

LIBER 2

Symbolism, Part 1

OVERVIEW

In this Liber we begin the study of the important concept of Symbolism. You will need to have a good grasp of Symbolism - of numbers, words, and diagrams - to appreciate the riches of much esoteric writing. Three Lectures will introduce you to Symbolism of Numbers. An important Exercise, Single Awareness, will help you raise your consciousness. Then you will find two Essays you will certainly find helpful. Lastly is Part 1 of an Optional article on “The Ancient Mysteries and Secret Societies” (to be concluded in Liber 3).

By the way, don't forget to review the First Charge in Liber 1!

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LECTURE

The Symbolism of Numbers (1)

My Brothers and Sisters:

There are many systems of counting, apart from the universal one based on nine distinct numerals and a cipher (zero). Some primitive peoples cannot write more than two symbols for numbers and must repeat these in a rather complicated manner in signifying even small quantities. Our own system which developed among Arabian philosophers under the name of “algebra” (from *Al Jebr*, meaning the resetting of things which have been separated) is known as the Base 10 System and probably owes its origin to the ten digits of our hands.

Before we consider the 10 Emanations of Omneity numerologically, we must understand the Martinist teaching of *theosophic reduction* and *theosophic addition*. This is rather like a fascinating game!

Please write down the figures 1, 4 and 7. You have a number which is called one hundred and forty-seven. *Theosophic reduction* is an operation that *reduces* a number made up of more than one numeral, to a single digit. To do it we add together the numerals of the number: $1 + 4 + 7 = 12$ and $1 + 2 = 3$, so the theosophic reduction of $147 = 3$. Does everybody understand? Let us try again with the number 2350: $2 + 3 + 5 + 0 = 10$, which in turn reduces to 1. So the theosophic reduction of $2350 = 1$. Theosophic reduction is a very simple exercise, perhaps you have met it already.

If you have, you have probably noticed that the addition of nines can never alter the ultimate answer when reduced to a single figure. It is almost as if 9 is a non-entity. Let us have an example: We will take the number 13. This reduces to 4. Now let us take the number 139. This adds to 13 which reduces again to 4, so we see the addition of the 9 did not affect the end result. Write down these numbers: $9 + 81 + 126 + 7$. Straightaway we can reduce this to 7 because 81 and 126 both add to 9 and as we have noticed, nines do not alter the end result

While on the subject of the number 9 you will notice also that any number multiplied by 9, when reduced, returns to 9. Try it!

The other operation which Martinists use in numerology is *theosophic addition*. This process is applied to only one number at a time and it should be mentioned that the theosophic addition of a number is not always reduced to one digit. Theosophic addition is done by adding all the numbers below the selected number to the selected number itself. For example, if we wished to have the theosophic addition of the number 4, we would proceed by adding all the numbers from 4 down to 1, thus: $4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 10$. The theosophic addition of 8 would be $8 + 7 + 6 + 5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1 = 36$. Is this clear? Let us notice, remembering the number 9, that when theosophically added, $9 = 45$ and this reduces to 9... thus we can see how 9 returns to itself. This will be significant when you learn to analyze the manifested world outside yourself and learn to read the *Book of Nature*.

Our Venerated Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin was a keen student of Numbers as you will discover if you read Theosophic Correspondence a book of letters written between him and Baron Von Liebigstorf of Switzerland during the years of the French Revolution. We recommend this book to all our members as a good background study of our Ven. M

In an earlier conventicle we learned about the Mystical Alphabet of symbols, which is an outward reflection of mankind's interior knowledge. By now, you, as a young member of our Order, should be forming, your own conception of how your mind works in order to express truths which are universal, and so, rooted in the Divine Nature of our *First Estate*. We endeavor to express these inner unconscious urges in terms of ideas collected from the external world, as perceived by one or more of our five physical senses.

This brings us to the Martinist Doctrines of Divine Emanations.

The innermost, or, if you prefer it, the highest sphere of Being is known as *Omneity*, the Perfect Totality of Existence. Since all forms of life *unite* in this changeless, *unmanifested* point, which has *no beginning* because it is timeless, and *no position* because it is everywhere, it then contains no separate parts which would of necessity be relatively less than perfect.

It also follows, that we, as *apparently separate persons*, can have no consciousness of such a state.

Without separate consciousness there can be no differences.
Without differences or contrasts there is no choice.
Without choice, no Will can be exerted.

To study the so-called *Fall of Man* from Perfect Unity into a lesser Divine state of diversity, we make use of *symbols* which are common to all Orders of Initiation, namely: *numbers*. This measure of common ground with other esoteric Fraternities was foreshadowed at an earlier conventicle. In clearing the ground for the successful sowing of Spiritual seed, and the correct building of the Spiritual Temple, let us remember that Omneity is not just represented by the number *One*, for *Omneity is both immanent and transcendent*. It (or God, if you prefer) is both *above* manifestation and *within* it.

One is the Martinist's abstract symbol for *Omneity* — which is not a separate *One* because it is *All*, and yet it is not conditioned or limited to All Manifestation because it remains also Above and Beyond All.

This is the first metaphysical point which our Order presents to those who seek the Divine Gnosis or Spiritual illumination.

(THERE IS A GREAT DEAL HERE FOR STUDY AND MEDITATION. DO NOT PASS OVER THIS WITH SCANT REGARD.)

Having commenced our search by recognizing that there is a Source which cannot be consciously known until we return there, we shall discuss and meditate upon the concept of the Number One as a *symbol* of the First Emanation or **Common Point** of Emanation of the Cosmos.

Tradition holds that the most highly evolved Beings are aware of Ten Emanations or **Planes of Existence**, descending through which we have reached our present troubled state in the seeming freedom of the Forest of Errors. Through these same Ten must we return to Omneity, consciously now¹, and forever aware that true freedom is the Liberation of the Spirit of Mankind.

Our **Free Will** to choose this Path was evolved at a price, namely: **The Fall of Man**. On the Path of Return we have to direct our hard-won consciousness into harmony with the Divine Emanations.

Shall we so use our Will?

If so, how?

Questions for your own edification:

- 1) What is the theosophical addition of the number 12?
- 2) What is the theosophical reduction of the number 191?
- 3) Give the meanings of the words “Theosophy”, “Omneity” “Immanent” and “Transcendent”.
- 4) What do you understand by **The Fall of Man**?
- 5) Can we, as individual human beings, know God?
- 6) What is a symbol?
- 7) Explain the meaning of a Divine Law, or Universal Law.
- 8) Does God intervene
 - (a) in the workings of the Universe?
 - (b) in the affairs of Man?

¹ “consciously now” i.e. **by a conscious effort**. On the Path of Descent there was no option of free will (we had no alternative); but the Path of Return (Ascent) demands of us first a decision In full consciousness, following the **awakening of the will** to return.

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LECTURE
The Symbolism of Numbers (2)

Dear Bro.∴ and S.∴

At our last conventicle, we stated that numbers are universal symbols. We studied the symbolism of **One**, the Monad, the Absolute. Tonight we will continue with our study of numbers and then touch upon another subject of especial interest to all Martinists.

To begin, let us clarify an important point regarding numbers. You have heard it said that some numbers are benefic in the sense that they exercise a good influence; and that others are malefic exercising a bad influence. We must avoid at all times falling into superstition.

Numbers have a good or bad character only in so far as they *symbolize* good or bad things, or let us say: positive or negative thoughts. Let us emphasize that **Numbers have no magical influence in themselves**. They are nothing but arbitrary signs by which we frame a certain concept. There can therefore be no good or evil numbers — but only good or evil thoughts in our minds.

The number 2 stands for **division**; duality as opposed to unity; passivity as opposed to activity; and in general, **opposition**. We shall recognize here the principles of the Binary Law and of **polarity**. We shall not delve into the symbolism of “2” at this point, as it will be studied at length later on.

The number 3 symbolizes **manifestation**. The **Triangle**, which is another way of expressing the same meaning, is the first figure of geometry. Only when there are three points, can we, by linking them with lines, draw a figure that has a form of substance in the sense that it has surface area.

One is a concept that cannot be exactly represented, because even the tiniest dot still has width. From a metaphysical point of view **One** can therefore only be conceived of mentally. **Two** only describes one dimension, — as the line, without width that unites 2 points. But since even the finest line still has width, **Two** also cannot be exactly represented. Only **Three** can be expressed geometrically as a figure and this is why we select it to symbolize **manifestation**.

