



Ancient Mystic Rites

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THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE OCCULTIST

The student of occultism, therefore, learns to awaken and train for scientific use the powers latent within him, and by their means he is able to see far more of the real meaning of life than the man whose vision is limited by the physical senses. He learns that each man is in essence divine, a veritable spark of God's fire, gradually evolving towards a future of glory and splendor culminating in union with God; that the method of his progress is by successive descents into earthly bodies for the sake of experience, and withdrawals into worlds or planes which are invisible to physical eyes. He finds that this progress is governed by a law of eternal justice, which renders to each man the fruit of that which he sows, joy for good and suffering for evil.

He learns, too, that the world is ruled, under the will of T. M. H., by a Brotherhood of Adepts, who have Themselves attained divine union, but remain on earth to guide humanity; that all the great religions of the world were founded by Them, according to the needs of the races for which they were intended, and that within these religions there have been schools of the Mysteries to offer to those who are ready a swifter path of unfoldment, with greater knowledge and opportunities for service; that this Path is divided into steps and degrees: the probationary Path, or the Lower Mysteries, wherein the candidates are prepared for discipleship, and the Path proper, or the Greater Mysteries, in which are conferred within the Great White Lodge itself five great Initiations, which lead the disciple from the life of earth to the life of adeptship in God, to become 'a living flame,' as it is said, "for the lighting of the world." He is taught that God, both in the universe and in man, shows Himself as a Trinity of Wisdom, Strength and Beauty, and that these Three Aspects are represented in the Great White Lodge in the Persons of its three chief Officers, through whom the mighty power of God descends to men.

THE OCCULT RECORDS

It will be seen that this occult knowledge depends no more upon the study of books and records than do the experiences of the mystics; both belong to a higher order of consciousness, the existence of which cannot be

satisfactorily demonstrated on the physical plane. Nevertheless, the study of the physical-plane records of the past is of value in confirming the historical researches of the trained occultist, who is able to read what are sometimes called the akashic records, and so to acquire an accurate knowledge of the past. This subject is so little understood that it may perhaps be useful if at this point I quote somewhat at length from a book entitled Clairvoyance which I wrote many years ago: On the mental plane (the records) have two widely different aspects. When the visitor to that plane is not thinking specially of them in any way, these records simply form a background to whatever is going on, just as the reflections in a pier-glass at the end of a room might form a background to the life of the people in it. It must always be borne in mind that under these conditions they are really merely reflections from the ceaseless activity of a great Consciousness upon a far higher plane. . . . But if the trained investigator turns his attention specially to any one scene, or wishes to call it up before him, an extraordinary change at once takes place, for this is the plane of thought, and to think of anything is to bring it instantaneously before you. For example, if a man wills to see the record of the landing of Julius Caesar in England, he finds himself in a moment...standing, on the shore among the legionaries, with the whole scene being enacted around him, precisely in every respect as he would have seen it if he had stood there in the flesh on that autumn morning in the year 55 B.C. Since what he sees is but a reflection, the actors are of course entirely unconscious of him, nor can any effort of his change the course of their action in the smallest degree, except only that he can control the rate at which the drama shall pass before him--can have the events of a whole year rehearsed before his eyes in a single hour, or can at any moment stop the movement altogether, and hold any particular scene in view as a picture as long as he chooses.

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Everyone in Egypt knew that there were Mysteries, and practically everyone knew that they were largely concerned with the life after death and the preparation for it. This teaching was, however, given to the initiates of the Mysteries under solemn and binding pledges of secrecy; and the results of certain lines of action in the world after death were shown in elaborate detail. The essential outline of this secret instruction was embodied in the rituals of Initiation, Passing, and Raising, and it is these rituals which have in part descended to us in the ceremonies of Freemasonry, which are still protected by oaths of secrecy as in the old days.

Every great nation has had its Mysteries, through which the great Teachers of mankind sought to instruct the people in matters of importance, inspired by the Great White Lodge which stands behind all religions alike. Among these the Egyptian Mysteries were pre-eminent among the western peoples of the ancient world, not only because of their immemorial age, but because of the fact that Egypt was one of the auxiliary centers of the White Lodge. The Great White Brotherhood has its headquarters in Central Asia, but it has at various times and for various purposes maintained subsidiary Lodges in different parts of the world.

