

The Book of TAROT

Illustrated with the Morgan-Greer Tarot



By Susan Gerulskis-Estes

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THE WORLD

*I saw eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light
All calm, as it was bright
And round beneath it, time in hours, days, years
Driven by the spheres
Like a vast shadow moved; in which the
world
And all her train were hurled*

Henry Vaughan
1621-1695

Preface

Conscious thought and meditation upon the Tarot over the centuries have caused the Tarot to exist as a very powerful entity. It has survived through the ages from so distant a past that no one can accurately trace its origin. There is a real presence of power behind the magical images of the Tarot. When using the Tarot cards one is in actuality invoking the state of one's being. Therefore, the Tarot is not to be taken lightly.

From its earliest creation, the Tarot was drawn with highly psychic images meant to provoke particular thoughts and feelings for the viewer to explore. These psychic images include universal symbols that have been built up in strength over the years through contemplation and meditation. Meditation acknowledges and develops the entity each card represents, thus causing its greater existence. For example, each time a person acknowledges and then meditates upon a symbol, the very fact that the person is meditating upon it causes its being. Continued acknowledgment and meditation reinforces the entity. Different thoughts will add or detract from the original concept of the image, which will cause it to grow or wither in its own development. But, nevertheless, it does exist.

The idea of the Tarot is subjective to the individual personality. Some oppose the Tarot; certain religious organizations consider the cards sacrilegious and condemn their use.

Throughout history there has been much religious opposition to using cards of any sort, including the Tarot. In 1378, cards in general were banned in Regensburg, Germany. Somewhere between 1450–70 in Italy, a Franciscan friar condemned dice and cards including the twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana.

The Tarot is certainly not sacrilegious and it is a lack of knowledge of the Tarot that causes such harsh judgment.

Anything that falls into the wrong hands can be used in a negative way, such as a knife, but one could certainly not condemn the use of a knife. A knife can be destructive but if used in a positive way, it becomes a very helpful and necessary tool. So with the Tarot. The Tarot contains knowledge that is eternal, therefore invaluable. There is no limit to the extent of the wisdom contained in the cards. What they reveal about this life, the before-life, the afterlife, the whole of nature, cause and effect, and the paths of existence, is remarkable. When a person fears or condemns the Tarot, one wonders what is really being feared or condemned.

The Tarot is an entity meant to be taken seriously. Using the Tarot for games of entertainment is not their correct or intended use. People who use them as such will, hopefully, lose interest in them.

Divination is the art of revealing what is in one's mind, conscious or subconscious, and the probability of future events through the cards. The person who foretells events or reads the cards is referred to as the Diviner and the person who searches for answers is referred to as the Seeker. Divination increases awareness and develops intuition. It also brings one to a better understanding of one's position in the universe.

Fortune-telling for its own sake or for amusement is another form of misuse of the Tarot. However, foretelling probable events based upon the knowledge of the Tarot for the sincere purpose of examining one's life and direction is a noble use of the cards. Divination will develop intuition and ease spiritual development into daily life if done properly. Readings should be used to analyze and understand situations so that they can be improved.

ORIGIN of the TAROT

The origin of the Tarot cards is surrounded by mystery. However, there are interesting theories about their creation, each extremely different and unrelated.

One theory propounds that the Tarot was invented by prehistoric man for use as a calendar noting nature's cycles.

Another theory suggests an artist named Jacquemin Gringonneur invented the deck for the amusement of Charles VI of France.

Antoine Court de Gebelin wrote in 1392 that the Tarot was actually a book saved from one of the temples of Egypt, when all other writings were destroyed by fire. He believed the Tarot cards were the remains of The Book of Thoth, Lord of Magic. Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom, occult knowledge, and the arts and sciences, was also secretary to other gods in the Egyptian pantheon. The invention of numbers and sacred writings were both attributed to Thoth. He is often depicted with a man's body and the head and neck of an ibis and often carrying a tablet, pen, and palm branch. The Book of Thoth, written in hieroglyphics, and also referred to as the Book of Tarot, is supposed to have contained all wisdom and occult knowledge.

