

Tarot Readings

According to basically all of the sources I've ever read or spoken with, Tarot cards are probably at least as old as the Bible. Therefore it makes perfect sense to me that there would be at least as many ways of interpreting them as interpretations of the Bible that have been written. As with everything of a spiritually interpretive nature, a sometimes precarious balance of open-mindedness and caution is extremely advisable.

To avoid accusations of "fishing for information" like the relatively harmless travelling fortune teller who appears at the beginning and end of the movie "The Wizard of Oz" during times when I perform Tarot readings for individuals, I begin by advising them not to tell me anything at all. I light a candle or two, then we touch hands for a few moments as the person concentrates on whatever the primary concern is. This allows subconscious energy to flow between us and to encourage a specific understanding and order to the interaction about to take place. While we are touching hands, I concentrate on calmness, a willingness to connect communicatively with the subconscious energy of the person, and on connecting with my own subconscious intuition.

After about thirty seconds, the person shuffles the cards as much or as little as desired and I begin the reading. As the shuffling is going on, I explain that as a human being I will do my best for them but I cannot guarantee that I will always be on target. The heart of the person is to be the final authority on whether the reading is helpful or not, and any donation I receive for my services should be proportionate in the person's mind to the help the person believes to have actually received. During the reading, I speak whatever the archtypal images of the cards prompts my intuition to verbalize and when I am finished (perhaps an hour later), it is the person's choice whether to tell me what I was talking about or not.

Amazingly, I have done some very accurate readings this way. One reading in particular I remember as proceeding very strangely, so much so that I stopped to say, "This is really strange to me, so I don't know whether I'm even on track at all here." The person immediately responded that I was exactly on track, so much so that they were quite astonished at what was being said. So I shrugged my shoulders, went back to trusting my intuition, and proceeded.

In all such readings, I would

encourage everyone to reject everything that is unhelpful. Life on earth in the physical realm is hard enough, without getting harassment from the spiritual realm as well. If something is really that distressing, either it isn't true or it can't be properly received in the present time or situation. In either case, it isn't something to remember.

At no point in time and for no reason whatsoever, would I encourage anyone to base an action exclusively on the results of a Tarot reading. Wise thoughts, words, and actions are based upon wholeness. Only to the extent that a Tarot reading confirms a number of other "signals" and also agrees with what "feels" right (in your own heart), should one even pay close attention. Good readings, like any other aspect of wholeness, never stand alone.

A final point to mention for now, although there's always more to say, is that a Tarot reading is never essential. In desperate circumstances, it may or may not help, but it is never essential. If someone wishes to perform a Tarot reading for a certain price, be sure that financial resources used to pay this price are not already committed to or needed by anything else. Also be sure there is a calmness within before the reading even begins, concerning the decision to give the particular reader the amount requested.

If any of the above is lacking, it's probably better to wait or do more individual research first.

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Life is a collaborative effort, encompassing more than we know. In a time of "information overload," news, communication, and travel across great distances is common, yet we often talk at each other without listening, communicating, or understanding.

Humanity needs its icons, but also its iconoclasts to grow beyond the good and bad qualities that now limit and describe us. The essences of both God and us remain, in the midst of questions, to be discovered, experienced, and expressed.

Please share in this ongoing dialogue, remembering to indicate whether and how you wish to be identified.

Blessings, love, and peace to you.

---Sister Who

New Age (?) Ethics

The patterns of opportunist, oppressor, inventor, and savior have been around for a very long time. In the current era is the mixed blessing of an abundance of healers and healing methods. The whole realm of healing is very subjective and usually beyond the reach of scientific measurement, which seems perfectly natural considering that healing is as much non-physical as it is physical. A complication is that abilities are easy to claim, inabilities are difficult to prove, and an enormous amount of money is exchanged while the debate continues. The most basic definition of "oppressor" that I've been able to discern is "one (person or group) who receives more than is given, such that the donor is unjustly disempowered by the exchange." For "opportunist" I've chosen the definition "one who in denial of the interconnectedness of all things, uses any available course of interaction for self-benefit, without regard for the influence or impact on others." For the word "inventor," I decided upon the definition "a creator of new tools to serve various goals." "Savior" seems to be a less popular word, as a form of self-reliance grows in popularity, but like anything else it is a role that can either be used or abused. One person may save another from a tragic death in an automobile accident. Another may erroneously believe in self-possessed weakness when in fact strength is more than abundant, and look for a savior to perform tasks inappropriately.

Two illustrations come to mind, as I type that last statement. The first is the explanation I read many years ago of the

training of circus elephants. A full-grown elephant, the text stated, has sufficient strength to pull a thirty-foot-long telephone pole out of the ground, yet they are restrained by a steel post of only about three feet in length. To accomplish this, the elephant must be staked in this manner when it is still very small and, at that stage of life, unable to remove the post from the ground. After much tugging, the elephant comes to believe that resistance is futile. Though the elephant grows in size and strength, its belief in its inability to escape remains. To the elephant, its captivity is very real. To an outside observer, it clearly is not.