We shall study in some detail the Law of the Triangle and the Symbolism of Three in the time ahead. Before moving on to our next point, let us dwell awhile on what we have studied so far tonight and then discuss any point that is not quite clear yet, or that needs enlarging.

Let us now begin a study of the **Triad** which is symbolized by the number 3 or by the Triangle:

Martinism constitutes a system of philosophy aimed at the reconciliation of Man with Nature and with God — and divides **Being** into three Planes or Worlds.

These Three Worlds correspond with the Hierarchy of Light as symbolized by the Altar Cloth. They also correspond with: The Three Kingdoms of Earth; the Three parts of the Human Body; and the Three parts of Man.

In order to get full benefit from our Martinist studies, it is important that we should master the following points:

There are three Worlds: The Empyrean World; The World of Orbs and the Elemental World.

These correspond in Man to the three stages of consciousness: The Perfect or Christ Consciousness; The Emotional or Intermediate Consciousness; and the Instinctive or Automatic Consciousness.

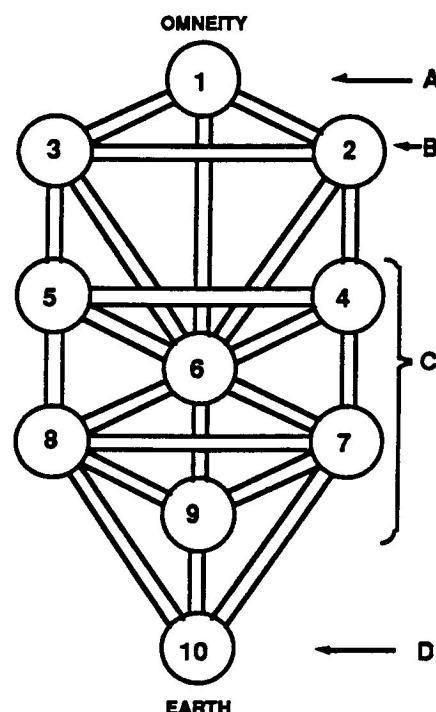
Man is divided into three parts: His Head; his Chest and his Stomach. These equate with his Âme;² his Plastic Envelope and his Physical Body. And correspond with the three Kingdoms of Earth: The Animal; the Vegetable and the Mineral. With the three colors of the Altar Cloth: The White; the Red and the Black³ indicating the three types of Men: The Children of the Light; the Men of Desire and the Men of the Stream.

We may also note that the Qabalists refer to the triple Planes of Consciousness which they call “worlds above our own.” If you will observe the Tree of Life (shown at right) you will find our world, — the material universe — represented by Sephirah #10 (“D”). The Qabalists’ “worlds above our own” are indicated by Sephiroth 1 (“A”); 2 & 3 (“B”); and 4 through 9 (“C”).

So that there can be no opportunity for error let us simply observe at this point that the *Empyrean World*; the *World of Orbs* and the *Elemental World* can be represented on the Tree of Life but they do *not* follow the demarcation of the previous paragraph. Where these Worlds fall on the “Tree” will be taken up *in* the series of lectures on the Qabala.

Now what concerns us at this point is the three stages of consciousness, so let us give our full attention to this matter. As we have said, there are three stages of consciousness

- 1) the Instinctive or Automatic Consciousness,
- 2) the Emotional or Intermediate Consciousness, and
- 3) the Perfect or Christ Consciousness.



Very few people ever achieve the third stage of consciousness and only the most evolved Adepts can

² Âme (pronounced Ahm) is a French word we have retained because its meaning cannot be easily approximated by any English word. It may be said to represent the spiritual properties of man, or the principle of life. In reality, it is the component part of man which is immortal. Perhaps the English word “Spirit” would come closest *Plastic Envelope* equates with “astral body” - a term used in other schools.

³ *The Symbolism of Light is taken from nature.* The total absence of Light is darkness. In nature, in the absence of light, all is black. Black symbolizes passivity, rest; ignorance (because ignorance is the absence of the light of knowledge). Black is therefore not an active symbol. The fire of desire, however, generates heat, which at first begins to glow a dull red. As the heat increases, the color turns through several shades of red, finally reaching a brilliant white light. Red is the color of desire, action, energy, blood, battle, sacrifice. It also symbolizes courage and the battlefield of life where one struggles to transmute the elements of Nature. White symbolizes the Light of Wisdom, purity, and those evolved Beings (Masters and Adepts, the “Children of the Light”) who traditionally wear white.

reach it at will. Very few people even attain the Intermediate stage of consciousness which is that of

self-knowledge, not because it is difficult to attain, but simply because people do not know of its existence.

In other words, people live instinctively, automatically, without being fully conscious of **Being** while they live. If we examine the things we did today, we will soon realize that we did them all, or almost all, in an entirely instinctive way, by habit or by need. While we were thus engaged, ***we never were conscious of being.***

All stages of consciousness are progressive and we have no hope of ever achieving Illumination, or should I say ***Controlled Illumination***, which is Christ Consciousness, without having mastered the art of attaining and of ***maintaining*** the Intermediate Consciousness.

We shall therefore endeavor to do so, and we have already begun our work in this direction through our efforts at metastasis (Exercise #1). In order to succeed, we must fully understand that the stage of consciousness in which we normally live in the waking state is instinctive consciousness. If we think we normally live in a state of self-knowledge we shall misdirect our efforts and achieve nothing.

Exercise 2, which is included in this Liber, will allow us to raise our consciousness from the level of ***Instinctive Consciousness*** to that of ***Intermediate Consciousness*** (which is self-knowledge). Do not neglect performing Exercise 2 according to instructions.

Brethren, let us not forget that our first achievement towards reintegration must be directed towards self-knowledge and self-realization. Let us recall the words of our V::: M::: Saint-Martin who wrote:

“At the first glance which man directs upon himself; he will perceive without difficulty that there must be a science or an evident law for his own nature, since there is one for all beings, though it is not universally in all, and since even in the midst of our weakness, our ignorance, and humiliation, we are employed only in the search after truth and light

Albeit, therefore, the efforts which man makes daily to attain the end of his researches are so rarely successful, it must not be considered on this account that the road is imaginary, but only that man is deceived ***as to the road*** which leads thereto, and is hence in the greatest of privations, since he does not even know the way in which he should walk.

The overwhelming misfortune of man is not that he is ignorant of the existence of truth, but that he misconstrues its nature. What errors, and what suffering would have been spared us if, far from seeking truth in the phenomena of material nature, we had resolved to descend into ourselves, and had sought to explain material things by man, and not man by material things; if, fortified by courage and patience, we had preserved in the calm of our imagination the discovery of this light which we desire, all of us, with so much ardor.”

In other words, Brethren, it is through the study of Man alone, by getting deeper and deeper into the problem and reflecting repeatedly on the terms of that problem, that one may reach a solution. Again, our V::: M::: wrote:

“He who knows himself will be able to know the universe and other beings. But the knowledge of self will be found only in self. It is in Man’s mind that we must look for the Laws that have presided at his origin.”

Man, who is the enigma, is therefore also the key to that enigma.

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom.

A few questions to test your comprehension:

1. What number signifies separation?
2. Can the number One be exactly represented?
3. What number symbolizes Omneity?
4. Name the three parts of Man.
5. On the Tree of Life, what number represents the Earth?
6. What is our first achievement on the Path to Reintegration?
7. Why is this?

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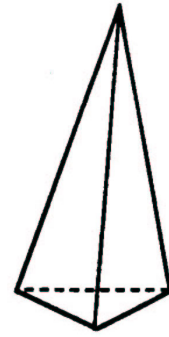
LECTURE
The Symbolism of Numbers (3)

Let us now extend our study of the science of numbers, the one science to which all others are related. The beginning of mathematics is lost in antiquity and most nations of the ancient civilizations had a workable system of mathematics. To demonstrate a truth however, the science of numbers depends on axioms, which are purely intellectual demonstrations of a Truth that is elusive, because it is entirely independent of the senses, and of matter. Let us not lose sight of the fact that the characters and signs which we call figures, are *Symbols* of numbers. Numbers, in their turn, represent Eternal Principles and such Principles are *immutable qualities* or *Emanations* that belong to Omneity. In this way, numbers form a concise language of Truths, Laws and Emanations the original material of the Two Books of Martinism (the Book of Nature and the Book of Man), which we shall study later.