The Greeks gave Thoth the name Hermes Trismegitus and referred to his sacred abstruse works as Hermetic.

The twenty-two pictures of the Major Arcana were painted on the walls of an Egyptian initiation chamber located in the lower chambers of the Sphinx. To be initiated into the order of Hermes Thoth, the neophyte was taken through the gallery by a member of the order who would explain the symbolic meaning of

the twenty-two pictures. The aspirant had to realize and understand the meaning of the pictures in order to gain enough courage, strength, and knowledge to complete the initiation. If the neophyte failed any of the initiation tests, he would be put to death.

Another theory states that the cards originated in India. The androgynous figure of the Hindu god Ardhanari contains in its four arms objects similar to those which represent the four suits of the Tarot. The objects to the right of Ardhanari, which is called Siva for its female form, resemble the staff and cup. On the left side is Siva's consort Devi, the male half, who holds a sword and a ring.

Hanuman, the monkey god, is also depicted bearing the same objects.

Vishnu, the god known as the Preserver, is depicted as a god with four hands holding a lotus, mace, conch, and discus. These four objects can be compared with the four suits of the Tarot. Vishnu also has ten incarnations which correspond numerically to the ten Sepirot of the Tree of Life and the ten pip cards in each card suit.

At the end of the fourteenth century, large groups of people were driven from India by the Islamic ruler Timur Lenk, who conquered much of central Asia. Many of the banished groups wandered to Europe bringing cards used for divination. However, cards were supposedly brought to Europe as early as the seventh century by the Arabs.

During the fifteenth century, the Tarot cards received much attention and use in Italy. By the sixteenth century, the cards gained popularity and had spread to France. The French occult revival in the nineteenth century caused the Tarot's popularity to soar.

The Torah is the Hebrew system of organizing all knowledge and experience. Many scholars believe the Tarot is the development or offspring of the Torah or Hebrew alphabet since the two relate in theme and number.

Hebrew letter	Meaning	Tarot Correspondent
Aleph	Bull, ox	The Fool
Beth	House	Magician
Gimel	Camel	High Priestess
Daleth	Womb	Empress
Heh	Window	Emperor
Vav	Nail, hook	Hierophant
Zain	Sword, weapon	Lovers
Cheth	Fence	Chariot
Veth	Snake	Strength
Yod	Open hand	Hermit
Kaph	Closed hand	Wheel of Fortune
Lamed	Ox goad	Justice
Mem	Water	Hanged Man
Nun	Fish	Death
Samekh	Tent peg	Temperance
Ayin	Eye	Devil
Peh	Mouth	Tower
Tzaddi	Fish hook	Star
Qoph	Head	Moon
Resh	Head and face	Sun
Shin	Tooth	Judgment
Tav	Mark	World

Another theory suggests the Tarot originated in Morocco. Fez became the intellectual center of the world after the ruin of Alexandria. Sages gathered there from all corners of the world but had a difficult time communicating since they spoke different languages.

To overcome the language barrier, a group of them invented a series of pictures and symbols: the Tarot. This method was used to contain their combined wisdom in a way that could be understood universally. The messages could be interpreted by anyone who learned how to decipher the allegorical messages.

All of the above are interesting theories on the Tarot's origin, but the mystery is still unsolved. One thing is certain; whoever the creator(s) of the Tarot, they were truly ingenious and have left a most provocative phenomenon for mankind to contemplate and from which to learn.

Structure

The Tarot was designed with psychic images to be used as tools to realize the higher, inner self. The cards contain wisdom that is ageless and, being allegorical, universal. The cards are divided into two main parts, the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana.

The Major Arcana is actually a complete Tarot deck in itself. The twenty-two cards, viewed in numerical sequence, show the internal stages of the development of consciousness. It starts at the most basic and undeveloped level represented by the Fool (0), and leads to the most complex level and ultimate goal of liberation, the World (21).

Each card in the Major Arcana contains its concentrated individual concept. Yet also, each card relates together in a calculated order to reveal the secrets of the body, soul, and spirit operating in harmony with the elemental and spiritual forces of the universe.

The Major Arcana is divided into three groups of seven, or septenaries. Distinct from the three groups is the Fool.

