

LESSON 118

HERMIT

The Golden Dawn version of this trump at first glance appears to be the standard interpretation. However, looking closely at the card one will see the Hermit gazing to his right, while the lamp is held in the left hand. In comparison with other versions the lamp is usually held in the right hand, and up high so that he can see where he is going in the darkness. Here, he is stationary and the lamp position signifies one who is waiting or standing motionless with the lamp acting as a type of beacon.

Standing alone he shows us that he is there to help guide us in the right direction. It is paramount that we must go to him and not visa versa. It is obvious that he waits for us and is also prepared to make a long journey (on our behalf), once we go to him and seek guidance. In the chaotic vast expanse of the astral light the Hermit attracts seekers of wisdom through his light.

In terms of descent from Kether the Hermit is the matured Fool as the divine spark still exists for he both leads and follows. The staff he holds reminds us of the wand of the Kerux (the Temple Officer who holds both the lamp and wand and who is analogous to Mercury, which is exalted in Virgo, the sign associated to this card). In the O=O ritual it is described by the Hierophant: 'The Wand of the Kerux is the Beam of Light from the Hidden Wisdom, and his Lamp is an emblem of the ever burning Lamp of the Guardian of the Mysteries.' The reference to the ever burning lamp is very important and relates to the Rosicrucian mysteries that still as yet have not been revealed to us. (Note: for a more detailed study of this subject refer to the paper by Wynn Westcott, reprinted in the book 'The Magical Mason' and subsequent reference texts quoted). The Lamp itself is situated in the centre of the card and has six beams emanating from it. These relate to the Tiphareth centre that the path leads to. The open right hand on the top of his cowl relates to both Yod, the letter associated to this card, and also the symbol of both protection and blessings as well as the hand of power which shows it is of Divine origin.

The Hermit looks towards the knowledge that comes from the Tiphareth centre for once this is activated and some of the hidden mysteries are revealed followers will seek him out for guidance and counsel. His long beard shows earned wisdom while his cowl shows that he is himself part of that elusive mystery

that we seek. The rope he uses as a belt signifies a binding of ourselves to his counsel and guidance.

The hand on the cowl and his skin colour are the translucent Yellowish Green of the King Scale. The cowl is coloured in the complementary Red-Violet. The beard of the Hermit is also tinged with the complementary translucent Red-Violet of the King Scale. The six rays that come from the Lamp are the King scale Yellowish Green. The robe of the Hermit is in the Pale Green of the Queen Scale and the rope around his waist is in the complementary Red-Violet. The Sky is in the Lime Green of the Prince Scale and the ground is in the Greyish Yellow of the Princess Scale while the Staff and Lamp are coloured in the complementary Red-Violet (of the Princess Scale).

The title of this card is 'Magus of the Voice of Power, the prophet of the Eternal'. This refers to the old concept of the prophet, where he wandered about preaching the gospels (an example of this is St. John) under divine sanction. It can also be taken to mean the modern Magus who gives speeches and lectures, though the archetypal imagery of the old wise man remains with us. Alfred Douglas, in his excellent book on the Tarot, gives an example of the Hermit from the works of Carl Jung which I will quote here: 'Isolation by a secret results as a rule in animation of the psychic atmosphere, as a substitute for loss of contact with other people. It causes an activation of the unconscious and this produces something similar to the illusions and hallucinations that beset lonely wanderers in the desert, seafarers and saints... As a substitute for the normal animation of the environment an illusory reality rises up in which weird ghostly shadows flit about in place of people.'

Apart from the observations of Jung, as quoted above, there are other major psychological considerations to consider as well. In the case of the Hermit we see evolvment through adaptability. It concerns us with self-reflection gained through a practical effort. In many ways this reminds one of the ancient Taoist sages of China who while in retreat studied the elements and combined their usage with both the macrocosm and microcosm, often going into extraordinary detail. The Hermit works on much the same dimension, for in his state of separation from the mainstream of the world he has had a chance to associate himself with the elements and their interactions through the various seasons. This requires quite an indepth analysis of the self and is a form of extreme but gradual self-examination. He must work these things out for himself and find the path that best suits his one personal vibration, which requires a complete reorientation of thought and action.

