

**LESSON 111**

**HIGH PRIESTESS**

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## HIGH PRIESTESS

The Golden Dawn archetypal figure of this card is one of extreme simplicity. The High Priestess is a term that describes the highest position a woman can attain within the Priesthood. Her main qualities are truth and spirituality which show that her receptive nature relates through purity of the soul.

In some of the early Tarot packs the High Priestess was called the Pappess. The Order design of this card has done away with the Pappess concept and embraced the High Priestess archetype concept which is more freer and receptive to the elemental forces than its predecessor. The actual figure in the card combines two modes of thought. The first is that of the High Priestess herself and the second is that of the Bride, shown by the veil and her offering of the cup. In the Golden Dawn and later in the Stella Matutina the High Priestess was always taught as a card which represented the Shekinah, the feminine counterpart of YHVH who resides in Kether, which is directly linked by the 13th Path. Of the Shekinah, Waite says:

'It must be remembered in the first place that Elohim is a title of Shekinah and also is Adonai, in which sense - but presumably for us in manifestation - she is called Mirror of Jehovah. Like the First Matter of the Great Work in Alchemy, Shekinah is almost myrionymous in respect of her designations, but almost without exception, the ascriptions are feminine. She is now the Daughter of the King; she is now the betrothed, the Bride and the Mother, and again she is sister in relation to the world of man at large. There is a sense also in which this Daughter of God is - or becomes - the Mother of Man. In respect of the manifest universe, she is the architect of worlds, acting in virtue of the Word uttered by God in creation. In respect of the myth of Paradise, the Shekinah is the Eden which is above, whence the river of life flows forth that waters the Garden below, and this is also Shekinah as she is conceived in external things - or Bride, Daughter and Sister in the world below. Considered in her Divine Womanhood, in the world of transcendence, she is the Beloved who ascends towards the Heavenly Spouse, and she is Matrona who unites with the King, for perfection of the Divine Male is in the Divine Female'.

The High Priestess herself is Silver White, the colour of the Queen Scale which is also analogous to the world of Briah, the Soul World. Her hair is coloured in the complementary very

light orange. The Lunar crescent on her forehead is Bluish White, rayed with Silver Blue of the Princess Scale and shows the Lunar vibrations, from Yesod, acting through Tiphareth. Her garment is the Bluish White of the Prince Scale and shows the mental attitude she upholds for those who seek her. The veil is Pale Silvery Blue of the King Scale and relates to World of Spirit which covers her from the prying eyes of the uninitiated. Her Cup is also in the colour of the Queen Scale. The background around her shows the colours of the four scales, starting from the lightest around her, gradually working out to the darker. The ground she is standing on is in the colour of the Princess Scale, showing her stability of purpose. Overall, the blue and silver colourings of the card show both the Lunar and elemental water empathies.

The title "Priestess of the Silver Star" is the name of the High Priestess. This is derived from its association to the Luna influence, the Silver Star.

The psychological mode of consciousness that High Priestess represents is Responsiveness. This shows a continual adjustment to situations that constantly occur. The psyche here, is adjusting receptively to outside stimulæ so that a level of inner contentment develops. If this would not occur the individual would then develop feelings of insecurity and over-sensitivity. One part of the psyche continually adjusts so that the other part maintains as near perfect equilibrium as possible, the degree of this depending on the base psychological makeup of the person concerned. In simple terms, the former is a must before the latter can be obtained. The whole concept revolves around the correct mode of self expression and ones instinctive reactions to life's experiences.

The symbol of the cup that the High Priestess holds is a symbolic example of the responsiveness and receptiveness of attitude that goes with the meaning of the card as a whole. Overall this is typical of the entire process of the individual. The reactions associated with the High Priestess to constantly change is based on the emotions which are at quite a deep level. The level of frustration to changes will depend on the individual response to this archetypal image of the woman and his or her past conditioning to this figure and its internal symbolic meanings.

The alchemical associations to the High Priestess are linked to the cup and to water - which is in fact Azoth, commonly associated to the Prime Substance. The cup which she holds is the Holy Grail (it comes directly from Kether), and is also the Lapis Exilis - the source of life itself. A quote from the Mass shows how some aspects of the bible can also be understood in alchemical terms as Khunrath, Kircher and Lulley have shown so often,

and when considered can also be used to describe aspects of this card as well.

'The Lord possessed me at the beginning of his ways. I existed before he found any creation - I existed from all eternity, before the earth was created, Abysses were not yet formed, yet form and already I was conceived. The fountains had not yet come out of the earth, the heavy mass of mountains had not yet been formed - I regulated all things'. This is also the Spiritus Mundi, the hidden essence of the Primea Materia (or Aqua Materia).