The Fool is the unnumbered or zero card. Given the number zero, the Fool may appear to be a card of less importance than the others since zero signifies nothing. However, zero is of such importance that the system of measurement could not exist without it. Neither could the Tarot exist without the Fool.

The Fool symbolizes a state of nothingness or lack of form from which all things emanate. He represents the dynamic force of energy in motion that causes the impulse to act or to take the first step. He is the energy behind the action.

The Fool's position in the Tarot is infinite. The Fool relates to and unites all the cards. The author has placed it at the beginning to symbolize the cyclic whirling forces of energy before the first

manifestation. It also can be placed after the World (21). Not counting the Fool, the World is the last card in this sphere of existence and the first in the next sphere, which is heaven.

The first septenary of the Major Arcana includes: the Magician, the High Priestess, the Empress, the Emperor, the Hierophant, the Lovers, and the Chariot. Basically, these seven cards are the collective traits or qualities personified. They represent the forces of the dynamic psyche.

The second septenary of the Major Arcana contains the cards numbered from eight to fourteen. They are: Strength, the Hermit, the Wheel of Fortune, Justice, the Hanged Man, Death, and Temperance. This group makes clear the Spiritual influence, the position of the soul affected by the ways and variable laws of the universe and cause and effect.

The third septenary includes the cards numbered from fifteen to twenty-one. They are: the Devil, the Tower, the Star, the Moon, the Sun, Judgment, and the World. This third group pertains to the higher, complex, yet more basic and pure forces of existence.

The Major Arcana can be used without the Minor Arcana for divination. It is the part of the deck used for meditation. Both divination and meditation will be discussed in a later chapter.

The Minor Arcana is divided into four suits: Rods, Cups, Swords, and Pentacles. The four suits represent the Divine Forces in action on each sphere and level of nature. Each suit contains four court cards and ten pip cards from ace to ten.

The court cards in the Tarot deck contain four royalty cards as opposed to the three court cards in the modern playing card deck. The court cards include a king, queen, knight, and page.

The King represents the Spirit; the archetypal man. He is the personification of the governing principle characteristic of his suit. In readings he is apt to represent an older established man or firm.

The Queen represents the Soul; the archetypal woman. She is a mature woman personifying the female influence characteristic of her suit.

The Knight symbolizes the Ego. He is a young person out in the world, or moving forces in a situation related to his suit. He represents the development of the soul.

The Page represents the body; a being not yet fully developed or out in the world.

The numbered cards of the Tarot develop from the Ace, which is the essence of the suit's meaning, to ten. The four objects used to represent the suits are pictured in the amount of the number of each card. For example, the Four of Rods contains four rods.

Kabalah and the Suits

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was founded in London, England during the late nineteenth century by A.F.A. Woodford, Dr. Woodman, and Dr. W. Wescott. Their purpose was to unite all occult knowledge into one ring of esoteric thought.

The Golden Dawn conjoined the Tarot to the Kabalah, an ancient occult theosophy based upon esoteric meanings of the Hebrew Scriptures. The wisdom of the Kabalah is hidden behind a system of numbers and letters. The main concept is "That Which Is, That Which Shall Be" symbolized by the Roman numerals, IHVH. This concept is broken down into four worlds which correspond to the four suits of the Tarot. They are listed below along with a description of the characteristic of each suit.

I The Archetypal World of pure ideas is represented by the Suit of Rods, sometimes referred to as Wands. Rods symbolize primal energy, will, and growth. They also represent agriculture, nature, inspiration, determination, strength, force, and intelligence. The Rod's element is fire.

H The Creative World and the ability to put an idea into a pattern are represented by the Suit of Cups. Cups represent love, emotions, feelings, sensitivity, and family life. The element assigned to Cups is water, which is the symbol of the unconscious imagination, creativity, and deep thought.

V The Formative World of expression is represented by the Suit of Swords. The Sword's element is air, gases, and the life energy. Characteristics of this suit are action, change, force, movement; sometimes war, trouble, and strife. Included are people in the military, politics, and people who are forceful and aggressive with analytical minds.

