"The High Priestess is the Universal Principle and Worldly Archetype of Intuition, Independence, Self-Trust and Self-Resourcefulness. This wonderful archetype reminds us to come into full balance with our Chi, to keep hold of both our Strength and Softness and not sacrifice either. The journey of the High Priestess is the return to the oasis within. The time has come to delve deeply into the recesses of your Sacred Self, to take the journey of Light and Knowledge. The tools of wisdom, intuition and manifestation are yours!"
THE PRINCIPLE OF INTUITION, SELF-TRUST AND SELF-RESOURCEFULNESS

“For self is a sea boundless and measureless.”

- K. Gibran (The Prophet)

The High Priestess represents the Universal Principle and Worldly Archetype of Intuition, Independence, Self-Trust, and Self-Resourcefulness. She is Isis, the eternal virgin and Artemis, the Huntress of sacred myth, clothed in the luminous veil of light, the manifestation of the spirit. In Oriental mythology she is Kuan Yin, the Goddess of Compassion.

With her resplendent form comes the gift of insight, intuition and concentration. She is an androgynous figure who archetypally represents balance, a positive sense of superiority, an austere person who is both wise and helpful.

From the naval up, the figure is all curved lines, soft, magnetic, ying, and receptive. From the naval down, the figure is all straight lines, strong, dynamic, yang, and assertive.
This archetype serves as a strong reminder that we are not to sacrifice our strength for our softness or our softness for strength. The High Priestess with her sun/moon crown represents each person’s commitment to have equal balance in strength and softness.

"The crystals represent the multifaceted aspects of intuition that are present at each level of consciousness: mental intuition (the triangular crystal); emotional intuition (the round crystal); spiritual insight (the diamond crystal), and physically registered information (the octagonal crystal). Intuition is akin to “the great still lake” - reflective, contained, deep and always present, waiting to be accessed and trusted."

- The Tarot Handbook (Angeles Arrien)

This archetype of Brilliance also represents the journey homeward and the return to oneself. The camel within the oasis symbolizes the return to the inner oasis and garden within. The camel represents self-resourcefulness in its capacity to go long barren distances, yet always finds the oasis, the sacred water of Self.

Astrologically, the High Priestess is card number 2, its element is Water, and modality is Cardinal. The planet is Aries and the ruler is the Moon. Its season is Spring. Within Alchemy it is Secundus Agens. Its mythical correspondence is Taurt, Isis, Ishtar, Diana, Arianrhod, Morrighu and Sophia.
Within the Magnificent Fantastical Creatures Tarot, written by Lisa Hunt and illustrated by D.J. Conway, the High Priestess was known to the Ancient Egyptians as Ua Zit. The striking Cobra goddess appears on the crowns of the Pharaohs as the uraeus, the upraised cobra.

Ua Zit appears in a variety of forms; a winged cobra, a crowned cobra, a woman wearing a vulture headdress and the red crown of Upper Egypt. In human form she holds a papyrus sceptre with a long snake entwined around it. Ua Zit is closely connected with the God Ra and the goddess Isis. The scrolls and the hieroglyphs represent hidden spiritual mysteries and the ancient magikal practises of Old.

Her appearance signifies that a secret will be revealed. Use your own intuition to understand and solve a problem. She also represents an important woman in a man’s life.

Use this card to represent the Goddess on the altar and during meditation, to help seek your spiritual path and see into the future. Can also be used in protection spells, particularly for Major changes.
In the sparkling Animals Divine Tarot, written by Lisa Hunt, the High Priestess is symbolized by Bast from the Egyptian mythos. This archetype is connected to the age-old practise of seeking Knowledge, following your intuition.

The seed of Knowledge has been planted: the spirals represent the unending quest for wisdom and the continuous season of change and renewal. The gemstone on the forehead is the third eye, gateway to enlightenment. The power of the gemstone imbues us with purity and self-illumination. The ethereal cats in the background are our spiritual guides; the stars are beacons of deeper understanding, illuminating our path as we continue on our journey to new heights of personal awareness.
"The Egyptians revered a cat goddess, Bast, whose lively presence protected the population from vermin and assured fecundity and health. She was a benevolent deity whose worshipers responded to her kindness with much jubilation. Every year thousands would make the pilgrimage by barge to Bubastis, the center place of her worship. Music, dance, drink, and victuals were plentiful during one of the most popular festivals in ancient Egypt.