The number of this card is 2, showing balance and stability of the duality and Life Force. The object of this duality is the introduction of the third force, not yet manifested. Because of the deviation from the perfection of the Monad the duality is also associated to sin and transgressions. Westcott says: 'As was the case with the Monad so the Dyad also was said to represent a large number of different objects and ideas; things indeed so dissimilar that it is difficult to understand how such multiplicity of opinion arose. And at first it is the general opposite to the Monad, the cause of dissimilitude, the interval between multitude and the Monad. Of figures, those which are characterised by equality and sameness have relation to the Monad; but those which in equality and difference predominate are allied to the Dyad.'

The Path of the High Priestess leads through the Abyss itself. It shows not only a type of androgynous association but a virginal one as well - but hints at the ecstasy of the receptiveness - the virgin/whore. She is a great feminine force controlling the very source of life by gathering unto herself all energising forces and holding them in solution until the time of their release.

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cont...

## DIVINATION

ON MATTERS OF Selfhood; Self Projection; new ideas; new beginnings; reactions to outside stimuli; the life force; first encounters:

The key impetus of the High Priestess in this position is personal experience. On a universal scale she shows motivation through emotions, that is, cosmic vibrations awaken deep, hidden feelings and needs. What is forming is stimulation of the positive side of a persons nature where desirable changes are made in their life. On a personal note, ones emotions and responses to the environment are energised causing one to partake more in social activity. The type of person represented here radiates receptiveness and sensitivity which other people are naturally drawn to. She tends, however, to cling to her surroundings and to whatever provides nourishment and shelter, although her instinct for survival is strong and she is able to adapt to any change, instinctively what is opportunity and what is danger.

ON MATTERS OF possessions and personal attitude towards such; personal estate and resources both physical and material; principles and feelings; management and projection; commerce, personal, commercial, governmental and national financial affairs directly relating to the self:

The key impetus of the High Priestess in this position is maturing thoughts. On a large scale she shows merging into the value system of the environment one inhabits. There is contentedness in the knowledge of inner resources and satisfactory security and trading alliances. People adapt to the fluctuations of the economy. Emotional security is formed through money and possessions. Family businesses are planned but no action is yet taken though if such ventures are gone into they will not be stable and will have fluctuating profits and losses. Psychological patterns from childhood inhibit growth. On a personal note the fluctuation of financial affairs take up most of ones time and effort. No action is advised during this phase. Material contentment.

ON MATTERS OF short journeys; communications; relationships; brothers, sisters, neighbours; humour; identity; early education; books; correspondence; enlarging ones field of activity:

The key impetus for the High Priestess here is the increase of mental powers. On a large scale there is receptivity where

others thoughts and feelings are felt; prediction of an opponent's next move. A mothering role is taken (towards countries or families; this can be on any scale). What is forming is an energising mind (or nation) through mental activities. There is an urge to create an impression on others. A tendency for the mind to wander, however, can interfere with progress. Closeness to females - sisters, cousins, aunts; a special journey may need to be taken; and involvement with relations. This card is fortunate in matters of public speaking.

ON MATTERS OF the end of one stage and the commencement of another; the home and private life; buildings; land; parents; security; emotions; significant shifts in lifes directions; concerning the soul; the occult in its practical terms; divination:

The key impetus for the High Priestess in this position is to have sanctuary. In many there is a strong desire to withdraw into a place of refuge, away from the day to day conflicts. On a large scale this card shows a time when growth has stopped and there is a regression into earlier, familiar patterns. However restlessness with familiarity prevents stagnation. Changes are forming which will initially upset plans but ultimately will be for the good of all. In the occult field, the High Priestess shows working on the middle path, however a person of mystical tendencies, but one is generally not conscious of his or her higher actions. On a personal note, increased activity in the home is caused by visitors. There is a possible difficulty in handling problems and one tends to retreat, relinquishing responsibility.

ON MATTERS OF love given; creativity of selfhood; the creative will; children; entertainment; recreation; speculation; sports; the arts; gambling; fulfilling potentiality:

The key impetus here for the High Priestess is the desire to produce. There are two paths indicated for the card in this position. One is the way of least resistance and the other is of challenge and hardship, both are the two extremes of the card, the choice being up to the querent. The High Priestess warns that if you choose the wrong path your karmic lesson will be repeated, and perhaps more harshly. On a large scale the High Priestess shows public appeal. Enterprises are forming and in relationships some people choose to live together, others plan families. There is a re-enactment of youth through children; a desire to produce children, and for pleasurable undertakings. Social affairs predominate ones interests.