From among the philosophers of antiquity, there is one whose name is always connected with the science of numbers: Pythagoras. He and his followers, called Pythagoreans, conceived numbers as a multiplicity of forms of Being. Numbers were the things which were first separated from an impartial union. This unity broke into two kinds of realities: Numbers and Unlimited Space, and by these two factors *Being* is manifested.

Like the Martinists, the Pythagoreans placed great emphasis on the Number 4 or Tetrad. By theosophic addition $4 = 10$. This is represented by what Pythagoras called the Divine Tetractys. According to the Pythagoreans, it contains all the harmonious ratios.

To Martinists, the Tetrad is the symbol of permanent foundation. Geometrically, it is the minimum number of points that can encompass a solid. Just as **ONE** exists only as a concept; **TWO** as a line in a one-dimensional world; **THREE**, as a surface in a two-dimensional world; so **FOUR** is a volume in a three-dimensional world, - which is a type of world in which we live. The symbol of **FOUR** would then be a three-sided pyramid, the simplest form of a three-dimensional figure. Mystically, **FOUR** represents the 4 letters of the Divine Name Yod-He-Vau-He (usually translated Jehovah). It is the number of *Fire* and as such, is symbolic of intellectual illumination.



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Moving on we come to the number **FIVE** called the Pentad. It is symbolical of the principle of evil. It represents Humanity in its exiled state. It represents the limiting principle of the World and of humanity. By virtue of the Law of Duality, there is, however, another aspect to the number “5”, we will take this up later.

As we have just said, the mention of the number five brings us to say that, in Martinism, it is often taken as a symbol of evil. This raises an immediate problem: *What is Evil?* Also, by continuity of thought: *What is Good?*

Since the dawn of conscience in Man, mankind has been bewildered by the apparently two opposed principles of Good & Evil. An almost indistinguishable mixture of Good & Evil - Light & Darkness - Right & Wrong - Harmony & Discord - seems to disturb and cloud the brightest rays of light which man feels he might perceive throughout the Universe and within himself. In his endeavors to explain this contradiction and clarify this confusion, Man may adopt dangerous opinions. In the past, he considered at times that Good and Evil were two principles equal in strength and rivals in power. Evil was some-times considered as being inferior to Good. Did Good & Evil have the same origin? If so, The Creator would be at the same time Father and Tyrant. Is he? Eventually, two basic beliefs came to be accepted:

- (a) The World was created by a Great Being, absolute in Power, Wisdom and Goodness, and the World has always remained under His Divine guidance.
- (b) A belief that Evil is an ugly fact, not a mere illusion, and that it has an individual existence.

Are these two basic beliefs true or false? And are there other explanations?

If we logically examine the respective power of Good & Evil we cannot fail to realize that Good, when it reigns in the thoughts, or when it is present in the actions, causes Evil to disappear. We may liken this to the light in a darkened room. As soon as the light is turned on, the darkness vanishes. In other words, as Good manifests, Evil regresses. We can say therefore that *Evil is the absence of Good*. Furthermore, the presence of evil *never* eliminates completely the concept of Good. Evil is, by nature, implacable and bent on destruction. If evil had power it would destroy

good. But when evil reigns in a society, the aspirations of a part of that society immediately become centered on Good. The oppressed, the suffering, and others too aspire for the Return Of Good. When Good and Harmony reign, however, evil does not inspire people. In conclusion let us observe that as in nature all the darkness in the world cannot extinguish the flame of one small candle, similarly we can say that evil has no *power* of its own.

May you ever dwell in the Eternal Light of Divine Wisdom.

Some questions for your consideration:

What is evil?

How does evil arise? (From the misuse of our Free Will.)

Could there be Good if there was no Evil?

Is Evil inferior to Good?, if so, why?

How do you define “good”?

Does Evil have an individual existence?

Is the Plastic Envelope immortal?

What part of Man’s anatomy corresponds to the Intermediate or Emotional Consciousness?

(Each student should have a personal notebook to jot down their individual impressions. As a start, divide a page into three columns and enter information concerning the Triad. In addition, record our own observations in the notebook.)

Some Vocabulary Terms:

What is “Martinism”?

(See Liber 1) In addition “Martinism” is understood to mean the writings of Martinez Pasquales and Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin.

What is the “Traditional Esoteric Arcana”?

This refers to the body of knowledge expressed by the Rose+Croix, in Hermeticism, Alchemy, the Qabalah and esoteric Christianity... all of which is also known as the Western Esoteric Tradition. “Martinism” is of course a part of this stream.

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EXERCISE 2

Single Awareness

Here is an exercise that will allow you to raise your consciousness from the level of instinctive consciousness to that of Intermediate Consciousness, which is that of Self-Knowledge.

You are to meditate, and in the period of meditation, simply avoid any mental or intellectual concentration or effort whatever and only try to *feel yourself living*. Sit comfortably and let your

consciousness penetrate your entire Being, simply observe in your mind the fact that ***you are yourself***. Avoid analyzing your feelings, as the slightest intellectual effort will bring you back to a stage of Instinctive Consciousness.

As we mentioned in Liber 1, this exercise is part of *The Mystic's Ladder*, which is to become part of your daily routine.

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ESSAY

Three Ways to Perfect Your Character

Dear Brothers & Sisters:

Poets of old held that the *summum bonum* of all existence was happiness, and certainly this belief is widely held to this day. We look forward to retirement as a time to engage in recreations which we think will finally bring us to true happiness.

There is a great misunderstanding about the true meaning of happiness. God did not create man to sit and idle away his time indulging his appetite. Jesus said: "I came not to send peace but a sword," intending us to be stirred by the need for self-conquest, self-mastery, self-discipline. In the usual meaning of the word "happiness" this is not a joyous prospect. L. B. Jack writes in his autobiography, "I think we should be well advised to get rid of all this botheration about happiness, both in our philosophical exercises and in our daily life." Happiness should not be an end in itself, but rather a reward for achievement, especially when that achievement is the result not only of what we have done, but of what we are.

Our subject is drawn from a statement of Austin Phelps: "In the destiny of every mortal being there is an objective more worthy of God than happiness. It is character, and the grand aim of man's creation is the development of a grand character."

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God has created you and me with the power and potential to become good persons, with the ultimate aim that we become perfect persons. Jesus requests, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Joshua Liebman said some years ago: "The human self is not a gift, it is an achievement; not a static reality, but a painfully passed reality — past lions in the way, a triumph over ogres, real and imaginary." The attainment of one's best self is a running battle, a never-ending process. The grand aim of it all is character — not just in terms of a man's reputation, but what he truly is within himself. I would like to suggest here three character-building techniques:

1. THE DISCIPLINE OF PUTTING FIRST THINGS FIRST.

Our problem today is not really indolence or indifference, but preoccupation. In our busy lives we become so absorbed in trivia that we lose sight of higher objectives. You need only listen in on the average lunch-break or bus stand conversation to see the crowding out of things that matter by things that don't count for much. Multitudes are living lives that are ***not so much bad lives, as frittered away***.

Reading is a good example of what I mean. At one time, educators had to plead with people to expose themselves to books in order to expand their intelligence. Today there is so much reading matter all around us that we must select very carefully what is important. Too willingly, we fill our minds with casual trash.

Some businessmen and women become so occupied in pursuing success that it consumes their lives.

They think they cannot help the fact that they have insufficient time for their families or for their spiritual pursuits. Actually, they have made a decision that one is more important than the other. There is an old Greek proverb which says, “Zeus frowns on the overbusy.”

Man’s true character, how well he fulfills the grand aim of his creation, is not determined so much by his achievements or the fortune he has amassed as much as by what he has become as a person—as a spiritual, radiating center—and by what he achieves in inward peace and contentment. As Jesus said, “What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his soul?”

2. THE DISCIPLINE OF “RIGHT PLANTING” IN THE FIELD OF POSSIBILITIES.

There is a legend about a man who dreamed of himself standing in a field with no boundaries. He asked an approaching stranger, “What is this field called?” He was answered, ‘Why, it’s the field of possibilities, so called because it is possible for all things to grow in it. There is no evil so terrible, no good so great that cannot be grown here; no sorrow so cruel, no joy so entrancing that cannot be harvested from this field; no poverty so overwhelming, no riches so grand but have been garnered here.” Looking around him, the man saw men and women. Some were burdened by great sorrows and troubles; others were free and joyous. Some suffered from dreadful pain; others were radiant with health. The man asked, “Why is it that some gather good from this field, and others evil?” The reply was: “Each reaps according to the seed he has planted. Each seed yields a harvest after its own kind. This field, called the field of possibilities, is also called the field of life.”