As the daughter/wife of the sun god Ra, Bast was the deliverer of the morning sunrays and was also associated with the lunar mysteries of the night. She was known as the “eye of Ra” and protected her father/husband from his enemies. Sometimes she is depicted as a lion-headed goddess Sekhmet; some think that this earlier Egyptian goddess incarnation represents a ferocious, darker side of Bast. Later representations show Bast as a regal, approachable cat-headed goddess who is adorned with jewels and is carrying a breastplate with a lion head attached to it."

- Animals Divine (Lisa Hunt)

In ancient Egypt, a cat reinforced the well-being of a household and to kill one was punishable by death. So important were these domestic beasts that upon a cat’s death, the family would mourn the loss by shaving their eyebrows and having the cat mummified and buried in one of the many cat cemeteries scattered throughout Egypt.
Cats are still one of the most popular animals in the world. Many believe that cats possess certain powers of intuition and their connection with nocturnal activities supports the belief that they are symbols of magic, fertility, and lunar cycles.

Within the gracious Connolly Tarot, created by Eileen Connolly and Peter Paul Connolly, the High Priestess is represented by a Powerful yet gentle female, sitting between the positive and negative aspects of life, shown by the two pillars. At her feet is the lunar crescent, glowing with mysterious secrets. In order to come back to our true Self, we must go beyond the gold gates of wisdom on our Life path.

This is unseen Wisdom, the activity beneath the surface of the sacred Self. The whole picture cannot be seen at this point, there is much depth yet to be discovered.

Contained within the alluring Shadowscapes Tarot, by Stephanie Pui-Mun Law and Barbara Moore, the High Priestess opens herself to the everlasting sky. She basks in the radiance the stars cast upon her upturned cheeks. She soaks in that tremulous, incandescent light, feeling the glow within her mind, opening corridors, dancing into filigree patterns.
"The stars chant: We were here when the mountains were young and the sea was only a dream.... we've seen the hills bloom with countless millions of seasons.... we've watched the clouds paint their visions in a slow language across the centuries.... let us speak.

The owl hoots in the darkness, calling out to his mistress with the music of the night. His white feathers gleam in the moonlight, as if with a light from within. He glides through the darkness to come to rest near her.

In the gloom, the night is full of whispers – the secret knowledge of the stars, the trees, and of the earth. The spirits of each murmur their collected stories and their wisdom in a sibilant descant.

She weaves those sounds through her fingers, drawing the voices into physical being, and in her fingers, a filigree key coalesces. She calls the owl to her. “Take this, and be the bearer of secrets.” she tells him.”

- Shadowscapes Companion (Stephanie Pui-Mun Law & Barbara Moore)

The insights of wisdom, Knowledge, learning, intuition, purity and virtue are all mysteries which are explored and contained together, holding hands with this divine goddess. She lifts her arms out, and in that gesture, her very body becomes the living symbol of a chalice. The owl is a Sacred keeper of Knowledge, bearing a key to unlock hidden mysteries. The pomegranate (fruit of fertility and death) is an icon of Persephone, who tasted the seeds and thus tied herself to Hades. The moons embroidered upon her garments wax and wane, the new crescent and gibbous moons that create the full cycle embraced in one, teaching us that Life also moves in stages.
In the *blessed Haindl* Tarot created by Hermann Haindl, the *High Priestess* is the *Goddess*, manifested as the *moon*, the *seas*, the *night* and the *Earth*. Light fills the card, *radiating from her palms*, pouring down from a *globe* over her head. Her dress seems to pour down like *rain* on the *camel* and the *dark land*. She is the *divine life principle*.

It is a time for *quiet*, *looking inward*, *seeking peace*, using *feeling* and *intuition* to find *Joy* within. This can also signify a lover who needs *solitude*, who *avoids commitment in romance*. It can also be a time for *action*, for *involvement with others*.

In the *scholarly text* *Learning the Tarot* by Joan Bunning, the *High Priestess* is the *Guardian of the Unconscious*. She sits in front of the *thin veil of awareness* which is all that separates us from our *inner landscape*. She contains within herself the *Secret of the Realms* and offers us the silent invitation, “*Be still and know that I am God*”.
"The High Priestess is the feminine principle that balances the masculine force of the Magician. The feminine archetype in the Tarot is split between the High Priestess and the Empress. The High Priestess is the mysterious unknown that women often represent, especially in cultures that focus on the tangible and known. The Empress represents woman’s role as the crucible of life."

- Learning the Tarot (Joan Bunning)

In readings, the High Priestess poses a challenge for you to go deeper - to look beyond the obvious, surface situation to what is hidden and obscure. She also asks you to recall the vastness of your potential and to remember the unlimited possibilities you hold within Yourself.
The **High Priestess** can represent a *time of waiting* and allowing. It is not always necessary to act to *achieve your goals*. Sometimes they can be realized through a *stillness* that gives *desire a chance to flower* within the *fullness of time*.