The presence of this secret centre belonging to the White Brotherhood had much to do with Egypt's greatness throughout the ages; although the fact of its existence was not known to the outer world, that Lodge of the true Mysteries supervised the whole scheme of Egyptian initiation, and made it the prototype of the Mysteries of all the nations around. Egypt was thus the centre of spiritual illumination for the entire western world, and all those who sought the Great Initiations were attracted to it; and it is this fact which explains the reverence paid to the Egyptian Mysteries by learned Greeks in later times, The principal centre for the public work of these Mysteries was the great pyramid, called in ancient Egypt Khut, "The Light". It was built on the most exact astronomical and mathematical calculations, and provided a veritable key in stone to the enigmas of the universe.

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. . . These three were all high Initiates of the Great White Brotherhood, and the Pharaoh possessed an even higher level of power than is usually given in the 330 it being that of a Crowned and Anointed Sovereign.

The Brn. of this high Order may be said to have passed on from a conception of the divine justice to the certainty of knowledge and the fullness of the divine glory in the Hidden Light. The 330 links the Sovereign Grand Inspector-

General with the Spiritual King of the World Himself--that Mighty Adept who stands at the head of the Great White Lodge, and in whose strong hands lie the destinies of earth-- and awakens the powers of the triple spirit as far as these can as yet be awakened. The actual conferring of the degree was and is a very splendid experience when seen with the inner sight: for the Hierophant of the Mysteries (who in these modern days is the H.O.A.T. E), stands above or beside the Initiator in that extension of His consciousness which is called the Angel of the Presence. If the recipient of the degree happens to be already an Initiate the Star (called in Egypt the Star of Horus) which marks the approval of the One Initiator once more flames out above him in all its glory; while in any case the two great white Angels of the rite flash down in splendor from the heavenly places, showing themselves as low as the etheric level that they may give their blessing to the candidate.

The Hierophant makes the actual links both with himself and with the reservoir of power set apart for the work of the Masonic Brotherhood, and through himself with that Mighty King whose representative He is, while the great white Angels of the Order remain as the guardians of the Bro. throughout life. He on the right hand has an aura of brilliant white light shot with gold, and represents Osiris, the sun and life, the positive aspect of the Deity; she on the left has an aura of similar light, veined with silver, and represents Isis, the moon and truth, the negative or feminine aspect of the divine glory. Their power is stern and splendid; and they give strength to act with decision, accuracy, courage and perseverance on the physical plane. They belong to the cosmic orders of Angels, those who are common to other solar systems besides our own, and their permanent centers of consciousness are on the intuitional plane, although their forms may always be seen hovering over the head of the initiate of this degree at the higher mental level. It is to be remembered that there is in reality no sex among these great Angels, yet one of them is preponderatingly masculine in appearance, and the other preponderatingly feminine.

When they think fit, they materialize themselves mentally and astrally--as at the greater ceremonies in Lodge--and they are always ready to give their blessing whenever it is invoked. They are inseparably one with the Sovereign Grand Inspector-General, linked to his higher self, never to desert him unless by unworthiness he first deserts them and casts them off. The symbols of the sun and moon are seen today on the gauntlets of the Sovereign Grand Inspector-General, and they are intended to refer to these great Angelic powers in the inner worlds.

The powers associated with the 330 appear to have been slightly modified since those ancient Egyptian times. The great white Angels seemed to be sterner and more rhadamanthine in ancient Egypt; to-day those who belong to the degree are in some ways gentler, though their power is no less splendid. This stage combined the wonderful love of Horns the Son with the ineffable life and strength of Osiris the divine Father, and Isis, the eternal Mother of the world; and this union of love with strength is still its most prominent characteristic.

It confers upon those who open themselves to its influence power similar to and only a little way below that of the first great Initiation, and those who enter the 330 should assuredly qualify themselves for that step before very long. Indeed, in the great days of the Mysteries this stage was accessible only to Initiates, and one feels that it ought only to be given to such now, just as it would seem appropriate that the marvellous gift of the episcopate should be conferred only upon members of the Great White Brotherhood. The power of the degree when in operation shows itself in an aura of dazzling white and gold, enfolding within it the rose and blue of Rose-Croix and K.H.; and in it also is manifested that peculiar shade of electric blue which is the especial sign of the presence of the King. The Sovereign Grand Inspector-General is the "Bishop" of Masonry, and if the life of the degree is really lived he should be an ever-radiating centre of power, a veritable sun of light and life and glory wherever he goes.

