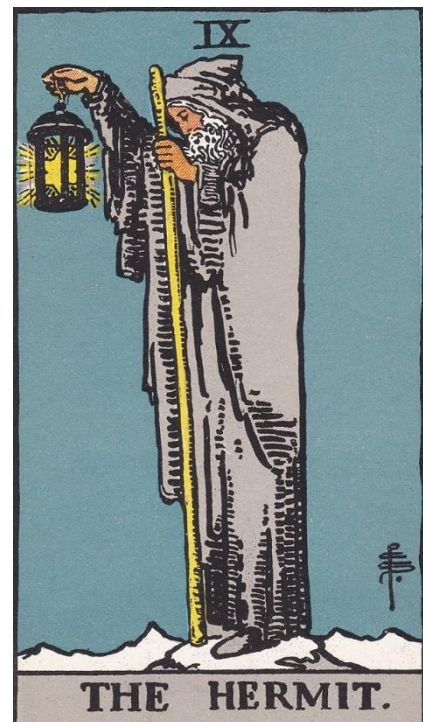


Practice - Newsletter - September 2022

Topic of the month

How the hermit leads us out of addiction and inner distress



For a few months now, my monthly newsletter has featured the "Theme of the Month" and the "Symbol Card of the Month." This month I am merging the two sections and looking at the theme of "addiction" from the perspective of the Rider-Waite Tarot card, The Hermit, which corresponds with the astrological sign of Virgo, which is primarily operative in September. I do this not out of some strange delight in fortune-telling, fair-ground hauntings and hocus-pocus, but out of the conviction that we can better understand life with the help of ancient, cross-cultural archetypes and symbols, as Carl Gustav Jung and many other eminent psychotherapists, on whom I base my work, have taught. This text is worth reading even for those who do not consider themselves "addicts." Addiction is just the tip of an iceberg on which we all float.

September, with Virgo as the dominant sign of the zodiac, offers us an opportunity to withdraw from the outer world and activate the unconscious psyche. The star in the Hermit's lantern points both up and down, inward and outward at the same time. As the alchemists have already explained to us, the downward triangle in the star points to the waters of the unconscious and the upward fire triangle points to a teacher, helper, therapist or spiritual guide who can assist us on this journey through the waters of the unconscious. In this way, the feminine and masculine elements of our psyche can come together and the two triangles can come together to form the Star of David. The ancient scriptures tell us that the Christ came from the House of David. The Christ represents an attainable state of consciousness in the realm of the human psyche where the human and the divine come together and form a unity again (the Son of Man and the Son of God in unity). The hermit is the Western version of the yoga ascetic, who withdraws from the everyday concerns of the world and makes religion, the return to God (Latin: "re-ligare" = "reconnection"), as an alternative to the theoretical theology of the official churches, tangible and experienceable.

Like the Eastern ascetics, the European hermits were often venerated by people as saints. However, these saints never turned their backs on humanity; they provided lodging for travelers and gave them their blessings when needed and desired. In the Grail legends we find knights who are helped by hermits in their spiritual quest. Carl Gustav Jung and his followers have described many dreams of patients in which old, wise men appeared as archetypal symbols and eremite teachers. They then bring a certain masculine quality of higher wisdom. Female guides also appear as archetypal symbols, pointing dreamers to certain feminine qualities. Dreamers who had or have a spiritual teacher, a guru, in the physical body usually develop a dream imago that provides guidance in the form of that spiritual teacher, even if that person has long since left the physical body. Only by regularly withdrawing from the outer world, preferably as a daily ritual of contemplation, prayer, meditation, can we awaken our inner self.