H The Material World of visible physical objects is represented by the Suit of Pentacles. Their element is earth and its solidity. Pentacles represent industry, business, commerce, trade, and financial awards. They also represent the comfort and security that come with financial success.

The Kabbalist philosophy is illustrated in the Tree of Life, a system of arranging the various levels of consciousness. In the diagram of the Tree of Life are the names of each Sephiroth (stage) and their translated meanings. Ain Soph Aour is the Godhead or Life Source. Malkuth represents earth and man's physical body. The theme of the numbered cards of the Lesser Arcana relate to the theme of the same number Sephiroth. The twenty-two cards of the Major Arcana which describe physical and spiritual forces constantly in operation relate to the twenty-two connecting paths of the Tree of Life.

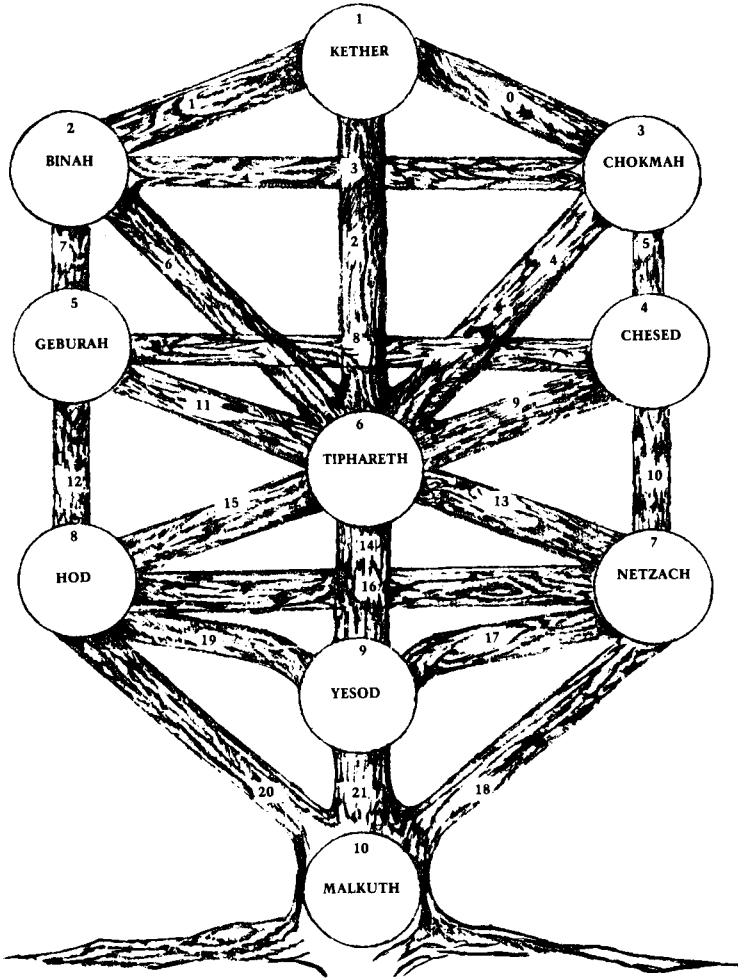
The Tarot, used as a tool for meditation of the ascending spheres of the Tree of Life, enables one to understand and deal with that level, thus heightening consciousness.

TREE OF LIFE

Kether: Crown
 Chokmah: Wisdom
 Binah: Understanding
 Chesed: Mercy
 Geburah: Severity

Tiphareth: Beauty
 Netzach: Victory
 Hod: Splendor
 Yesod: Foundation
 Malkuth: Kingdom

AIN SOPH AOUR



The twenty-two numbered segments are the twenty-two connecting paths that have been related to the Tarot.

Numerology and the Tarot

Numerology is the occult meaning of numbers concerning their influence on life. The Tarot cards incorporate numerology to express itself since the meaning of numbers is ageless, changeless, and has the same connotation universally.

In the Minor Arcana, an essential part of the meaning of a card is derived from the knowledge of its number in relation to its suit. Numerology is also incorporated into the Major Arcana.

NUMEROLOGY

Zero—Infinite nothingness, boundless, limitless, pure energy, bliss, superconsciousness, beyond beginning.