Such was the highest and holiest of the sacramental powers conferred in the Mysteries of ancient Egypt, such the highest degree known to us in Masonry to-day, bestowed in its fullness upon but very few. The opportunity to draw down its sublime glory is offered to all who receive the degree; how far it is taken and what use is made of the power is in the hands of the Bro. alone, for to use the power as it should be used needs high spiritual development and a life: of constant humility, watchfulness and service. If he calls upon it for the service of others, it will flow through him mightily and sweetly for the helping of the world. If he neglects the power, it will remain dormant and the links unused--and Those behind will turn Their glance away from him to others more worthy. The power of the 330 is a veritable ocean of glory and strength and sweetness, for it is the power of the King Himself, the Lord who reigns on earth as Vice-Gerent of the Logos from eternity unto eternity.

THE STAGES OF THE: OCCULT PATH

Behind the whole splendid scheme of the Egyptian Mysteries the Lodge of the Great White Brotherhood in that country ever stood in silence and secrecy, guarding them and using them as a channel of the Hidden Light--its very existence being unknown to all who remained outside the inner circles, The Brotherhood selected for initiation into its ranks only those who had fulfilled the ancient conditions imposed upon all candidates for that high degree, the qualifications for which were laid down in Part I of the manual of occult instruction now called Light on the Path, which represents the teaching of the Egyptian Lodge. Candidates were therefore generally chosen from among the Brn. who had received the higher instruction, and had prepared themselves by many years of meditation, study and service. Still, it sometimes happened that one might be chosen for Initiation who had not passed through the outer steps of the Mysteries, but in previous lives had prepared himself for it--for it is the ego who is initiated, not the mere personality of the lower planes.

There have always been five great Initiations, which in Christian teaching have been illustrated by stages in the life of the Christ as related in the Gospels, which contain elements derived from the teachings of the Egyptian Mysteries. The disciple Jesus was an initiate of the Egyptian Lodge, and therefore much of the Egyptian symbolism was adopted by His followers, and was later woven into the Gospel story. In The Masters and the Path I have given an account of certain of the ceremonies of Initiation used in the Great White Brotherhood at the present day. The Egyptian rituals were in some respects slightly different from these in form, although their essence was identically the same; for the Egyptian Lodge possessed the tradition handed down from the initiates of Atlantis, which was somewhat modified in later days, to suit the needs of the slowly-evolving humanity of the Aryan Race.

P. 63-4 The Jewish Mysteries

THE JEWISH LINE OF DESCENT

ALTHOUGH our modern Freemasonic rites and symbols are derived from Egypt, as has been shown in The Hidden Life in Freemasonry, they have reached us for the most part through the Jews. The tradition which has most influenced our modern Masonry is that of the Jewish Mysteries, so the greater part of our ceremonies and s...s are now cast in a Jewish form.

In The Hidden Life in Freemasonry, it has been explained that many of the traditions preserved in the Old Testament have a basis in fact, although the actual events of Jewish history were magnified and distorted through the lens of an almost fanatical patriotism by the later compilers of the records. The Jewish scriptures as we have them today were almost entirely rewritten after the return from the captivity; and the priestly writers who did this work transfigured in a glow of enthusiastic romance the poetic traditions of their nation.

THE JEWISH MIGRATIONS

The Jewish race is an offshoot of that Semitic people who formed the fifth sub-race of the Atlantean root-race. Some four thousand years before the great cataclysm of 75,025 B.C., which overwhelmed the first Atlantean empire of Egypt, the Manu had led His especial followers into the uplands of Arabia in order that they might be separated t`rom the bulk of the Atlanteans, and that a new type might be evolved from them which would later be developed into the Aryan root-race. Strict injunctions were given by the Manu that there was to be no intermarriage with neighboring races, so that the purity of the new stock might be maintained; and the idea of these men that they were a "chosen people" was fostered to that end. Shortly before the cataclysm some seven hundred of the best and most promising of

these people were led into Central Asia by the Manu, and they grew there after many thousands of years into a great nation, the nucleus of the Aryan race that was later to rule the world,