All about us there lies this field of life. It has unlimited possibilities. Our life is always in the process of bearing harvest. Life is energy, it is power~ it must yield, it must produce. We are immersed in it and we cannot prevent it from producing, but we can determine by our actions what it will bring forth: good or evil, joy or sorrow, life or death. That is God’s privilege conferred upon us in the statement “Concerning the work of my hands, command ye me.”

A pencil may be used to draw a figure that is ugly or it may be used to draw a figure that is beautiful; it is merely a question of how the pencil is used. So we are called to the discipline of right thinking and right speaking, the right use of the law of mind at all times, to call forth the positive out of the field of infinite possibilities.

3. LISTENING TO THE “STILL”, SMALL VOICE OF GOD”.

Emerson refers to the idea that there is guidance for all people and that by lowly listening we shall hear the right word. Character does not grow by chance, nor by resolutions to do better. There must be a developing desire to improve one’s self, which is really God inspiring us with a splendid idea. He who supplies us with that idea and gives us the power to carry it out is really God at the center of our being. Desire to change is God tapping at the door of consciousness, leaning us in the way of growth.

F. L. Rossen once wrote: “If the weathervane points north it does not bring the north wind; it is a sign that the wind is already blowing.” In the same way, a man’s praying does not bring God’s action; it is proof that God is already moving in and through us. The very act of prayer is the activity of God. Prayer is simply letting God be God in you. God’s orders take the form of inspirations and aspirations. Listen. Pray. Then, as the Quakers say, When you pray, move your feet” The Twenty-third Psalm, which begins, “The Lord is my shepherd...” is interpreted by many people to mean, “The Lord is my bellhop.” God does not obey us, He inspires us. But he does not compel us to accept His inspiration. We have free will. We should be still, so that the activity of God can move us and set us on that path of success that is the perfect path for us.

The purpose of life is not to *have* but to *be*, to continue to fulfill our aim of the Infinite creative process. We must discipline ourselves to put first things first and never allow ourselves to become

preoccupied with trivia, so that we miss the finer, more important things. We must discipline ourselves in righteousness, right thinking, and right planning in the field of possibilities. We must discipline ourselves to constantly need the still, small voice, and to take time to be still and to humbly listen to the process that is moving through us, expressing as us, in the outworking of our own imprisoned splendor.

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ESSAY Spiritual Vision

We are living today in an age of progress, an age of uncertainty, an age of constant challenges. Many people cry out, ‘What is the world coming to?’ Well, actually, it is coming to itself, though the road may be long and slow and arduous. Of course, we *are* in troubled times, but from a human standpoint we have always been in troubled times. (When have we had times of peace and prosperity?) We have had periods of lethargy and indifference, which are also troubled times in a more serious way. Troubled times are times of opportunity, times of discovery, times of growth. In times of crisis we have always girded ourselves for battle, whether it be for personal problems or for international relations. And yet history has invariably demonstrated that it has been *light* rather than *might* that has always achieved the ultimate victory.

We need men of vision and foresight who will follow the lead of the Psalmist when he says, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help.” And we can pray after an election that the leaders that have been chosen on all levels of government will actually rise to the best that is in them and express the vision of true greatness. Vision is the Aladdin’s lamp of the soul. It is the Divine spark that lights the lamp of progress.

During political campaigns you occasionally will find a large picture of a candidate pasted on a store window, and if you go inside the store you most likely won’t see the back of the candidate’s head, but the same face looking in at you that looked out at you -- literally, a two-faced creature. In this sense we are all two-faced; one face looking outward and the other looking inward. We are all endowed with both outer vision and inner vision. The one is physical sight, the other is insight; the one beholds appearances, the other sees in perspective; the one walks by sight, the other walks by faith; the one learns through tuition, the other by intuition.

We all begin life in this world with an inner vision of perfection. But as the child grows to adulthood, the exercise of inner vision is neglected as the individual becomes engrossed in outer things and experiences. In time, the inner vision faculty becomes virtually atrophied through nonuse. So, it was with inescapable logic that Jesus insisted that no one could enter the kingdom except by becoming as a little child, recovering the inner vision which beholds the Father in all things.

Jesus constantly exercised the inner vision. He often referred to His use of the inner vision, but never more clearly than the occasion of His healing of the invalid by the pool of Siloam. Remember, after being assailed by the Pharisees for doing healing work on the Sabbath, He replied: “The son can do nothing of himself but what he seeth the Father doing; for what things soever He doeth, these things the son also doeth in like manner, for the Father loveth the son and showeth him all things that Himself doeth.” By this He inferred that nothing could be done unless it were possible, and that which is possible exists as *already done in God*. And He said: “All things are possible to God.” So it follows that if there is anything that man desires to do, if he turns within he will behold the Father doing that thing. This inner vision is the fountain out of which all things become possible to man.

It is interesting that the word that is translated as “eye” or “vision” in the Old Testament comes from a word that means “fountain” in the original Greek. Someone has said that Jesus did not come into the world to set it right but to see it right. The same holds true for each of us. The great need, in spite of apparent disorder and confusion, is not to set things right, but to *see them rightly*. Through inner or spiritual vision, we look above and beyond the illusion or the confusion and we see the Truth, and this seeing becomes the fountain out of which comes the good.

So often we say, “Well, that’s all well and good, but facts are facts and seeing is believing!” It is true that physical sight is a matter of impressions registered on the optical nerve that report appearances to the brain. But there is another way of seeing, the Christ way, through spiritual seeing, or insight. This kind of seeing is not an impression we see, but an expression radiating. And Jesus said, “Let your light shine.” This kind of seeing is like a searchlight that dispels the darkness and reveals the Truth, the life, the way. When Jesus was faced with a condition of lack and the disciples wanted to go to town to procure supplies to feed the hungry multitudes, the key to that seeming miracle which followed was in right seeing. It is recorded that Jesus “lifted up His eyes to heaven,” which simply means that He looked inward to the consciousness of all-sufficiency; then, with substance pouring out through the fountain of this spiritual vision, He proceeded to break the bread and fish, and there was abundance.

Believing is seeing with the inner vision. You cannot really “pray, believing..” when your sight is fixed on the mountain to be removed, the empty cupboard to be filled, or the crippled hand to be healed. You must lift up your eyes and see with the inward vision, and then you perceive the Divine possibilities. You will see the Father doing the thing and you will find the victory.

On one occasion Jesus said to his disciples: “Say not ye there are yet four months and then cometh the harvest; behold, I say unto thee, lift up your eyes and look on the fields, that they are white already unto harvest.” This is the vision to see the flower in the seed, to see the wheat in the grain, to see the healthy body in the lame and afflicted, to see the Divinity in the person. This is the key to Jesus’ great miracle-working power. He simply lifted up His eyes and, through spiritual vision, saw the individual not as blind or lame or deaf. He saw him in the Father and the Father in him. This seeing became a fountain, a wellspring out of which came this healing life which worked the wonders of transformation.

Following “the Christ way” does not mean that we should become a race of dreamers, walking with our heads in the clouds. Certainly, the physical eyes are placed in front of our heads for the purpose of seeing our way in the world. A traveler through a rugged country asked his Indian guide one night: “How are you able to pick your way over these jagged peaks by treacherous trails, without ever losing your direction?” The guide answered: “I have the near look and the far vision. With the one I see what is directly ahead of me, and with the other I guide my course by the stars.” This is a beautiful thought The near look and the far vision; the merging of inner and outer vision.

Certainly, we have to see with our physical eye. Certainly, we must face facts. But we can and we must be selective about what we fix our faith upon. We must decide if we are going to look upon the dark places of life, — the sickness, the poverty, the hardships, the chaos — or whether we are going to look upon that which is good — the light and life, the pleasant and constructive. It is an inescapable truth that whatever we look upon will draw us toward it. Of course, there are times when we come face to face with a crisis of health, lack, or inharmony. But in these moments we must lift up our eyes to see the fields already white with harvest. This is the dawn of faith, the faith that can truly remove mountains.