In doing so, it is important that we face our fears, anxieties and uncomfortable feelings. At a time when the external world offers so many opportunities for most of us to flee from our own feelings, fears, anxieties, doubts, etc., this is all the more important. The whole arsenal of addictions and bad habits lines up here. Anything we do out of an unpleasant feeling quickly ceases to be a pleasure and becomes an obstructive habit or even an escape that easily becomes an addiction. Thus, escape becomes a search in the wrong place, giving more power to something outside of us than to our inner resources that could bring salvation. What does this mean in concrete terms? It means that we can enjoy a cigarette or a glass of alcohol in moderation or misuse it to escape from an unpleasant feeling or self-insecurity. It means that we can watch porn to have a little extra fun with our bedfellows, or watch it in solitude and secret in our closet to escape our loneliness, insecurity, and other unpleasant feelings, and then build it into an addiction that becomes harder and harder to get away from the longer we cultivate the behavior. Addiction to ever new bedfellows and ever more daring sexual practices is another game in this area, commonly called "sex addiction." It means that we can pursue sports out of a zest for life and a natural urge to move, or become a rushed adrenaline junkie who needs ever stronger athletic stimuli to feel anything at all. It manifests itself as a dependence on media imagery and information overload; we now have numerous contemporaries who no longer use social media and other areas of information technology to facilitate interpersonal communication, but instead literally merge their brains with the digital world and can no longer live without a regular glance at the Telegram or WhatsApp channel, Instagram or Facebook account, or other monstrosities of our time, feeling empty and cut off from the world and unable to communicate in a balanced way. It can also mean that we develop an eating disorder and starve/eat ourselves to death to conform to an illusory self-image and/or become addicted to our body's opiate-like releases activated by our brain's reward center as a result of overeating or fasting (anorexia). One variation of this is bulimia (binge eating/vomiting). It can mean that we abuse substances that nature has produced for careful use in pain or for controlled use in shamanic rituals - that is, all plants as well as their man-made derivatives that produce a psychedelic, analgesic and/or intoxicating effect - to escape "from ourselves" and fall into a strong dependency that can only be broken by the psychological essence of the hermit.

This essence is first of all abstinence from the external value, withdrawal from the behavior on the external level, i.e. physical withdrawal, no cigarettes, no alcohol, no other drugs, no porn, no changing sexual partners, three proper meals a day and no more binge eating. The dangers in these withdrawal procedures are often so great that a clinical setting is needed for them. In many substance-related addictions, the addictive substance is withdrawn "cold turkey" before something else can take its place. As one can imagine, this is often a roller coaster ride through hell for those affected. But even with a porn, sex or relationship addiction, the abstinence phase can be very uncomfortable and even lead to physical withdrawal symptoms. Particularly delicate are often the physical processes to which patients are exposed on their way out of the eating disorder; this usually only works with close medical supervision.

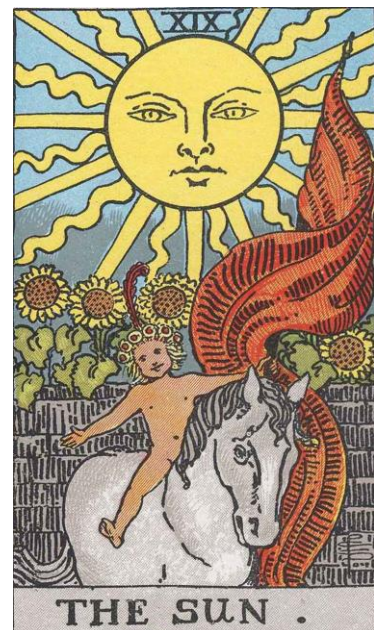
In this phase, the hermit shows himself at his cold, lonely peak. He has left the world of the senses and enters the mind. Of course, this rigid, frosty image is an illusion, since in reality

the spiritual world is rich in symbols and filled with joy, light and love. But before we can comprehend and experience this, we must first experience spirit as a silent and sobering alternative to the noisy world of the physical senses that harasses/offends the spirit. Shamanic candidates of all times and cultures went into the wilderness/desert to seek their spiritual guides and defeat their demons before learning to heal. Even the Bible tells of the shaman/yoga ascetic Jesus of Nazareth and his time in the desert. This does not have to be an actual desert landscape; it can also be a paraphrase of an inner process that a seeker/addict goes through.