One—Alpha. The first, the start, the seed, the beginning. Creation from dust. Nonmanifest to manifest. Singularity. Individuality. Oneness of human. I am. Positive action.

Two—Adding on another force. Knowledge. Opposites. Mental and physical, masculine and feminine. Positive and negative. Balancing opposite forces. Action. Reasoning. Wisdom. Duality.

Three—Object of creation. Childbirth. Multiplication. Development of the seed (ONE) in union with the earth (TWO) produces a plant (THREE). The product resulting from the creation. Growth. Visible material result of ideas and action. Harmony.

Four—Memory. Logical mental reasoning by the physical man full of Spirit. Being able to express oneself in a socially accepted way in the material universe. Measurement. The reality of life on earth and being able to express oneself in it.

Five—Changing. Lack of stability. Uncontrollable force. Adversity. Wondering where you belong in society, in the world. Unhappy. Destructive energy. Moral law. Creative thought.

Six—Success. Equilibrium. Self acceptance in chosen field of life work or duty. Enthusiasm. Hope. Love. Harmony. Satisfaction. Beauty. Cooperation.

Seven—Soul Development. Safety. Security. Evaluation. Perfection. Successful completion of goals, but effort must continue. Mystery. Fate. Intuition. Number of Occult Intelligence.

Eight—Rhythm and Balance. Justice, ability to judge. Peace. Understanding. Strength. Open-mindedness. Perfect intelligence. Health. Wealth. Regeneration. Opposite force. Discarding old ideas for new. Infinity.

Nine—Attainment of a goal. Fulfillment. Completion of a cycle. Foundation to begin with new cycle. Phase before moving on to a much higher level of understanding.

Ten—Completed force, be it positive or negative. Perfection. Understanding.

To determine personal numeral influence, add all the numbers in your birthdate. For example: 3/20/57 would equal $3 + 2 + 0 + 5 + 7 = 17$, and $1 + 7 = 8$.

The Major Arcana



KEY 0

THE FOOL

Astrological Influence: The planet Uranus symbolizes that which has potential to be constructive or destructive.

Numeral Influence: Before beginning (0).

A youth is seen taking the first step to begin a journey into the future. He appears to be stepping off a cliff, quite unaware of the imminent danger. Rather, his attention is fixed expectantly ahead.

Over his shoulder is a rod which contains, in the handkerchief tied to it, knowledge gained in a previous existence. The knowledge will aid him in overcoming obstacles that will inevitably arise during his journey. The rod in his left hand is used as a walking stick. The rod symbolizes the spiritual unity and nature of all things. The white rose which he also holds in this hand represents purity and innocence.

The Fool wears a red plume, which indicates faith, on a leafy wreath around his head. The wreath indicates his connection with nature. The multicolored garments of white, red, green,

and black refer to the elements and influences to which the Fool is exposed. The multiple colors also confirms his seemingly irrational, choose-at-random attitude.

A small white dog jumps and bites his left sleeve, but the Fool seems totally unaware. He is activated by impulse and the subconscious mind rather than reason. Although there is no one about to help him as he takes the step leading off the cliff, the warm sun shining upon him indicates spiritual guidance and blessing.

The Fool is potential that is not yet applied to anything. He is the manifestation of energy from within; the human personality not yet in motion. He symbolizes one who is on the outside of systemized, orderly living while adapting to a new life. He is eager to experience and develop himself and nature to its fullest potential.

The Fool is the manifestation of a new cycle of existence. He is starting anew, and since he is unaware of what direction in which to proceed, he acts upon impulse. He has the choice of many different roads and is open-minded to all of them. Not being a discriminating sort, he is open to endless possibilities, new ideas and experiences.

Key 0 indicates the space before the start of a new cycle that will require decisions and action. The period is a carefree one without pressure, but also without direction.

Divinatory Meaning: Space before a decision or choice is made. A new cycle is about to begin that the seeker will enter inexperienced. New and endless possibilities.

Reversed: Lack of effort. Immaturity. An irresponsible personality. Fear of advancing. Reckless abandonment of the senses.