A famous skin specialist, remarking how negative thinking is a contributing cause of skin irritations, stressed the idea that we should always keep outside the problems of life. Now, this is an important thing, of course. When we accept the appearances as real; when we think that things and people can

take our good from us, then we get lost in the midst of experiences. Then we actually find ourselves resisting and resenting; we lose our perspective and we are invariably swallowed up in negation. But if, when we are confronted by the dark appearances that threaten us, we declare, "None of these things move me," and we determinedly stand still and "lift up our eyes," turn within and see the Father within this thing and this thing in the Father, then surely we will find help and healing. And when we have this sense of oneness, this sense of the near look that is selective and the far vision that is dedicated, then we are on the threshold of a new kind of living: abundant, happy, victorious living. Spiritual vision is the birth of faith, and faith is the victory that overcomes the world.

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OPTIONAL The Ancient Mysteries and Secret Societies (1)

When confronted with a problem involving the use of the reasoning faculties, individuals of strong intellect keep their poise, and seek to reach a solution by obtaining facts bearing upon the question. Those of immature mentality, on the other hand, when similarly confronted, are overwhelmed. While the former may be qualified to solve the riddle of their own destiny, the latter must be led like a flock of sheep and taught in simple language. They depend almost entirely upon the ministrations of the shepherd. The Apostle Paul said that these little ones must be fed with milk, but that meat is the food of strong men. Thoughtlessness is almost synonymous with childishness, while thoughtfulness is symbolic of maturity.

There are, however, but few mature minds in the world; and thus it was that the philosophic/religious doctrines of the pagans were divided to meet the needs of these two fundamental groups of human intellect - one philosophic, the other incapable of appreciating the deeper mysteries of life. To the discerning few were revealed the *esoteric*, or spiritual, teachings, while the unqualified many received only the literal, or *exoteric*, interpretations. In order to make simple the great truths on Nature and the abstract principles of natural law, the vital forces of the universe were personified, becoming the gods and goddesses of the ancient mythologies. While the ignorant multitudes brought their offerings to the altars of Priapus and Pan (deities representing the procreative energies) the wise recognized in these marble statues only symbolic concretions of great abstract truths.

In all cities of the ancient world were temples for public worship and offering. In every community also were philosophers and mystics, deeply versed in Nature's lore. These individuals were usually



From Montfaucon's *Antiquities*

A FEMALE HIEROPHANT OF THE MYSTERIES

This illustration shows Cybele, here called the Syrian Goddess, in the robes of a hierophant. Montfaucon describes the figure as follows: "Upon her head is an episcopal mitre, adorned on the lower part with towers and pinnacles; over the gate of the city is a crescent, and beneath the circuit of the walls a crown of rays. The Goddess wears a sort of surplice, exactly like the surplice of a priest or bishop; and upon the surplice a tunic, which falls down to the legs; and over all an episcopal cape, with the twelve signs of the Zodiac wrought on the borders. The figure hath a lion on each side, and holds in its left hand a Tympanium, a Sistrum, an Distaff, a Caduceus, and another instrument. In her right hand she hold with her middle finger a thunderbolt, and upon the same arm animals, insects, and, as far as we may guess, flowers and fruit, a bow, a quiver, a torch, and a scythe." The whereabouts of the statue is unknown, the copy reproduced by Montfaucon being from drawings by Pirro Ligurio.

banded together, forming seclusive philosophic and religious schools. The more important of these groups were known as the Mysteries. Many of the great minds of antiquity were initiated into these secret fraternities by strange and mysterious rites, some of which were extremely cruel. Alexander Wilder defines the Mysteries as “sacred dramas performed at stated periods. The most celebrated were those of Isis, Sabazius, Cybele, and Eleusis.” After being admitted, the initiates were instructed in the secret wisdom which had been preserved for ages. Plato, an initiate of one of these sacred orders, was severely criticized because in his writings he revealed to the public many of the secret philosophic principles of the Mysteries.

Every pagan nation had (and has) not only its state religion, but another into which the philosophic elect alone have gained entrance. Many of these ancient cults vanished from the earth without revealing their secrets, but a few have survived the test of ages and their mysterious symbols are still preserved. Much of the ritualism of Freemasonry is based on the trials to which candidates were subjected by the ancient hierophants before the keys of wisdom were entrusted to them.

Few realize the extent to which the ancient secret schools influenced contemporary intellects and, through those minds, posterity. Robert Macoy, 33 °, in his *General History of Freemasonry*, pays a magnificent tribute to the part played by the ancient Mysteries in the rearing of the edifice of human culture. He says, in part:

“It appears that all the perfection of civilization, and all the advancement made in philosophy, science, and art among the ancients are due to these institutions which, under the veil of mystery, sought to illustrate the sublimest truths of religion, morality, and virtue, and impress them on the hearts of their disciples... Their chief object was to teach the doctrine of one God, the resurrection of man to eternal life, the dignity on the human soul, and to lead the people to see the shadow of the deity, in the beauty, magnificence, and splendor of the universe”

With the decline of virtue, which has preceded the destruction of every nation of history, the Mysteries became perverted. Sorcery took the place of the divine magic. Indescribable practices (such as the Bacchanalia) were introduced, and perversion ruled supreme, for no institution can be any better than the members of which it is composed. In despair, the few who were true sought to preserve the secret doctrines from oblivion. In some cases they succeeded, but more often the arcanum was lost and only the empty shell of the Mysteries remained.

Thomas Taylor has written, “Man is naturally a religious animal.” From the earliest dawning of his consciousness, man has worshiped and revered *things* as symbolic of the invisible, omnipresent, indescribable *Thing*, concerning which he could discover practically nothing. The pagan Mysteries opposed the Christians during the early centuries of their church, declaring that the new faith (Christianity) did not demand virtue and integrity as requisites for salvation. Celsus expressed himself on the subject in the following caustic terms:

“That I do not, however, accuse the Christians more bitterly than truth compels, may be conjectured from hence, that the cryers who call men to other mysteries proclaim as follows: ‘Let him approach whose hands are pure, and whose words are wise.’ And again others proclaim: ‘Let him approach who is pure from all wickedness, whose soul is not conscious of any evil, and who leads a just and upright life.’ And these things are proclaimed by those who promise a purification from error. Let us now hear who those are that are called to the Christian mysteries: Whoever is a sinner, whoever is unwise, whoever is a fool, and whoever, in short, is miserable, him the kingdom of God will receive. Do you not, therefore, call a sinner, an unjust man, a thief, a housebreaker, a wizard, one who is sacrilegious, and a robber of sepulchres? What other persons would the cryer nominate, who should call robbers together?”

It was not the true faith of the early Christian mystics that Celsus attacked, but the false forms that were creeping in even during his day. The ideals of early Christianity were based upon the high moral standards of the pagan Mysteries, and the first Christians who met under the city of Rome used as their places of worship the subterranean temples on Mithras, from whose cult has been borrowed much of the sacerdotalism of the modern church.

The ancient philosophers believed that no man could live intelligently who did not have a fundamental knowledge of Nature and her laws. Before man can obey, he must understand, and the Mysteries were devoted to instructing man concerning the operation of divine law in the terrestrial sphere. Few of the early cults actually worshiped anthropomorphic deities, although their symbolism might lead one to believe they did. They were moralistic rather than religionistic; philosophic rather than theologic. They taught man to use his faculties more intelligently, to be patient in the face of adversity, to be courageous when confronted by danger, to be true in the midst of temptation, and, most of all, to view a worthy life as the most acceptable sacrifice to God, and his body as an altar sacred to the Deity.

Sun worship played an important part in nearly all the early pagan Mysteries. This indicated the probability of their Atlantean origin, for the people of Atlantis were sun worshipers. The Solar Deity was usually personified as a beautiful youth, with long golden hair to symbolize the rays of the sun. This golden Sun God was slain by wicked ruffians, who personified the evil principle of the universe. By means of certain rituals and ceremonies, symbolic of purification and regeneration, this wonderful God of Good was brought back to life and became the Savior of His people. The secret processes whereby He was resurrected symbolized these cultures by means of which man is able to overcome his lower nature, master his appetites, and give expression to the higher side of himself. The Mysteries were organized for the purpose of assisting the struggling human creature to reawaken the spiritual powers which, surrounded by the flaming ring of dust and degeneracy, lay asleep within his soul. In other words, man was offered a way by which he could regain his lost estate (See Wagner's *Siegfried*.)

In the ancient world, nearly all the secret societies were philosophic and religious. During the medieval centuries, they were chiefly religious and political, although a few philosophic schools remained. In modern times, secret societies, in the Occidental countries, are largely political or fraternal, although in a few of them, as in Masonry, the ancient religious and philosophic principles still survive.