The alchemical aspect of this card initially focusses on the

lamp the Hermit holds. For this embodies the principles of the hidden aspect of alchemy, the Animus Mundi, which implies the hidden process (also Azoth applies here as well). Khunrath says: 'Azoth, our stone, reduces bodies to the first matter and reunites them with the universal form (hidden virtue), crystallizes it, and advances it to gems, many pearls artificially it concretes into one. Metal also as myself have seen. It frees animals from diseases and preserves them in the strength of its virtue. (Like all Philosophers Stones) It refreshes vegetables as though nearly dead will revive them. Fermentation with specific essences of simples and methodically applied in a fitting lamp, its enduring water lightened by Art burns perpetually. It expels and drives away evil spirits from the possessed - wherefore not?'. It goes on to say, 'The stone here said accurately to be fermented with its own metal, for is not light the true aurific seed, not the common light, but that which the first rotary wheel of life becomes efficient. So in fact the Hermit is a symbol of a healer by virtue of the lamp he holds and its marvelous regenerative process, which is an aspect of fermentation in which the divine spirit (Azoth or Animus Mundi) is allowed to surpass to ordinary limitation - releasing the intuitive process.

The number associated to the Hermit is 9, of this Westcott says. 'The Ennead is the first square of an odd number. It was said to be like the Ocean flowing around the other numbers within the Decad; no further elementary number is possible, hence it is like the Horizon because all the numbers are bound by it.'

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## DIVINATION

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

The Hermit in this position shows a person operating unto the psychological profile explained above. An adaptable person, able to make gains, or, evolve through his or her adaptability. One reflects on past experience and acts accordingly to prevent past mistakes repeating themselves. The self is consciously (and not necessarily physically) separated from the 'mainstream' for self-examination and to find the path true to oneself. Thus, reorientation is the key impetus for the Hermit for some, and enlightenment for others, either on a mundane level (realization of a situation, or an answer to a problem), or a more religious level. The Hermit shows that although one has achieved a goal, a new beginning has already been made. It is as if one is caught

in a strong current of a vast ocean.

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:

Here the Hermit shows an emphasis on quality of possession rather than quantity. In time all will understand that the only true thing of value is human life and the advancement of their souls, thus he who has everything stands shining his beacon to show the way to others. In material matters one should not expect good fortune with the Hermit here for he is one who relinquishes material possessions and emotional ties. What one possesses is an inborn knowledge that must be developed. The Hermit represents a guide or teacher, someone who has reached adeptness. Value is placed on health and this may be an area in which you find yourself working. For some possessions are retained but a person may find himself alone with them.

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

One comes up against someone with high critical and analytical abilities whom you can learn from. Everyday affairs are handled with efficiency and there is a clarity in communication. Any journey is long and one can expect to travel somewhere whether it be in the mind or physically. This card refers to religious or esoteric education rather than the conventional. Communication in any form will be sent rather than received and this will be to far distant places. In affairs relating to the family, the Hermit shows isolation - self-imposed separation from family, neighbours, relations, friends etc. One prepares for a long journey, sets a goal, makes a resolution. This card is good under matters of study or learning of any kind. However one must walk alone.

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 here for the Hermit is to improve oneself, to build a strong foundation in order to pave the way ahead. A new direction in life is to be taken; one must look ahead, never

back. Through divination, directions are sought. By applying divinative knowledge to human psychology one can predict future actions. Visions of the future come and go. On material matters the Hermit shows timely, precise actions. However there is a loss (generally voluntary but sometimes unwillingly) of real estate and/or family. This is because importance is placed on property or people which symbolise an emotional tie, yet it is the image of the Hermit, to travel alone. Nevertheless attention is paid to the health and spiritual growth of family members.