About 40,000 B.C. the Manu led out the second sub-race of the new root-race to colonize Arabia once more, since the Semites who had been left behind were the closest of the Atlantean peoples to the new stock. Arabia became a great Aryan kingdom, excepting only a certain section of those inhabiting the southern part of the peninsula, who declined to recognize the Manu or to intermarry with His people, quoting His own regulation against Him in defense of their refusal. Later this tract of country was conquered by the Aryans. and a fanatical section of its inhabitants forsook their homes, and settled on the opposite coast of the Red Sea in what we now call Somaliland. Here they lived for several centuries, but in consequence of an attempt on the part of the majority to intermarry with the negroes of the interior, a fairly large minority of them withdrew from the community, and, after many wanderings, found themselves in Egyptian territory. The Pharaoh of the period, interested in their story, offered them an outlying district of his kingdom if they chose to settle there. Eventually some Pharaoh made a demand upon them for additional taxation and forced work which they considered an infringement of their privileges; and they once more undertook a wholesale migration under the leadership of him whom we now call Moses, and after further wanderings settled in Palestine, where they were known as the Jews, still strongly maintaining that they were a chosen people.

During their sojourn in Egypt certain of them had been initiated into some of the degrees of the Egyptian Mysteries. Moses, as was said much later, 'was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'.

P. 93 THE MAGIC OF THE GREATER MYSTERIES

In the Eleusinian Mysteries the initiates were brought into close communion with the Deity through specially consecrated food and drink. Cups of highly-magnetized water were given to them, and consecrated cakes were eaten during the ceremonies of initiation. S. Clement of Alexandria gives us the formula or pass-word of the Eleusinian Mysteries, which some have taken to refer to this sacrament: I fasted; I drank the draught; I took from the chest; having tasted, I placed in the basket, and from the basket into the chest.". In many religions we find a similar method of conveying the divine blessing to the people.

The Hallows (Hiera) already mentioned were physical objects extremely highly magnetized, through which much of the magical side of the Mysteries was performed. They were the personal property of the priestly family of the Eumolpidae, being handed down from generation to generation; and their solemn exposition and the explanation of the symbolical teaching connected with them was one of the features of the Eleusinian ritual.

One of these was the caduceus, the rod of power, surrounded by the twisting serpents and surmounted by the pine-cone. It was the same as the thyrsus; and was said to be hollow and to be filled with Fire.

P. 167 THE PRESERVATION OF THE TEMPLARS' TRADITION

The destruction of the Order of the Temple did not, however, involve a complete suppression of the teaching enshrined within it. Certain of the French Knights Templars took refuge with their brethren of the Temple in Scotland, and in that country their traditions became mingled to some extent with the ancient Celtic rites of Heredom, thus forming one of the sources from which the Scottish Rite was later to be evolved. Traditions of vengeance upon the execrable King and Pope and the Traitor passed down throughout the ages, and were interwoven with the Egyptian tradition corresponding to our Black Masonry, culminating in what we now call the 300.

It is not difficult to see how such a confusion might arise, especially among those who did not fully understand the inner meaning of the Egyptian teaching, and how a particular and temporary idea of vengeance might be blended with the philosophical doctrine of the meaning of evil and retribution and its place in the divine plan. It is these traditions of vengeance, however little understood, that form the basis of our 300 ritual, although in modern days the tendency has been to soften the harsh outlines as far as possible, to expunge all ideas of physical revenge, and even, as in the French

rites, to delete all reference to the Templars and their wrongs.

Other streams said to be from the Order of the Temple are claimed as genuine by their modern representatives, but without sufficient reason. The French *Ordre du Temple* alleged a direct succession from Jacques de Molay, and produced in support thereof the celebrated Charter of Larmenius (which is usually considered a forgery in any case the *Ordre du Temple* had no connection with modern Masonry. The Strict Observance, though it claimed to perpetuate Templar lines of thought, never, I believe, held its rituals to be of ancient origin, for these clearly belong to the eighteenth century. The modern Military and Religious Order of Knights Templars does not claim direct descent, though it may well embody certain genuine traditions. Its ritual is beautiful, and it appears to have been one of those rites which have been taken up by the H. O. A. T. E and used.