Space prohibits a detailed discussion of the secret schools. There were literally scores of these ancient cults, with branches in all parts of the Eastern and Western worlds. Some, such as those of Pythagoras and the Hermetists, show a decided Oriental influence, while the Rosicrucians, according to their own proclamations, gained much of their wisdom from Arabian mystics. Although the Mystery schools are usually associated with civilization, there is evidence that the most uncivilized peoples of prehistoric times had a knowledge of them. Natives of distant islands, many in the lowest forms of savagery, have mystic rituals and secret practices which, although primitive, are of a decided Masonic tinge.

THE DRUIDIC MYSTERIES OF BRITAIN AND GAUL

“The original and primitive inhabitants of Britain, at some remote period, revived and reformed their national institutes. Their priest, or instructor, had hitherto been simply named Gwydd, but it was considered to have become necessary to divide this office between the national, or superior, priest and another whose influence [would] be more limited. From henceforth the former became Der-Wydd (Druid), or superior instructor, and [the latter] Go-Wydd, or O-Vydd (Ovate), subordinate instructor; and both went by the general name of Beirdd (Bards), or teachers of wisdom. As the system matured and augmented, the Bardic Order consisted of three classes, the Druids, Beirdd Braint, or privileged Bards, and Ovates.” (See

Samuel Meyrick and Charles Smith, *The Costume of the Original Inhabitants of The British Islands.*)

The origin of the word **Druid** is under dispute. Max Muller believes that, like the Irish word *Druí*, it means “the men of the oak trees.” He further draws attention to the fact that the forest gods and tree deities of the Greeks were called *dryades*. Some believe the word to be of Teutonic origin; others ascribe it to the Welsh. A few trace it to the Gaelic *druídh*, which means “a wise man” or “a sorcerer.” In Sanskrit, the word *dru* means “timber.”

At the time of the Roman conquest, the Druids were thoroughly ensconced in Britain and Gaul. Their power over the people was unquestioned, and there were instances in which armies, about to attack each other, sheathed their swords when ordered to by the white-robed Druids. No undertaking of great importance was started without the assistance of these patriarchs, who stood as mediators between the gods and men. The Druidic Order is deservedly credited with having had a deep understanding of Nature and her laws. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* states that geography, physical sciences, natural theology, and astrology were their favorite studies. The Druids had a fundamental knowledge of medicine, especially the use of herbs and simples. Crude surgical instruments also have been found in England and Ireland. An old treatise on early British medicine states that every practitioner was expected to have a garden or back yard for the growing of certain herbs necessary to his profession



From Wellcome's *Ancient Cymric Medicine*

THE ARCH-DRUID IN HIS CEREMONIAL ROBES

The most striking adornment of the Arch-Druid was the *iodhan moran*, or breastplate of judgement, which possessed the mysterious power of strangling anyone who made an untrue statement while wearing it. Godfrey Higgins states that this breastplate was put on the necks of witnesses to test the veracity of their evidence. The Druidic *tiara*, or *anguinum*, its front embossed with a number of points to represent the sun's rays, indicated that the priest was a personification of the rising sun. On the front of his belt the Arch-Druid wore the *Iiath meisicith* a magic broach, or buckle, in the center of which was a large white stone. To this was attributed the power of drawing the fire of the gods down from heaven at the priest's command. This specially cut stone was a burning glass, by which the sun's rays were concentrated to light the altar fires. The Druids also had other symbolic implements, such as the peculiarly shaped golden sickle with which they cut the mistletoe from the oak, and the *corman*, or *scepter*, in the form of a crescent, symbolic of the sixth day of the increasing moon and also of the Ark of Noah. An early initiate of the Druidic Mysteries related that admission to their midnight ceremonies was gained by means of a glass boat, called *Cwrwg Gwydrin*. This boat, symbolized the moon, which, floating upon the waters of eternity, preserved the seeds of living creatures within its boat-like crescent

Eliphas Levi, the celebrated transcendentalist, makes the following statement:

“The Druids were priests and physicians, curing by magnetism and charging amulets with their fluidic influence. Their universal remedies were mistletoe and serpents' eggs, because these substances attract the astral light in a special manner. The solemnity with which mistletoe was cut down drew upon this plant the popular confidence and rendered it powerfully magnetic...The properties of magnetism

will some day reveal to us the absorbing properties of mistletoe. We shall then understand the secret of those spongy growths which drew the unused virtues of plants and become surcharged with tinctures and savors. Mushrooms, truffles, gall on trees, and the different kinds of mistletoe will be employed with understanding by a medical science, which will be new because it is old.... But one must not move quicker than science, which recedes that it may advance the further. (See *A History of Magic*.)

Not only was the mistletoe sacred as symbolic of the universal medicine, or panacea, but also because of the fact that it grew upon the oak tree. Through the symbol of the oak, the Druids worshiped the Supreme Deity therefore, anything growing upon that tree was sacred to Him. At certain seasons, according to the positions of the sun, moon, and stars, the Arch-Druid climbed the oak tree and cut the mistletoe with a golden sickle consecrated for that service. The parasitic growth was caught in white cloths provided for the purpose, lest it touch the earth and be polluted by terrestrial vibrations. Usually a sacrifice of a white bull was made under the tree.

The Druids were initiates of a secret school that existed in their midst. This school, which closely resembled the Bacchic and Eleusinian Mysteries of Greece or the Egyptian rites of Isis and Osiris, is justly designated the **Druidic Mysteries**. There has been much speculation concerning the secret wisdom that the Druids claimed to possess. Their secret teachings were never written, but were communicated orally to specially prepared candidates. Robert Brown, 32 °, is of the opinion that the British priests secured their information from Tyrian and Phoenician navigators who, thousands of years before the Christian Era, established colonies in Britain and Gaul while searching for tin. Thomas Maurice, in his *Indian Antiquities*, discourses at length on Phoenician, Carthaginian, and Greek expeditions to the British Isles for the purpose of procuring tin. Others are of the opinion that the Mysteries as celebrated by the Druids were of Oriental origin, possibly Buddhistic.

The proximity of the British Isles to the lost Atlantis may account for the sun worship which plays an important part in the rituals of Druidism. According to Artemidorus, Ceres and Persephone were worshiped on an island close to Britain with rites and ceremonies similar to those of Samothrace. There is no doubt that the Druidic Pantheon includes a large number of Greek and Roman deities. This greatly amazed Caesar during his conquest of Britain and Gaul, and caused him to affirm that these tribes adored Mercury, Apollo, Mars, and Jupiter, in a manner similar to that of the Latin countries. It is almost certain that the Druidic Mysteries were not indigenous to Britain or Gaul, but migrated from one of the more ancient civilizations.

The school of the Druids was divided into three distinct parts, and the secret teachings embodied therein are practically the same as the mysteries concealed under the allegories of the Blue Lodge Masonry. The lowest of the three divisions was that of Ovate (Ovydd). This was an honorary degree, requiring no special purification or preparation. The Ovates dressed in green, the Druidic color of learning, and were expected to know something about medicine, astronomy, poetry if possible, and sometimes music. An Ovate was an individual admitted to the Druidic Order because of his general excellence and superior knowledge concerning the problems of life.

The second division was that of Bard (Beirdd). Its members were robed in sky-blue, to represent harmony and truth, and to them was assigned the labor of memorizing, at least in part, the twenty thousand verses of Druidic sacred poetry. They were often pictured with the primitive British or Irish harp - an instrument strung with human hair, and having as many strings as there were ribs on one side of the human body. These Bards were often chosen as teachers of candidates seeking entrance into the Druidic Mysteries. Neophytes wore striped robes of blue, green, and white, these being the three sacred colors of the Druidic Order.

The third division was that of Druid (Derwyddon). Its particular labor was to minister to the religious need of the people. To reach this dignity, the candidate must first become a Bard Braint. The Druids always dressed in white — symbolic of their purity, and the color used by them to

symbolize the sun.

In order to reach the exalted position of Arch-Druid, or spiritual head of the organization, it was necessary for a priest to pass through the six successive degrees of the Druidic Order. (The members of the different degrees were differentiated by the colors of their sashes, for all of them wore robes of white.) Some writers are of the opinion that the title of Arch-Druid was hereditary, descending from father to son, but it is more probable that the honor was conferred by ballot election. Its recipient was chosen for his virtues and integrity from the most learned members of the highest Druidic degrees.