The techniques of meditation, various magical practices and (psycho) analysis give the unconscious, the hidden parts of our psyche, an opportunity to speak to us. For we, as addicts, are faced with the task of replacing the addictive, fleeing behavior with patterns of thinking, feeling and finally behaving that do not harass, insult, humiliate, numb and kill our spirit, but allow it to shine and radiate in all its beauty and splendor. To do this, we must understand what we were trying to run away from, to do this we must learn to endure the unpleasant feelings without numbing them, must feel them physically, and then we may experience that "out of me" means "through me," that is, to endure feelings, to release identification, and to let feelings subside, to experience that they don't kill me, these feelings, that I can endure them, that I can find a way to become permeable and show the trauma energy a way through me (if it is trauma that plays a causal role, which is often the case).

First of all, we are on our own in this, even if we have doctors, therapists and loved ones around us, we walk the path alone, supported and warmed only by our stiff, gray cloak of contemplation, as the image of the hermit shows us. But the hermit holds up the light for us, ready to guide us on our path, which, after all, leads into the unknown. Addiction creates an eight-lane highway in our brain, it is easy to find it again and again and follow it. The hermit leads us away from this highway into the wilderness, onto our very own individual path; Jung always spoke of "individuation." Until this becomes a new "Way Of Life", a new, eight-lane highway, but this time under OUR management alone, we have to walk the path very often, to practice our new way of thinking, feeling and acting very often. We often keep in mind how long it took to establish the old, self-damaging behavior. If you read carefully, you will have noticed the many "must's/have to's" that I use. Of course, first, we don't have to do anything. I use the verbs "must/have to" to outline a necessity on the way to the desired result. But of course, we don't have to go this way.

Where does the hermit lead us? In the favorable case, the path leads to rebirth in the eternal part of the Self, which is to be found beyond the ego-personality. Those who go even further can experience themselves as a free child riding out of the garden of past experiences in the bright sunshine. With this, the hermit is not yet fully interpreted, but it should suffice for a monthly newsletter. For further details I refer to Rachel Pollack's standard work "Tarot - 78 Steps of Wisdom", whose interpretations I have followed in this newsletter in large parts and from which I have been inspired to my own reflections.



Dates, important and news:

- Our last in-person seminar last weekend on the topic of "Developing Intuition" touched us all very much. In a familiar atmosphere we have dived into the waters of the unconscious and experienced and marveled at the information that is actually accessible to us when we trust our intuition and our sensitive perceptions. If you would like to join us next year, you can already register for the next cycle of the **annual training "Life Success through Applied Spirituality"**.

- **Elke's next online meditation** will take place on Friday, 02.09.2022: Start at 20.00h - duration 45 minutes - 1 hour. There is a fee for this meditation (17,00 €). For more information and registration [click here](#)
- **Preview: October 05, 2022: Elke Tegel:** "Causes of cancer from a holistic perspective": By popular demand, Elke offers another lecture. In this lecture she will speak from her more than 14 years of experience in alternative-medical and holistic work with the disease cancer. After a short talk there will be time for general questions. For more information and to register [click here](#)
- **Preview: 05.10.2022: Elke Tegel:** Fall Seminar, 5 evenings: "Coming into your physical and mental strength": Every human being experiences times when one's inner strength is put to the test. Learn techniques, methods and healing herbs that can help you to master personal crises. For more information and to register [click here](#)

I wish you a good and insightful time on the mountain top, in the wilderness, in the desert, on the beach, at the lake or wherever you may spend time this September to let the hermit lead you into the new and unknown.

Yours Joerg Schuber



Bildnachweise:

1. <https://pixabay.com/de/photos/freiheit-himmel-h%3a4nde-handschellen-1886402/>
2. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4d/RWS_Tarot_09_Hermit.jpg
3. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sun_%2BTarot_card%29#/media/File:RWS_Tarot_19_Sun.jpg
4. Jörg Schuber: private