

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TAROT



Behind the **Tarot** is an idea, a power that has been influencing humanity and shaping its destiny since the dawning of time. Since man's earliest beginnings, the impulse within him has been to replicate his own inner nature in form. The images of his earthly existence that he carved and painted as an outward expression of his art were sacred to him as symbols of the formless life within. In time, when human nature began to impose itself on the natural order of creation, man's connection with his inner reality began to wane. The simplicity of the primitive spirit gave way to the need for more complex models to demonstrate his understanding of life and the universe. The **Tarot** is such a model.

When western civilisation began to flourish, the gnosis – the original knowledge of man – began to filter through to the great body of learning in the West. This contributed to a burgeoning of scientific investigation and artistic expression as well as advancement in more esoteric practices such as alchemy and astrology. The **Tarot** evolved through the need to preserve, in the language of symbols, the knowledge of his origins. The cards appeared for the first time, in a version that would be recognisable today, in fourteenth century Europe. Their fundamental message that the truth could be realised through the power of the individual man or woman was in direct conflict with the ruling authority of the day – the church. However, despite the many attempts to outlaw the **Tarot** since it first appeared, it has survived as a remarkable testimony to man's creative spirit.

But what is the purpose of the **Tarot** today? How can a set of ancient symbols and images of strangely bedecked characters have any significance in this age of super-technology? The **Tarot's** enduring appeal lies in the power of symbols and the accessibility of the cards themselves. When a rapport with the symbols has been established, the cards act as a mirror, reflecting facets of the psyche that are usually hidden from everyday awareness. This enables those who are sensitive to the inner life to have insights and intimations of the future, for which the **Tarot** is primarily known. Given sufficient inspiration, the Tarot reader can indeed delve into the mystery of the psyche – yet this is only part of it.

The cards tell a story of a character called the Fool and his mythic journey of self-discovery. Each card symbolises a challenge or encounter which contributes towards his life's potential. When sufficiently seasoned through the trials of existence, he is ready to begin the epic journey back home – the inner descent back through all that he has been.

To activate the idea of the **Tarot**, it is imperative to connect with the essence of the symbols by observing how they manifest in your own living experience. As the Fool travels through the **Tarot**, so do I, the individual man or woman, journey through existence in an endeavour to discover something that is real and enduring. The Fool's story is the story of us all. See this and you begin to perceive the idea behind the **Tarot** – and the symbols come to life.

Lance Kelly