Within the *learned Book of Thoth* written by *magister Aleister Crowley*, the **High Priestess** refers to the Hebrew letter *Gimel* (*meaning Camel*). The card refers to the **Moon**, a *universal symbol of femininity*, going from *highest* to *lowest*. Crowley states; “the **High Priestess** is the first card which connects the *Supernal Triad* with the *Hexad*; and her path, as shown in the diagram, makes a direct connection between the *Father* in his *highest aspect*, and the *Son* in his most *perfect manifestation*. This path is in *exact balance* in the middle pillar. There is here, therefore, the *purest* and most exalted *conception of the Moon*.”
"The card represents the most spiritual form of Isis the Eternal Virgin; the Artemis of the Greeks. She is clothed only in the luminous veil of light. It is important for high initiation to regard Light not as the perfect manifestation of the Eternal Spirit, but rather as the veil which hides that Spirit. It does so all the more effectively because of its incomparably dazzling brilliance. Thus she is light and the body of light. She is the truth behind the veil of light. She is the Soul of Light. Upon her knees is the bow of Artemis, which is also a musical instrument, for she is huntress, and hunts by enchantment.

Now, regards this idea as from behind the Veil of Light, the third Veil of the original Nothing. This light is the menstruum of manifestation, the goddess Nuith, the possibility of Form. This first and most spiritual manifestation of the feminine takes to itself a masculine correlative, by formulating in itself any geometrical point from which to contemplate possibility. This virginal goddess is then potentially the goddess of fertility. She is the idea behind all form; as soon as the influence of the triad descends below the Abyss, there is the completion of concrete idea."

- The Book of Thoth (Aleister Crowley)
The following chapter of the Book of Lies, may assist the student to understand this doctrine by dint of meditation:

"Dust Devils. In the Wind of the mind arises the turbulence called I. It breaks; down shower the barren thoughts. All life is choked. This desert is the Abyss wherein is the Universe. The Stars are but thistles in that waste. Yet this desert is but one spot accursed in a world of bliss. Now and again Travellers cross the desert; they come from the Great Sea, and to the Great Sea they go. And as they go they spill water; one day they will irrigate the desert, till it flower. See! Five footprints of a Camel! V.V.V.V.V."

At the bottom of the card, accordingly, are shown nascent forms, whorls, crystals, seeds, pods, symbolizing the beginnings of life. In the midst is the Camel which symbolizes "the oasis". In this card is the one link between the archetypal and formative worlds.

It is important to reflect that this card is wholly feminine, wholly virginal, for it represents the influence and the means of manifestation (or, from below, of attainment) in itself. It represents possibility in its second stage without any beginning of consummation.
It is especially to be observed that the three consecutive letters, *Gimel*, *Daleth*, *Hé* (Atu II, III, XVII) show the Feminine Symbol (Yin) in three forms composing a *Triune Goddess*. This Trinity is immediately followed by three corresponding and complementary Fathers, *Vau*, *Tzaddi*, *Yod* (Atu IV, V, IX). The Trumps 0 and 1 are *hermaphrodite*. The remaining fourteen Trumps represent these *Primordial Quintessences of Being* in conjunction, function, or manifestation.

Within the outstanding thesis, *Understanding Aleister Crowley’s Thoth Tarot*, by *Lon Milo DuQuette*, the author points out that the *High Priestess* also goes by the names; *The Priestess of the Silver Star*, *Planetary Trump of the Moon*.

Esoterically speaking, the card is symbolized on the *Tree of Life* as Path 13, joining *Kether-Crown* to *Tiphareth-Beauty*. Its colours are *blue*, *silver*, *cold Pale blue*; and *silver*, rayed sky blue. *Purity is to live only to the Highest*; and the *Highest is All*: be thou as *Artemis to Pan*! Read thou in the *Book of the Law*, and break through the *veil of the Virgin*!

**The Moon**, partaking as she does of the *highest* and the *lowest* and filling all the space between, is the most universal of the Planets.
"As the only middle-pillar path the spans the Abyss, the position of the High Priestess on the Tree of Life is unique. She links the ultimate Father of Kether to the Son of Tiphereth and, in doing so, joins the supernal triad to the rest of the Tree. ‘In this card,’ Crowley points out, ‘is the one link between the archetypal and formative worlds.’ The Abyss she traverses is, quite literally, the desert of the soul, and like the desert camel, she is the only vehicle capable of crossing that terrible wasteland."