ON MATTERS OF sickness (generally due to work problems); employment: employees; relationships within the work environment; conflicts; service; ones sense of service; the acquiring of skills; psychology:

The key impetus for the High Priestess in this position is obscurity. Take care of your health and be cautious in all activities, for the future is obscure and one will not see problems arise until they are on top of you. On a large scale health concerns draws some to appeals to aid third world countries or areas of need. The High Priestess advises one to turn inward and take a look at your backdoor - there are those in your own country that also need help. On a personal note comfort and safety is found in the familiar, in a daily routine. When contemplating employment it is better to relate to the devil you know rather than one you do not. There are fluctuations in moods and health but well aspected this card shows a balanced constitution able to overcome any adverse situation that may threaten.

ON MATTERS OF marriage and divorce; contracts; the other party; competitors, adversaries, and known enemies; partnerships; public relationships; social interaction; the law of compensation; what is lacking; the workings of karma:

The key impetus for the High Priestess in this position is identity with the whole. On a large scale she shows patriotism and a sense of belonging as ones country is the mother land. What is forming is a happy romance, or marriage entered into to establish a family and home; an engagement. On a personal note one may find oneself strongly influenced by a partner to be what their idea is of who and what one should be. This card reminds one to differentiate between being an individual within and part of the whole and being an individual within a relationship and not let oneself be taken completely over.

ON MATTERS OF death and rebirth; accidents; effects of others; crime and retribution; legacies; wills; others estates and finances; joint resources; moods; sex; spiritualism; rejuvenation; mysticism; transformation; psychotherapy:

The key impetus of the High Priestess under the above matters is attunement, to the unconscious or any other cosmic vibration. She shows heightening of psychic attunement, to the collective unconscious. In matters of spirituality she shows the unconscious mind as yet unmanifested on a conscious level - whatever is happening is happening on an unconscious level with no actual physical participation. On a personal note, there may be news of death, or one may be drawn to a deeper spiritual

of financial or business situations. Emotional patterns are awakened and this card advises that you delve into past experiences and uncover the source of your mistakes so that these patterns are not repeated. In partnerships there may be sexual intimacy.

ON MATTERS OF religion; metaphysics; philosophy; higher study and education; legal systems; morals; institutions of learning; long distance travel; exploration; public communications; the collective mind:

The key impetus of the High Priestess in this position is quickened aspirations. She shows contemplation on the meaning of life; collective spiritual beliefs; and/or mass movement and change into the collective unconscious. What is forming is widening of mental vision - deeper study. There is adaptation of beliefs to changing influences and conditions; an outcome is foreseen. On a personal note she represents philosophic and scientific pursuits, with an intuitive grasp of concepts; contact with religious people. A long journey and/or one may be embarking on new adventures. She shows a sharing of insight.

ON MATTERS OF public honour; status; ambitions and goals reached; achievements; profession; the other parent; causes for disgrace; recognition; identity:

The key impetus for the High Priestess here is to be loved by the mother/world. On a large scale one sways to the feelings of the masses and those in authority, or, you may hold a position of authority. You must define what your space in physical reality is then you can release any mother archetypal hangups. What is forming is recognition for your efforts. On a personal level there is a movement to external concerns; ones main concern is with integrity and profession. The High Priestess brings opportunity when in this position, and all life's aspects are strengthened. Make as much progress as you can during this phase of your life.

ON MATTERS OF friends; income; social alliances; legislation; ones attitude; group activities; government, counsellors; love received; spiritual and intellectual aspirations; ideals; fulfilment; what you yield and how you benefit others:

The key impetus for the High Priestess here is to belong. This is a favourable position. International organisations provide security and comfort, giving a sense of belonging. This is a time to expand ones social horizons. Opportunities arise to form



new friendships; contacts are formed with groups or associations. There are friendships with women and womens organisations which may become predominant in your life. On a personal note, if you have difficulties in the past with friendships you may examine your own aura (thought) projections and try not to repeat the same patterns in the future - project positiveness.

ON MATTERS OF responsibility and contribution to others; humanistic concerns; karmic debts; unresolved problems; hidden resources; the unconscious; sorrow; health afflictions; secret enemies; hospitals; secret societies; self undoing; total identification:

The key impetus of the High Priestess here are subconscious forces which effect ones emotional attitude; there is psychic sensitivity to others feelings which can distort your own feelings. Sympathetic feelings are awakened when encountering the down trodden or those less fortunate. The High Priestess here shows that this is a time for inner search, spiritual meditation. There is a need to regress into past experiences. You may even find that you have direct access to a library of wisdom through use of your own insight. On a personal note this card shows shyness and loneliness, self inflicted confinement or confinement of another. You require periodic seclusion. If badly aspected she shows phobias and unresolved problems with the mother archetype.

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#### MEDITATION ON THE HIGH PRIESTESS:

Let the Student first study the overall picture of the card, then study each detail: Each symbol and image. Study the colours. Now let the Student look at the card and feel its vibrations. Write down your overall impression.

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#### exercise

Now paint this card with the above described colours. An outlined drawing is supplied with this lesson.

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