A second illustration occurred to me during the hundreds of hours of exercise I did in preparation for competition in Bodybuilding in both the 1990 and the 1998 international Gay Games. Simply put, the one who wants the muscles must do the exercises.

My intention in mentioning the above, is to initiate an ongoing discussion of the ways of perceiving and healing for which numerous people request to be paid in cash. I suspect that for every legitimate healer and seer there are at least two others who have mastered the language and manner but are lacking any true gift for the specific practice. Each individual exchange is unique and open-mindedness is needed if greater self-empowerment is to be achieved, but none need become a victim of someone else's greed or misguided sincerity in the process.

As with most things, there will probably never be a final word on this subject, nor should there be. I prefer, however, that individuals cease to be victimized by those claiming to have some sort of divine connection or information, which is essential to the well-being of every other person on earth. Jesus, said, "the kingdom of God is within you" and I suggest that no greater authority exists than that point of Divine Light each person inherently possesses.

Words of a Song:

"Cathedral of the Heart"
by Denver NeVaar

1.
Yellow bricks and steeple high
contained the worship space;
at other times I met with God
in a wild and wooded place;
but the home that God
likes most of all--
I knew right from the start--
travels with each one
everywhere:
the cathedral of the heart.

chorus:

There the music rolls like thunder
will rainbows all around
and God and I together
are all that can be found;
a healing light that fills the place
as our dance goes on and on;
the cathedral of my heart is where
love lets me sing my song.

2.
From time to time I build a space
with candle, cup, and sphere,
crosses, stars, and painted things
that cannot bring God near;
but the call that brings
that Sacred One
more quickly than I know,
is when with openness
and honesty
my cathedral spirit shows.

A Metaphorical Meditation

Experience is based upon perspective and no single perspective is universal. The snow falls outside my window and has no awareness of being warm or cold but only of being that temperature that is just right for it to be. We generally rate life according to an expectation of about fifty to one hundred years. To a glacier we may be ridiculously young and to a snowflake unimaginably old. The perception of time is not constant within all that exists. To a single crystal of water, the construction of an entire snowflake is enormous in size. Yet there is a greater order to the snowflake that is equally revealed in the first crystal. A single snowflake may seem quite inconsequential, yet an avalanche can thunder down a mountainside and leave nothing alive within its path.

In similar ways, individual people somehow embody the patterns according to which the universe is ordered, yet in having such a limited perspective are rarely adequately equipped to say for certain just what the realities of the larger universe are. In the context of various other things, we are both younger than we can imagine and older than we know. We also pass through different forms, being first some sort of intention, then a liquid that becomes solid, and at some point thereafter pass again into the realm of spirit.

Smoke is often used in rituals to carry



prayers to the spirit world as that emissary that stands between the physical form of wood, sage, herbs, or spices, and the invisible realm of air, which is often equated to spirit. In a similar way, snow comes from the air, takes a physical form, and at some point returns to the air. Sometimes we welcome its coming and sometimes we don't, and the same is true of its going away again.

Yet each of us is as a snowflake, with a limited amount of time to give whatever we can to each other and to the world. At some point, our sacrifice to this life will be completed and each of us will also pass away. Jesus recognized this also, telling his disciples at one point, "for a little while I am with you." Again and again this pattern has repeated itself throughout my life--elementary school, high school, college, living first in one place and then another. What will we make of the time we have to share--memories or regrets?

Yet the cycles and seasons of life, like the cycles of life of a snowflake are both our dismay and our hope. As surely as we must let the seasons pass in their appropriate time and refrain from holding them longer, just as surely their unique combinations of burdens and blessings will return.

To end with a quotation from the Judeo-Christian book of beginnings, "And God saw all that He had made, and behold, it was very good." I'm not sure we've quite figured that one out yet.

Recommended Movies:

Six Degrees of Separation. In a search for understanding in what ways and to what degree everyone and everything are somehow interconnected, the question of honest interaction lingers--honesty towards others and also honesty towards one's self and one's ideals.

Brother Sun, Sister Moon. Through an interpretation of Saint Francis of Assisi, here again is an opportunity to consider the fine line between spiritual devotion and popular acceptance, and a dare to "above all else to

Recommended Reading:

Walking on Water--Reflections on Faith and Art by Madeleine L'Engel. Drawing from life experience and thoughtful reflection, the author leads the way through profound questions to empowered understanding that is unthreatened by lingering mysteries and paradoxes.

Another Mother Tongue--Gay Words, Gay Worlds by Judy Grahn. The author presents the findings of an amazing amount of research into the spiritual, religious, and

**"We all take turns
being the one in need."**

---Sister Who