

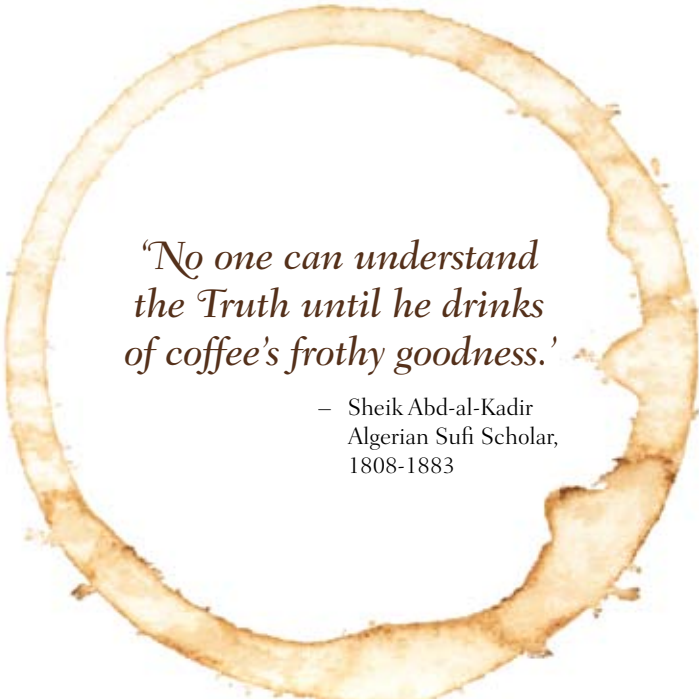
S T A C E Y D E M A R C O



the
Coffee Oracle



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*‘No one can understand
the Truth until he drinks
of coffee’s frothy goodness.’*

– Sheik Abd-al-Kadir
Algerian Sufi Scholar,
1808-1883

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worshipping
at the
temple of
COFFEE

I remember as a little girl how much I loved going over to my auntie's house for a coffee afternoon. My auntie was married to a man of Greek birth and all her raven-haired Hellenic sisters-in-law would sweep grandly into her small, bright kitchen laden with big baking trays of warm sesame-sprinkled, plaited biscuits and honey-soaked pistachio pastries.

For a pigtailed, Bondi beach girl of five or six, this was unspeakably exotic, and I would watch wide-eyed as my mother, my auntie and all the Greek sisters would begin to unpack the 'tools' for our afternoon sojourn.

Unpacked first would be the special coffee cups – not the usual clunky mugs or tea cups we had at our house, but ones that were a completely different shape and almost translucent. They had no handles, were much narrower and were patterned in turquoise, rose and gold.

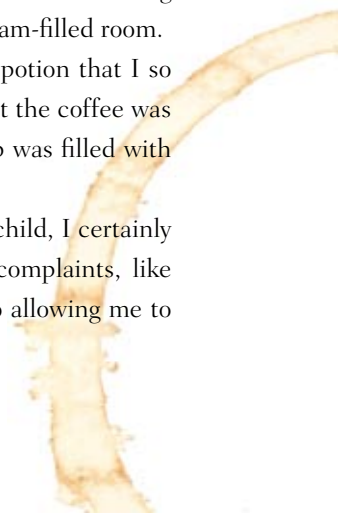
Then, out would come the gold foil bag of magic beans. I would always lean over and inhale the luminous brown, cowrie-shaped roasted beans, such was the hypnotic hold that smell had on me. Next, a wooden and steel coffee grinder would hit the table and lastly – unveiled with a flourish as a magician would a rabbit in a hat – the tall, brass engraved coffee pot.

I would watch as the women performed what seemed a complex choreographed dance, each movement linked by the promise of the black elixir that would eventually be poured, thick and glossy from the brass pot. The grinding, the measuring, and the boiling occurred time and time again until... a long pour was made into each cup, without a single drop spilled.

Then sugar was added. In fact, lashings of sugar were insisted upon. Then a whirling dervish of pastries, cakes and conversations began to fly across the steam-filled room.

As I was still a child, I wasn't permitted a taste of the rich, black potion that I so loved the aroma of. I could feast on all the sweet goodies I wanted, but the coffee was deemed "too strong for me". So I wouldn't feel too ostracised, my cup was filled with cola or dark grape juice so it would look like coffee.

I knew better of course and as I was, let's say politely, a persistent child, I certainly wasn't happy with this arrangement. After probably one too many complaints, like water wearing away stone, my mother was cajoled by the aunties into allowing me to drink hot milk with a teaspoon of the black coffee mixed in.



I was triumphant.

I loved ‘my’ coffee so much that my mother soon bought me my own coffee cup; a tiny china cup and saucer with a delicate floral pattern and a real gold rim. She told me that it was a coffee cup especially for little girls, (I now know it was an espresso cup!) and I was so proud to be able to join all the beautiful grown-up ladies in their special activity.