According to James Gardner, there were usually two Arch-Druids on Britain, one residing on the Isle of Anglesea and the other on the Isle of Man. Presumably there were others in Gaul. These dignitaries generally carried golden scepters and were crowned with wreaths of oak leaves, symbolic of their authority. The younger members of the Druidic Order were clean-shaven and modestly dressed, but the more aged had long gray beards and wore magnificent golden ornaments. The educational system of the Druids in Britain was superior to that of their colleagues on the Continent, and consequently many of the Gallic youths were sent to the Druidic colleges in Britain for their philosophical instruction and training.

Eliphas Levi states that the Druids lived in strict abstinence, studied the natural sciences, preserved the deepest secrecy, and admitted new members only after long probationary periods. Many of the priests of the order lived in buildings not unlike the monasteries of the modern world. They were associated in groups like ascetics of the Far East. Although celibacy was not demanded of them, few married. Many of the Druids retired from the world and lived as recluses in caves, in rough-stone houses, or in little shacks built in the depths of a forest. Here they prayed and meditated, emerging only to perform their religious duties.

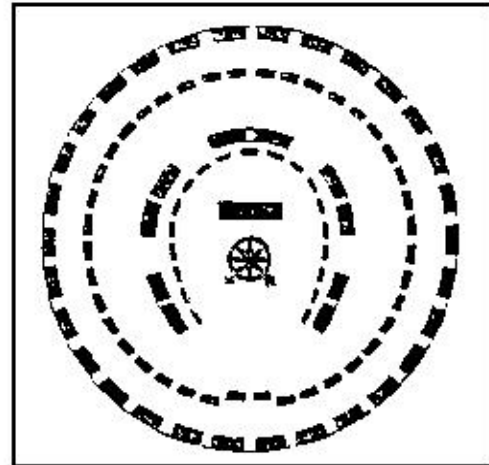
James Freeman Clarke, in his *Ten Great Religions*, describes the beliefs of the Druids as follows:

‘The Druids believed in three worlds and in transmigration from one to the other: In a world above this, in which happiness predominated; a world below, of misery; and in this present state. This transmigration was to punish and reward and also to purify the soul. In the present world, said they, Good and Evil are so exactly balanced that man has the utmost freedom and is able to choose or reject either. The Welsh Triads tell us there are three objects of metempsychosis: to collect into the soul the properties of all being, to acquire a knowledge of all things, and to get power to conquer evil. There are also, they say, three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the nature of each thing, of its cause, and its influence. There are three things which continually grow less: darkness, falsehood, and death. There are three which constantly increase: light, life, and truth.’

Like nearly all schools of the Mysteries, the teachings of the Druids were divided into two distinct sections. The simpler, a moral code, was taught to all the people, while the deeper, esoteric doctrine was given only to initiated priests. To be admitted to the order, a candidate was required to be of good family and of high moral character. No important secrets were entrusted to him until he had been tempted in many ways and his strength of character severely tried. The Druids taught the people of Britain and Gaul concerning the immortality of the soul. They believed in transmigration and apparently in reincarnation. They borrowed in one life, promising to pay back in the next. They believed in a purgatorial type of hell where they would be purged of their sins, afterward passing on to the happiness of unity with the gods. The Druids taught that all men would be saved, but that some must return to earth many times to learn the lessons of human life and to overcome the inherent evil of their own natures.

Before a candidate was entrusted with the secret doctrines of the Druids, he was bound with a vow of secrecy. These doctrines were imparted only in the depths of forests and in the darkness of caves. In these places, far from the haunts of men, the neophyte was instructed concerning the creation of the universe, the personalities of the gods, the laws of Nature, the secrets of occult medicine, the mysteries of the celestial bodies, and the rudiments of magic and sorcery. The Druids had a great number of feast days. The new and full moon and the sixth day of the moon were sacred periods. It is believed that initiations took place only at the two solstices and the two equinoxes. At dawn of the 25th day of December, the birth of the Sun God was celebrated.

The secret teachings of the Druids are said by some to be tinctured with Pythagorean philosophy. The Druids had a Madonna, or Virgin Mother, with a Child in her arms, who was sacred to their Mysteries; and their Sun God was resurrected at the time of the year corresponding to that at which modern Christians celebrate Easter.



From Maurice's *Indian Antiquities*

THE GROUND PLAN OF STONEHENGE

The Druid temples or places of religious worship were not patterned after those of other nations. Most of their ceremonies were performed at night, either in thick groves of Oak trees or around open-air altars built of great uncut stones. How these masses of rock were moved has not been satisfactorily explained. The most famous of these altars, a great ring of rocks, is Stonehenge, in Southwestern England. This structure, laid out on an astronomical basis, still stands, a wonder of antiquity.

Both the cross and the serpent were sacred to the Druids, who made the former by removing all the branches of an oak tree and fastening one to the main trunk in the form of the letter T. This oaken cross became symbolic of their superior Deity. They also worshiped the sun, moon, and stars. The moon received their special veneration. Caesar stated that Mercury was one of the chief deities of the Gauls. The Druids are believed to have worshiped Mercury under the similitude of a stone cube. They also had great veneration for the Nature spirits (fairies, gnomes, and undines), little creatures of the forests and rivers to whom many offerings were made. Describing the temples of the Druids, Charles Heckethorn, in *The Secret Societies of All Ages & Countries*, says:

“Their temples wherein the sacred fire was preserved were generally situated on eminences and in dense groves of oak, and assumed various forms — circular, because a circle was the emblem of the universe; oval, in allusion to the mundane egg, from which issued, according to the traditions of many nations, the universe, or, according to others, our first parents; serpentine, because a serpent was the symbol of Hu, the Druidic Osiris; cruciform, because a cross is an emblem of regeneration; or winged, to represent the motion of the Divine Spirit.... Their chief deities were reducible to two — a male and a female, the great father and mother — Hu and Ceridwen, distinguished by the same characteristics as belong to Osiris and Isis, Bacchus and Ceres, or any other supreme god and goddess representing the two principles of all Being.”

Godfrey Higgins states that *Hu*, the Mighty, came from a place which the Welsh *Triads* call the Summer Country, the present site of Constantinople. Albert Pike says that the Lost Word of Masonry is concealed in the name of the Druid god *Hu*. The meager information extant concerning the secret initiations of the Druids indicates a decided similarity between their Mystery school and

the schools of Greece and Egypt **Hu**, the Sun God, was murdered and, after a number of strange ordeals and mystic rituals, was restored to life.

There were three degrees of the Druidic Mysteries, but few successfully passed them all. The candidate was buried in a coffin, as symbolic of the death of the Sun God. The supreme test, however, was being sent out to sea in an open boat. While undergoing this ordeal, many lost their lives. Taliesin, an ancient scholar, who passed through the Mysteries, describes the initiation of the open boat in Faber's *Pagan Idolatry*. The few who passed this third degree were said to have been "born again," and were instructed in the secret and hidden truths which the Druid priests had preserved from antiquity. From these initiates were chosen many of the dignitaries of the British religious and political world. (For further details, see Faber's *Pagan Idolatry*, Albert Pike's *Morals and Dogma*, and Godfrey Higgins' *Celtic Druids*.)

THE RITES OF MITHRAS

When the Persian Mysteries immigrated into Southern Europe, they were quickly assimilated by the Latin mind. The cult grew rapidly, especially among the Roman soldiery, and during the Roman wars of conquest the teachings were carried by the legionaries to nearly all parts of Europe. So powerful did the cult of Mithras become that at least one Roman Emperor was initiated into the order, which met in caverns under the city of Rome. Concerning the spread of this Mystery school through different parts of Europe, C.W. King, in his *Gnostics and Their Remains*, says:

"Mithraic bas-reliefs cut on the faces of rocks or on stone tablets still abound in the countries formerly the western provinces of the Roman Empire; many exist in Germany, still more in France, and in this island (Britain) they have often been discovered on the line of the Picts' Wall and the noted one at Bath."

Alexander Wilder, in his *Philosophy and Ethics of the Zoroastrians*, states that **Mithras** is the Zend title for the sun, and he is supposed to dwell within that shining orb. **Mithras** has a male and a female aspect, though not himself androgynous. As **Mithras**, he is the lord of the sun, powerful and radiant, and most magnificent of the *Yazatas* (Izads, or Genii, of the sun). As **Mithra**, this deity represents the feminine principle; the mundane universe is recognized as her symbol. She represents Nature as receptive and terrestrial, and as fruitful only when bathed in the glory of the solar orb. The Mithraic cult is a simplification of the more elaborate teachings of Zarathustra (Zoroaster), the Persian fire magician.