The principal deities connected with this card are those who, by tradition, represent the lunar goddess, virgin priestess, huntress, and most importantly, the powers and mysteries of woman as the initiatrix. If you look carefully, you will see that her bow is actually a three-stringed harp “for she is a huntress, and hunts by enchantment.”

"This card is the textbook display of the graphic principles of synthetic projective geometry. The arms of the Priestess sweep upward, pulling and distorting the webbed network of space and light, forming the crescent bowl of a magnificent Moon-coloured cup. The pillars on either side of her are obscured by the diagonal webbing and somewhat difficult to see, but it is important to be conscious of their presence when meditating on the composition of the card."

- Understanding Aleister Crowley’s Thoth Tarot (Lon Milo DuQuette)
The **High Priestess** is the *initiatrix*. Initiation means “beginning”. The objects that appear at the bottom of the card are not *lunar symbols* per se. The **camel** is, of course, indicative of the Hebrew letter **Gimel** (*the Hebrew letter attributed to the High Priestess*), but the other objects, the **crystals** and **seeds**, are suggestive of the *hidden* and *mysterious secrets* of the *beginning of life*.

The time has come to **delve deeply** into the *recesses* of your Sacred **Self**, to take the *journey* of **Light** and **Knowledge** and connect with the **Truth** of your own **Chi**. The tools of **wisdom**, **intuition** and **manifestation** are yours!
The High Priestess as a Life-Time Personality Symbol

For those individuals whose birthday adds up to the number 2, the High Priestess represents their life-time spiritual symbol. These persons greatly value their independence and self-resourcefulness. They have a deep regard for balance and harmony and are unusual people to know in that they are equally as dynamic as they are receptive. They are very tenacious and are able, like the camel, to go long, barren distances but invariably, they find the oasis. They are very perceptive and can quickly assess what is working and what is not working. High Priestess people can immediately tell what is out of balance and can supply the creative solutions to bring situations, projects and people back into balance. Anyone with the High Priestess as a life-time symbol would be an excellent negotiator, consultant or diagnostician. Such persons would be highly gifted in arenas in which their visions, perceptions, and insights would apply.

The High Priestess as a Growth Symbol

Whenever one has the High Priestess as a Growth symbol, there is the beginning of a long, nine-to-ten year cycle that emphasizes the process of creative self-sufficiency and individuation. During a High Priestess year, one evaluates who one is and who one is not. It is a year in which there is need for balance and harmony, requiring trust in one’s own independence, self-resourcefulness, and perceptions.

Often during a High Priestess year, an individual will experience the emergence of a new identity. This year marks a period of independence during which one has little tolerance for being limited, restricted, or restrained. One may find that there is a need to be on one’s own or it may be that circumstances force one to be on one’s own. It is a year during which one could be drawn to water areas and have a deep need to remove oneself from disharmonious situations.
The High Priestess as an Outer Mirror

When one pulls this symbol or finds oneself continually drawn toward it, it represents that one is in a state of harmony and independence. The High Priestess within one is working easily and effortlessly. There is a sense of self-containment and self-trust. One’s perceptions are insightful and one trusts what it is that one sees internally and externally. There is a strong feeling of spiritual depth and resourcefulness.

The High Priestess as a Visual Affirmation and Meditative Symbol

The High Priestess is an excellent symbol to use as a visual affirmation to enhance self-trust, independence, and resourcefulness. This symbol, more than any other, reinforces the trusting of one’s intuition.

Sample Affirmations of The High Priestess

I deeply value and honor the human being that I am.

I am a very perceptive and intuitive human being.

I trust myself and value my sense of integrity.
Symbols that are facets of The High Priestess

The four twos in the deck are the High Priestess tools: the Two of Swords (peace of mind); the Two of Cups (love); the Two of Wands (dominion and balance); and the Two of Disks (expansive yet stable change). Intuition and its various ways of expressing itself are also pictured by the four twos: inspired things (Two of Swords); picking up on other persons’ feelings and moods or kinds of love expressed (Two of Cups); trusting the core of oneself (Two of Wands); and sensing information through the body (Two of Disks).

Lust/Strength (the number 11, which adds up to 2) is an example of the High Priestess being expressed externally. When we are in our strength or full lustre, we come across the High Priestess: strong, balanced, and lustrous. Lust/Strength is the capacity to trust oneself fully. It is the High Priestess within that provokes our demonstration of Strength and Radiance in the outer world.