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THE CO-MASONIC RITUALS

In 1916, by order of the H. O. A. T. E, the ritual of the Craft degrees was finally revised in accordance with their ancient occult meaning, this ritual being based upon the English and Scottish workings. Certain features, such as the recognition of the elementals and the three symbolical journeys, were introduced from the French Craft rituals worked under the auspices of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite - with further modifications from occult sources. This ritual was approved by the H. O. A. T. E Himself, who deigned to work it in His own Lodge, afterwards making certain suggestions, which were of course immediately adopted.

In 1923 He further most graciously authorized an English translation of His Latin ritual of the Rose-Croix, to be worked in those Sovereign Chapters R C who desired to make use of it, The celebration of this ceremonial has enormously quickened the occult strength of our Chapters; and though as yet we cannot hope to equal the old Egyptian working, we are able to some extent to call down and pour forth upon the world the splendid powers of the Rosy Cross.

In 1925 the H.O.A.T. E was kind enough to allow the use of a Mark Ritual which had been brought into line with the inner meaning of the degree; and in the same year He directed that a ritual of the Holy Royal Arch should be prepared, embodying certain suggestions which He Himself had deigned to make. Thus step by step the whole working is being revised in accordance with the ancient knowledge, and the way to the restoration of the Mysteries is being prepared

THE FUTURE OF MASONRY

Masonry must surely have a wonderful part to play in the civilization of the future. Not for naught have the old hallowed rites been preserved in secret and the immemorial powers of the Mysteries transmitted throughout the ages to our modern world of the twentieth century; for we stand to-day on the threshold of a new era, which will be heralded by the coming forth once more of the World-Teacher, the Lord of Love Himself, who taught in Palestine two thousand years ago. We have seen that human evolution takes place according to a cyclic law; race succeeds race, and subrace follows subrace according to the plan of the Great Architect of the Universe, working in this world through that White Lodge which is the guardian of humanity. The time has come for the blossoming of a new subrace, the sixth of our great Aryan race, and it is already beginning to appear in North America, Australia and other lands. In that subrace, as in all the others, there will be egos of different temperaments; some no doubt will seek their inspiration in the liberal forms of Catholic Christianity, but others will find themselves attracted to the philosophic and ceremonial teaching formerly given in the Mysteries of Egypt which are the heritage of the Masonic brotherhood.

The coming of the World-Teacher has always in the past marked a revival or an inauguration of the Mysteries. Thoth in Egypt, Zoroaster in Persia, Orpheus in Greece--each of these mighty Messengers of the White Lodge, who were yet one Messenger appearing under different names and in different forms, left behind Him a glorious rite of initiation to

lead men to His feet after He had gone. That great Teacher of mankind passed from human sight as Gautama the Lord Buddha; but the scepter of the Lord of Love was placed by the spiritual KING in the hands of His successor, whom today we revere as the Lord Christ, whose coming we await with hearts filled with longing love.

He, too, will surely take the sacred vessels of the Mysteries and fill them anew with His own wonderful life. He, too, will mould them according to the needs of His people and the age in which they live. For the influence of the sixth ray, the ray of devotion which inspired the Christian mystics and the glorious Gothic architecture of the Middle Ages is passing away. and the seventh ray is beginning to dominate the world--the ray of ceremonial magic which brings the especial co- operation of the Angelic hosts, of which Masonry itself with its many colored pageant of rites is a splendid manifestation. Thus in the coming days when the Lord of Love who is our Most Wise Sovereign and the Prince of Sovereign Princes will visit yet again His holy sanctuaries--guarded throughout the ages by His great Disciple, the Prince-Adept of the seventh ray and the Master of our Craft--we may look for a restoration to the worthy, and to the worthy alone, not only of the full splendor of ceremonial initiation, once more to be a true vehicle of the Hidden Light, but also of that secret wisdom of the Mysteries which has long been forgotten in the outer Lodges and Chapters of the Brotherhood.

Such surely is the destiny that awaits our beloved Order in the future; such the splendor that will transfigure the Craft in the years that are to come. until within its temple walls once more is raised--not only in symbol but in actual fact--the ladder which stretches between earth and heaven, between men and the Grand Lodge above, to lead them from the darkness of the world to the fullness of light in God, to the Rose which ever blossoms at the heart of the Cross, to the Blazing Star whose shining brings peace and strength and blessing to all the worlds.