

The Ancient Mystery Schools

T065 The Inner Teachings 24th November 1937 Pembroke Hall, London

Invocation:

Eternal Love! We pray that we may become Thy love. We pray for the love to forgive those who trespass against us, that we may in turn be forgiven our trespasses. We pray for Thy peace, the peace of the ages, of the eternal wisdom, which knows no fear, no desire, nothing but Thee. Spread over this meeting Thy peace.

Amen.

Our talk is planned to follow talks already given on the path of the spiritual pilgrimage and on the power of thought. When we speak of the ancient mystery schools, you ask what is meant by the term. Briefly, we endeavour tonight to give you some simple ideas on the mystery schools of the ages. We can but sketch or outline these paths of spiritual progress, and you, my brother or sister, must follow the lines indicated.

How did the ancient mystery schools originate? You know that this world is far older than is thought. To speak of the age of man* in thousands of years is a mistake. In far-off days, when the human cycle was in process of being born, there came to this planet the wise men, the God-men, from worlds which had advanced far beyond any spiritual growth known in human evolution on earth today. These wise men—or God-men—brought the Secret Doctrine, or the mysteries of nature. They came to establish on the earth schools of wisdom. Temples were erected wherein the training of those sons of men able to assimilate this Ancient Wisdom took place, and the students instructed in the nature mysteries, the mysteries of life, of the universe, of all the arts and sciences. They were taught from the invisible worlds also.

*[*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction.]*

Remember, all [that] the world contains is first born from the invisible, and comes through into physical or outer manifestation; so in these schools of learning or of light, the mysteries of life, even before manifest on earth, were recorded. To this day are preserved in the secret places of the earth, tablets of stone upon which these ancient secrets are written in symbol; in the mountains, in the caves, or the temples. These records speak to the wise, the just and the true, to those who have traversed the path of light and become initiates of the secret mysteries: the masters of the wisdom, of the records of the ages. Such records are also imprinted on the ether, and are the etheric or akashic records*.

*[*See teachings T 112, T 169, T 221, T 226, T 229, T 269, T 280.]*

Always the same path is revealed, for whilst there are seven great mystery schools—schools of the wisdom of the gods, seven seemingly different paths by which man may travel—the fundamentals, or rules, are the same, the principles identical. One universal law governs the seven schools established by the God-men, sometimes referred to as the serpent-gods, because the serpent is the ancient symbol of the Secret Wisdom.

Today all men are free to follow the path, if they will, towards the mysteries. Some may speed and others loiter, but once man desires wisdom, not for his own satisfaction, not

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because of curiosity, but that he may labour to serve his fellows, then his feet are placed on the path which leads ultimately to the house of light. When a soul, out of this great longing, finds himself, he is assisted with teaching, with guidance from the invisible. Then it is well for him to abide on the one path, for it is not good to sample many paths because they will lead to a cul-de-sac. Follow the one path, follow the light and guidance from your invisible teachers. The mysteries of the invisible worlds will be revealed to your diligence and in the degree you give selfless service. There are many ways of serving, and no student is bound to follow the path set by others; he should follow the light which shines from his own spirit.

These mystery schools of the past served a great purpose. They revealed the one true life, the life of the spirit. They revealed to men the origin of their birth, the path man was destined to tread. In the schools of Atlantis the third eye (now withdrawn into the brain and known to medical science as the pineal gland) began to withdraw and ceased to function, and so the invisible worlds became hidden. Did the vision of man fail, or did the invisible worlds actually withdraw? Both, for man had then to develop physically and mentally, and his will had to become deepened, developed, strengthened. In other words, men ceased to be as children under the care of parents—the parents being the God-men, the guardians of the human family. Man had to learn, even as a babe, to stumble to his feet, to grow in stature and godliness, to learn to use the God-powers wisely.

As power grew in man, there were those who misused it. Perhaps the teachers, or the young priests, trained by the Masters, became too eager and admitted students unable to stand up to the invisible powers revealed. At all events, we find deterioration. Then there came that which is known as magic of the black—black as against the white magic—but rather was it ignorance and misuse of power, much as man today is still misusing the powers of art and music, of science and literature and vision. The perversion of God's pure and lovely gifts is as prevalent today, only perhaps in a different form, as of old, when the masters of the wisdom withdrew. Then the schools of the pure white light, the white magic, departed into the secret places, where they are now established. But there comes forth from time to time a teacher who presents to humanity once more the simple truth, unveiled, ungarnished, wholly beautiful. Those people who respond find themselves on the path. They may be childlike, simple folk, but the fact of their response means that they are helped. It takes a long time, usually, for the student to advance to the degree of disciple and initiate.

Remember, then, the very first indication of truth, of true teaching, is simplicity, simplicity and then profundity. Call to mind the simple and yet profound revelation of the Master Jesus and that of the Lord Buddha. Look, then, for simplicity first in all revelation. Then follow diligently; put into practice the actual *being*, being and becoming in very truth those beautiful truths which have been revealed. Seek no short cut into the temple. There can be no gate-crashing: only a steady upward climb, and many a test must be passed.