But the best was yet to come.

As the women around me drained their coffee, leaving scarlet lipstick marks on the rim, each in turn would go quiet for a small while, cradling the cup in both hands and allowing their eyes to hood. In one swift movement they would turn the cup upside down with a sharp click, let the dregs drain into the saucer, and then turn the cup a few times and then again, flip the cup the right way up.

All the energy would come back into their bodies like Christmas lights going on and all would gather around the cup in order to see what pictures the earthy grinds had made.

“Ooh, a visitor is coming...do you have that house of yours in order? Hahahah!”

“Ah! I see that you will travel soon. Maybe you can talk your husband into taking you to a tropical island rather than the caravan you slept in last year?”

“That new job of yours will be bringing in more money than you thought, hey?”

And sometimes more serious matters were raised and validated.

“Mmm...that decides it then. I will tell him what I think.”

“Another child on the way...I hope you are ready!”

“I know I need to put myself first for a change. I feel so trapped but I know this is the way forward.”

“Yes, change is coming. Good!”

Decades later, the memories of these afternoons are still vivid in my mind, yet two aspects have really stood out.

The first was the answer I got when I asked one of the aunties what they were doing when they peered into the coffee cups.

She pulled me onto her lap, her brown eyes meeting mine and said very seriously, “I am listening to my heart speak and to the sound of the God’s voice. Both make pictures for us to look at.”

And the second was how this revelation made me *feel*.

It made me feel powerful.

It made me feel secure.

And it made me feel very sure that she had told me the *truth*.

I realised that this was not a frightening or superstitious thing like the bogeyman or a monster. This wasn’t some trick or some coincidence instead this was advice from something big and wise! It was a truth, just as real as the fact that my dog had brown fur and that I had to unfortunately go to school on Monday. And I was really glad about this because I felt that I was connected to something that made things simpler, not more complex. Something that made them – and me – feel like they knew what to do if we felt worried or sad and also feel closer to each other. Listening to my own heart or to God’s made good sense, especially if it made me feel as calm and happy as I did in my auntie’s kitchen.

As a grown woman I still feel the same way, although naturally I have a lot more going on than the six year old ‘me’. Boy, it’s a lot harder to hold on to that calm and happy feeling!

However, I have learnt that divination or Oracle reading in some form enables me to quickly connect with my own deep Self and with the Divine. By engaging an Oracle, I know I am actively co-creating with ‘something bigger’ and getting clear about the next steps forward. I can cut through the fog of confusion, leap-frog over fear or plan my next fiscal quarter by side-stepping my rational conscious mind and choosing to listen to something bigger and wiser.

By consulting a really convenient Oracle, such as the one in your coffee cup, not only can you stay open and connected to your own intuition and creative powers more often but to the Divine as well...a very potent combination in this increasingly disconnected world.

Coffee connects us, stimulates and opens our minds and hearts for conversation of the inner and outer kind. As a busy businesswoman, author, and Witch (not necessarily in that order!), I have learned to weave a Coffee Oracle into my daily life. The form this normally takes – a visit to a café for a takeaway – is a decidedly modern yet ritualistic activity for me and has enriched my life both spiritually and materially. I am certain that it will do the same for you.

For those who don’t feel they have, or wish to have, a ‘spiritual’ bent, coffee can still be seen at the very least, as a reviver, a pick-me-up, an activity that gives a small breather in an ordinarily frantic day, or as a conversation starter. I invite you to put any preconceived ideas to the side and simply enter into consulting the Coffee Oracle with a sense of fun and discovery. Just like reading shapes in clouds or seeing pictures in the open fire, allow your imagination to run wild, relax and see what comes of it. You may be mightily surprised!

What I love about reading coffee is that you don't have to have an intense knowledge about coffee or any fancy equipment. You can consult the Oracle on the train on your way to work, at your office desk, in a busy cafe, or even tucked up in bed. Gone are the days where you have to know, as my aunts did, how to brew traditional, thick, Middle Eastern-style coffee to get a reliable reading. You don't even have to have a special cup, although funnily enough I'm still drinking out of small cups (espresso is my Oracle of choice!). Now, it can be as simple as popping in and paying a quick visit to your friendly neighbourhood barista.

I consider myself a very rational person and I normally take quite a bit of convincing to feel sure something doesn't just work for me but works consistently for others too. As such, I collect case studies and record methods to prove and ensure success. This book is the result of many years of practical experience, research, case studies and results that stretch well beyond what most people would term coincidence.

I would love you to treat my book as a coffee companion, a small, friendly guide that can easily be carried solo into your local café – or noisily shared with friends. See it as an instruction book that suggests rituals and paths to follow towards the better hearing of one's own heart's desires and perhaps a decoder of some of the harder puzzles that get in our way.

Above all, I hope that you never see your humble cup of coffee in quite the same way again.

So come join me for coffee, won't you?