According to the Persians, there coexisted in eternity two principles. The first of these, **Ahura Mazda**, or **Ormuzd**, was the Spirit of Good. From Ormuzd came forth a number of hierarchies of good and beautiful spirits (angels and archangels). The second of these eternally existing principles was called **Ahriman**. He was also a pure and beautiful spirit, but he later rebelled against Ormuzd, being jealous of his power. This did not occur, however, until Ormuzd had created light, for previously Ahriman had not been conscious of the existence of Ormuzd. Because of his jealousy and rebellion, Ahriman became the Spirit of Evil. From himself he individualized a host of destructive creatures to injure Ormuzd.

When Ormuzd created the earth, Ahriman entered into its grosser elements. Whenever Ormuzd did a good deed, Ahriman placed the principle of evil within it. At last when Ormuzd created the human race, Ahriman became incarnate in the lower nature of man so that in each personality the Spirit of Good and the Spirit of Evil struggle for control. For 3,000 years Ormuzd ruled the celestial world with light and goodness. Then he created man. For another 3,000 years Ormuzd he ruled man with wisdom and integrity. Then the power of Ahriman began, and the struggle for the soul of man continues through the next period of 3,000 years. During the fourth period of 3,000 years, the power of Ahriman will be destroyed. Good will return to the world again, evil and death will be vanquished, and at last the Spirit of Evil will bow humbly before the throne of Ormuzd. While Ormuzd and Ahriman are struggling for control of the human soul and for supremacy in Nature, Mithras, God of Intelligence, stands as mediator between the two. Many authors have noted the similarity between mercury and Mithras. As the chemical mercury acts as a solvent (according to alchemists), so Mithras seeks to harmonize the two celestial opposites.

There are many points of resemblance between Christianity and the cult of Mithras. One of the reasons for this probably is that the Persian mystics invaded Italy during the first century after Christ and the early history of both cults was closely interwoven. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* makes the following statement concerning the Mithraic and Christian Mysteries:

“The fraternal and democratic spirit of the first communities and their humble origin; the identification of the object of adoration with light and the sun; the legends of the shepherds with their gifts and adoration, the flood, and the ark the representation in art of the fiery chariot, the drawing of water from the rock; the use of sanctification of Sunday and of the 25th of December; the insistence on moral conduct, the emphasis placed on abstinence and self-control; the doctrine of heaven and hell, of primitive revelation, of the mediation of the Logos emanating from the divine, the atoning sacrifice, the constant warfare between good and evil, and the final triumph of the former, the immortality of the soul, the destruction of the universe - [these] are some of the resemblances which, whether real or only apparent, enabled Mithraism to prolong its resistance to Christianity.”

The rites of Mithras were performed in caves. Porphyry, in his *Cave of the Nymphs*, states that Zarathustra (Zoroaster) was the first to consecrate a cave to the worship of God, because a cavern



From Lundy's *Monumental Christianity*

MITHRAS SLAYING THE BULL

The most famous sculpturings and reliefs of this *protokos* show Mithras kneeling upon the recumbent form of a great bull, into whose throat he is driving a sword. The slaying of the bull signifies that the rays of the sun, symbolized by the sword, release at the vernal equinox the vital essences of the earth — the blood of the bull—which, pouring from the wound made by the Sun God, fertilize the seeds of living things. Dogs were held sacred to the cult of Mithras, being symbolic of sincerity and trustworthiness. The Mithraics used the serpent as an emblem of Ahriman, the Spirit of Evil, and water rats were held sacred to him. The bull is esoterically the Constellation of Taurus; the serpent, its opposite in the zodiac, Scorpio; the Sun, Mithras, entering into the side of the bull, slays the celestial creature and nourishes the universe with its blood.

was symbolic of the earth, or the lower world of darkness. John P Lundy, in his *Monumental Christianity*, describes the cave of Mithras as follows:

“But this cave was adorned with the signs of the zodiac, Cancer and Capricorn. The summer and winter solstices were chiefly conspicuous, as the gates of souls descending into this life, or passing out of it in their ascent to the Gods; Cancer being the gate of descent, and Capricorn of ascent. These are the two avenues of the immortals passing up and down from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth.”

The so-called chair of St. Peter, in Rome, was believed to have been used in one of the pagan Mysteries, possibly that of Mithras, in whose subterranean grottoes the votaries of the Christian Mysteries met in the early days of their faith. In *Anacalypsis*, Godfrey Higgins writes that in 1662, while cleaning this sacred chair of Bar-Jonas, the Twelve Labors of Hercules were discovered upon it, and that later the French discovered upon the same chair the Mohammedan confession of faith, written in Arabic.

Initiation into the rites of Mithras, like initiation into many other ancient schools of philosophy, apparently consisted of three important degrees. Preparation for these degrees consisted of self-purification, the building up of intellectual powers, and the control of the animal nature. In the first degree the candidate was given a crown upon the point of a sword and instructed in the mysteries of Mithras' hidden power. Probably he was taught that the golden crown represented his own spiritual nature, which must be objectified and unfolded before he could truly glorify Mithras; for Mithras was his own soul, standing as mediator between Ormuzd, his spirit, and Ahriman, his animal nature.

In the second degree he was given the armor of intelligence and purity and sent into the darkness of subterranean pits to fight the beasts of lust, passion, and degeneracy. In the third degree he was given a cape, upon which were drawn or woven the signs of the zodiac and other astronomical symbols. After his initiations were over, he was hailed as one who had risen from the dead, was instructed in the secret teachings of the Persian mystics, and became a full-fledged member of the order. Candidates who successfully passed the Mithraic initiations were called Lions, and were marked upon their foreheads with the Egyptian cross. Mithras himself is often pictured with the head of a lion and two pairs of wings. Throughout the entire ritual were repeated references to the birth of Mithras as the Sun God, his sacrifice for man, his death that men might have eternal life, and lastly, his resurrection and the saving of all humanity by his intercession before the throne of Ormuzd. (See Heckethorn.)

While the cult of Mithras did not reach the philosophic heights attained by Zarathustra, its effect upon the civilization of the Western world was far-reaching, for at one time nearly all Europe was converted to its doctrines. Rome, in her intercourse with other nations, inoculated them with her religious principles; and many later institutions have exhibited Mithraic culture. The reference to the “Lion” and the “Grip of the Lion’s Paw” in the Master Mason’s degree have a strong Mithraic tinge and may easily have originated from this cult. A ladder of seven rungs appears in the Mithraic initiation. Faber is of the opinion that this ladder was originally a pyramid of seven steps. It is possible that the Masonic ladder with seven rungs had its origin in this Mithraic symbol. Women were never permitted to enter the Mithraic Order, but children of the male sex were initiates long



From Montfaucon's *Antiquities*

THE BIRTH OF MITHRAS

Mithras was born out of a rock, which, breaking open, permitted him to emerge. This occurred in the darkness of a subterranean chamber. The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem confirms the theory that Jesus was born in a grotto, or cave. According to Dupuis, Mithras was put to death by crucifixion and rose again on the third day.

before they reached maturity. The refusal to permit women to join the Masonic Order may be based on the esoteric reason given in the secret instructions of the Mithraics. This cult is another excellent example of those secret societies whose legends are largely symbolic representations of the sun and his journey through the houses of the heavens. Mithras, rising from a stone, is merely the sun rising over the horizon, or, as the ancients supposed, out of the horizon, at the vernal equinox.

John O'Neill disputes the theory that Mithras was intended as a solar deity. In *The Night of the Gods* he writes: "The Avescan Mithra, the *yazata* of light, has '10,000 eyes, high, with full knowledge (*perethuvacdayana*), strong, sleepless and ever awake (*jaghaurvaunghem*),' The supreme god Ahura Mazda also has one Eye, or else it is said that 'with his eyes, the sun, moon and stars, he sees everything.' The theory that Mithra was *originally* a title of the supreme heavens — god — putting the sun out of court — is the only one that answers all requirements. It will be evident that here we have origins in abundance for the Freemason's Eye and its '*nonquam dormio*.'" The reader must not confuse the Persian Mithra with the Vedic Mitra. According to Alexander Wilder, "The Mithraic rites superseded the Mysteries of Bacchus, and became the foundation of the Gnostic system, which for many centuries prevailed in Asia, Egypt, and even the remote West."

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