The Aeon/Judgement symbol is another external representation of the High Priestess. The Aeon (the number 20 adds up to 2) represents our capacity in daily life to utilize good judgement by looking at things in holistic ways rather than getting caught or fixated in details or part of the whole. The High Priestess within us provokes us externally to look at the historical history of our experience (the Aeon) in our families and in our career. The Aeon is the High Priestess’s reminder that we can transform the critic within us to the fair witness if we are willing to trust the deepest core of who we are.
Gifts and Challenges of The High Priestess

**Gifts:**

The Two of Swords (*Peace*)
The Two of Cups (*Love*)
The Two of Wands (*Dominion*)
The Two of Disks (*Change*)
The Aeon (*Good Judgement*)
Lust/Strength
High Priestess (*Independence*)

**Challenges:**

To Trust Intuition
Transform Critic to Fair Witness

**Opposing Cards: some Possibilities**

The Magician  *acting consciously, thinking, the known and obvious*
Two of Wands   *acting boldly*
Seven of Wands *being aggressive*
Eight of Wands  *putting plans into action*

**Reinforcing Cards: some Possibilities**

The Hermit     *looking inward, withdrawing, seeking guidance*
Hanged Man     *suspending activity, waiting*
Four of Swords *resting quietly, contemplating*
Skills and Traits - facets of The High Priestess

- staying NONACTIVE -

withdrawing from involvement
no intervention of events
being receptive to influence
becoming calm
being passive
waiting patiently

- accessing the UNCONSCIOUS -

using your intuition
seeking guidance from within
trusting your inner voice
opening to dreams and the imagination
being aware of a larger reality
acknowledging the Shadow

- seeing the POTENTIAL -

understanding the possibilities
opening to what could be
seeing your hidden talents
allowing development
letting what there is flower
free flowing consciousness

- sensing the MYSTERY -

looking beyond the obvious
approaching a closed off area
opening to the unknown
remembering something important
sensing the secret and hidden
seeking what is concealed
World and Occupation

- Becoming One with the Self -

fruitfulness, the unknown, the clouded future, wisdom
seeing behind the façade, psychotherapeutic experiences
loss of interest in superficial pursuits, biological rhythms
getting to the source of a thing, looking deeper, cleansing
good judgement, taking time out, staying in the background
introversion, length of days, the seeker herself, healing
a woman of interest to the seeker, detoxification, rest
confronting what lies within, recuperative journeys
fasting, initiative, purging, catharsis, withdrawal, repose
action, privacy, seclusion, clandestine, change and transition
aloneness, practicality, transformation, mystery
sabbaticals, visions, past tense, intuitive understanding
spiritually inclined females, inner knowing, patience
avoidance of worldly people, discretion, reserve
subtlety, dreams, introverted women, contemplation
subliminal processes, imagination, mediumship, oracles
prophecy, secrets, memory, women of beauty, allure
virginal women, actresses, healers, dancers, sisters
daughters, lovers, mystique, entertainers, cosmetics
glamour, fashion, models, artists, musicians
necessary transgression, breaking taboos, passion

Bio-energetic

- Mechanics of Self -

curses, medication abuse, dietary problems, toxicity
emotional adjustment, poisoning, painful memories
psychosomatic disorders, menstrual problems

inherited traits, drug abuse, bereavement, bulimia
anorexia, psychic attack, unconscious temperament
bodily fluid, lymphatics, subtle nerves, ill will
Negative Path

- Straying from the Divine -

introversion, pessimism, hyper-sensitivity, laziness
loss of libido, hatred of hard work, inadequacy
apprehensiveness, systemic weakness, fatigue
trepidation, out of our depth, painful memories
incompetence, unclear communication, vacuity
reflection upon the past, depression, temptation
fatalism, abandonment, negative persons, fear
loneliness, weariness, loss of motivation, doubt
behind the scenes activity, dejection, unfulfillment
loss of power, ambivalence, uncanny experiences
confusion, compulsive attachment, helplessness
psychic attack, hostility, disreputable women
inadequate advice, gender dysphoria, addiction
promiscuity, sexual debauchery, lack of sense
seduction, vampirism, sexual disease, lunacy
obsession, superficial situation, bad judgement
conceit, poor intuition, hatred of males, resentment
false love, ignorance, psychic disorder, fantasy
criminal intent, vacillation, immorality, deception
Reversed

- Finding Solace in the Self -

inauthentic existence, neglecting personal needs refusal to acknowledge inner world, insensitivity inhibition or fatigue is overcome, lack of subtlety untapped powers, improved circumstances negative habits persist, intuitive skills remain undeveloped superficiality, warnings go unheeded, light, truth loss of a female friend or partner, banality, reversedness the unravelling of involved matters, little time to rest lighter moods, public rejoice, increased trust, difficulty no secret activities are involved, withdrawal ends loneliness passes, cessation of fear, no depth

(The reversal asks to strengthen the positive and release the negative. Any path will always lead to both being fulfilled)

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