The training in the temple of the olden days, the seclusion and isolation which enabled the student finally to graduate, is gone; today your life must be spent in a workaday world. In the West, the people are not shielded from the temptation of the outer world, but rather the student is subject to the continual pull of the lower world, of excitements and the passions of

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the physical life. Of old, the student withdrew, quietly pursued the path, worked diligently, gave healing to the sick and comfort to those who mourned. Powers came which enabled him to draw aside the veil between his and the invisible worlds. These same powers can be yours today, but you must literally go forth to the battlefield of life and there learn to discriminate between the false and the true, between the real and the unreal—not easy, oh we know it is not easy!

Many now living were once workers in the Egyptian temples, particularly those servers in some simple and humble centres of spiritual light. Those drawn to such places have already learned certain inner truths which abide, because while the physical life passes, and even the personality brought onward from the past to a future life is dropped and hung up in the 'wardrobe' above (there to wait until required for use), the inner wisdom once learned from a mystery school is never lost. That is why many of you feel the stirring—the ancient wisdom—within your breast. You do not need to be convinced; you know, because you have once seen into the invisible world, and you know.

But there are those yet seeking for conviction because the hunger of love within urges them to find out where some loved one goes at death. For these there is the science becoming known as survivalism, which enables a man to obtain proof of the continuity of life after death. Never mind if the seeker only contacts the immediate next world, the lower astral plane. All serves a purpose and is true, and it is right that communication and proofs should be given to the enquirer, but the deeper students of the mystery schools know that life is continuous. If you know, then the light is born within; you leave behind the search for evidence, which is but an endless repetition like a gramophone record ever repeating the same thing. The light within says 'I know; there is no death; my loved one cannot die; he still lives, serving in God's great vineyard. My work is so to prepare myself that I can be an ever-increasing vessel for the light of God—a light to lighten the way for all struggling in the darkness.' Remember, then, you are called to serve because in the past you were a student. Maybe you failed. Some do; many indeed, even as children may fail in their examinations at schools, but God is loving. Remember, it is no disgrace to have failed. Go forward, inspired to fresh effort, determined to do your best when the next opportunity comes.

There are three major steps into the mystery schools, and these are clearly revealed to masonic* brethren. We will explain them to the ordinary listener in this way: the first degree is that of the student, the learner. When the feet are set on the path and the desire to learn becomes urgent, the student attracts the attention of the great Lords of Karma; the student is saying: 'I want knowledge; I want to grow; I want to be of use to God and to the Masters. Make me worthy, O God, to be Thy servant.' Then comes the process of purification. Let us remember that the higher vehicles of man need much cleansing. By 'higher vehicles' is meant the invisible vehicles, which along with the physical need purification, because much has been gathered into them which hinders and obstructs. Therefore frequently there comes into the life passage of the student trouble, sickness, suffering; one may be born in a crippled body, endure great tragedy, possibly even commit crime. That sounds unlikely, perhaps? We see beneath the surface, and ordinary man cannot. We see ever in the sorrows of humanity the working out of karma. We know that this or that soul maybe takes to itself suffering and

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degradation because it needs purging of conditions which were perhaps brought about in a previous incarnation. We would remind you that suffering and sorrow and separation from loved ones may be your own choice, your karma, which the highest part of you has selected, so that you could be prepared, purified, made ready to be received.

*[*White Eagle refers to masonry as a form of universal truth or teaching, with no specific reference to the freemasonry of today.]*

The next step—the second degree—is that of the disciple. The disciple must learn obedience, implicit obedience to the master of wisdom and truth. The disciple learns to be exact and precise in all his working: no slipshod methods about the disciple. He works with his ‘tools’ upon his lower self, shaping and perfecting it. The disciple, then, follows the master of truth and wisdom. The master Christ within his own breast, and the master of wisdom who teaches him wisdom and the way of life. Absolute truth and honesty, then, is demanded of the disciple. No deception: deception there cannot be in the second degree.

The third degree is when the disciple is ready to receive illumination, when he can be trusted to receive the secrets of heaven; when, in other words, he is able to come into the presence of the Lord as an initiate. He must be able to function on the invisible planes freely, for true initiation only takes place in the invisible, on the higher planes, for the initiate is a soul touched by the master’s hand and raised to a sublime degree. He is one born again from the grave of materialism and illusion—the grave of earth; one born again into the true light of his heavenly home. By some this is described as the second death. Initiation takes place on the invisible planes of life, and the initiate is then at-one with his brothers in the grand school or the Great White Lodge.

Thus do the brothers of the light work on, having purged themselves of all selfish desire. They are the white-robed brethren, crowned with the crown of illumination, and stand around the throne, and they take off their crowns and cast them at the feet of God. A mystery, meaning that all they have learned, all attainment, all glory which has become part of them, is not for themselves. They lay it all before the Grand Master, the great Architect of the universe, that He may use it—use them unceasingly, in the great service of humanity, and in the creation of worlds yet to be, in the creation of great cycles of human life yet to be conceived. When such love for the Light, for God, is born in our hearts, telling us what is true and real, revealing to us the simple path of service, dare we turn back, dare we reject? Remember Lot’s wife!* Brethren, we can but go forward, each mounting the steps leading to the Grand Temple of Light. God help us in our search.

*[*See Genesis ch. 19]*

And now, with one accord let us stand in the open spaces, under the canopy of the blue sky and the stars of eternity, receiving the blessing of the peace of the spirit of Good [*sic*]. We thank Thee, our Father, now, and for ever.

Amen.

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The search matches with either words and phrases, which appear in the text, or the following 'key' words and phrases, which are similar in meaning to those in the document:

Brotherhood, unfoldment