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

Under the above matters the Hermit is fortuitous for creativity of Selfhood, the innovator. The love he represents is a universal one not a personal one, showing that a person is willing to sacrifice their own happiness for the happiness of another. Activities undertaken are solitary and there is little value or concern for time wastings activities such as sports, games and other forms of recreation. This card does not depict a paternal interest in children nor does it show association with children, however he is sometimes represented as a teacher of guiding influence for children. In matters of love attachments are relinquished so that one can continue in ones chosen direction. Any attachment can be inhibiting.

ON MATTERS OF sickness; employment; employees; relationships within the work environment; conflicts; service; ones sense of service; the acquiring of skills; psychology:

Being in tune with ones environment is the main impetus for the Hermit in this position. He represents those who are ritualistic in their approach to the above matters, hard but fair, and have organisational abilities. Relationships are like unto a teacher to a pupil, or a guide to a follower. Generally self-employed, but excel in whatever they undertake, applying themselves with dedication and exactness. On a larger scale a country, company, government or local body, etc, take their own path, relinquishing any affiliations that may stand in their way, but ready to show their way to others if they wish to follow.

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:

This is an inappropriate position for the Hermit, as he shows one who usually ends up alone, and in matters of business a person will stand alone. Adversaries have abandoned any intent in your direction and known enemies become few in numbers. Partnerships, marital or otherwise, should not be formed when receiving the Hermit here so be cautious and discerning. In terms of Karma one has shed old karma and is now making new karma. Any social contact is made only with those of like mind, like interests, and of, or near ones social status (material or spiritual). This is not due to snobbery, however, it is more a case of necessity. If married, one partner may go away on his/her own, physically or mentally for a while.

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:

To give up old values and conditioning is the key impetus for the Hermit under the above matters. One begins to identify with the universal will. On a lesser scale, sexual energies are channelled into ones work or spiritual aspirations. This card does not bode good fortune for partnerships except in accord with ones own divine destiny. Disagreements arise over monetary matters, legacies become lengthy disputes, separation. Projects are completed. In crime and retribution, possible imprisonment or solitary confinement is indicated. There may be an illness that isolates you. This is not a card for good financial affairs. There may be a death and only one is left to go alone, or there may be a spiritual division where one walks the Path alone.

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:

Looking for inspired wisdom is the key impetus here. Guidance or counsel is available if you really want it and are prepared to listen, but you will only seek counsel come if it is absolutely needed - a last choice. The Hermit in this position shows that someone or something acts as a tool to guide us into the light, though what attracts us is the light and not the tool. The Hermit here is fortunate for serious study and a time of learning. It shows that directions taken are proven paths of which others have successfully trodden. A study of nations or races and the workings of minds is predominant. Viewpoints are down-to-earth, social and religious concepts are held strongly. There will be a long journey before one finds what one is looking

for, (life's journey!)

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

Here the Hermit represents someone who has ascended to the top of their field, who looks on to those following, offering guidance and inspiration. On a negative side, a person or nation has gone too far in its bid for power and stands out alone. However if there is foresight of what is ahead, appropriate measures are taken to avoid isolation. Careers are self made. This card shows work in the clergy or some form of religious/spiritual manner. In ones own field of expertise one does well, however if you attempt anything outside your field there will be disappointment.

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:

Here the Hermit shows an awareness, of the Self and the people. There is an ability to politically manipulate the masses through understanding what motivates them. Governments, political parties or politicians go their own way contrary to what is required by the population. Friendships are few and this card shows someone who is not by nature a friendly individual but is very discriminative towards involvement with groups. However once committed, there is loyalty. One must have a cause, goals are achieved gradually and the key impetus is in a purpose. Here the impetus is to serve humanity, but first one must fortify the soul.

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:

A time to be born, a time to love, a time to learn, and a time to die, each in his or her own time. This is the lesson the Hermit brings in this position. The meeting of ones own destiny. It shows someone inwardly striving for perfection which leads to self-discrimination and at times feelings of inadequacy. Negative thinking can be your downfall. This card shows isolation, self confinement through ones thought patterns which result in freedom from imprisonment of the mind. Physically it shows a release, for

he is a wanderer, but a wanderer with a purpose.

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MEDITATION ON THE HERMIT:

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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