

# The Greek Mysteries

T045 The Inner Teachings 5th May 1937 Pembroke Hall, London

## Invocation:

O divine Spirit, cleanse our hearts and minds by the inflow of Thy love and wisdom. We call unto the angels of power, wisdom and love. We raise our consciousness to commune with those whom we call 'brother', who minister to their brethren on earth. May the power of the great hosts, the white-robed brethren enfold and bless each one in this assembly.

Amen.

Tonight we are to talk about the Greek mysteries. Most of you know something of the Greek myths, stories which without inner vision you cannot fully appreciate, for they contain a deep esoteric truth. Such truths were brought to mankind by messengers from other planets, for when this earth was brought into manifestation and humanity born upon it, messengers from other planets came to initiate those ready to receive the knowledge of the wisdom of the gods.

Therefore when studying what remains today of the Greek mysteries, bear in mind that these stories have their foundation in esoteric truth. Let us consider first the Eleusinian mysteries. We speak first of the lesser Eleusinian mysteries which were revealed to the people, to many thousands. Some here present in a previous incarnation without doubt have participated in these ceremonies. The main theme, the main truth of the lesser mysteries, was the descent of the soul into matter. This recalls the revelation brought to humanity at the beginning of the first earth cycle, when the soul born of the Father–Mother God must become immersed in a dense body to gain experience. The candidate was taken into the first hall or chamber of initiation practically unclothed, symbolising the pure soul innocent of material or earthly vesture.

You may be surprised to learn that the series of revelations made to the candidate of the lesser mysteries were very similar to the teachings now given in spiritualistic teachings concerning life on the astral plane. The candidate was shown, as a series of plays and pictures, the type of life which the soul would experience, such experience being always in accordance with the life the soul lived while in the physical body. By a series of pictures the candidate was taught (as many of you learned) that if the soul did not attune itself to the spiritual life whilst here on earth, it could not hope to find the heaven world after death. The primary truth underlying the lesser mysteries was therefore the story of the descent of the soul into the dense underworld.

A story illustrates this: was there not Persephone, daughter of Ceres (who might also be called Isis)? Persephone, gathering flowers, was suddenly snatched from the ideal life and drawn down into the underworld by Pluto. Again we find Persephone known as Psyche, or the soul, that spiritual aspect of man\* imprisoned into the underworld, or bodily life, to gain experience. Doubtless the Greek people did not interpret the story thus, but considered that Persephone represented the coming of spring and summer and her capture and imprisonment by Pluto, the God of darkness and chill winter.

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

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If the basic teaching of the lesser mysteries illustrated the descent of the soul into matter, the greater mysteries revealed the ascent, the soul's extrication from the underworld. We find also the story of Bacchus, he, Bacchus being the Sun, and the twelve titans or giants symbolising the twelve signs of the zodiac. You see the idea? When the soul or the Sun of God (which is within us all) descends into matter there comes a breaking up, a separating by those twelve signs. On the body of Bacchus all these signs were represented and had each a particular influence or 'pull', thus illustrating the influence of the signs and planets on the soul.

Another interesting point: did you ever learn of Orpheus playing beautiful music on a lyre with seven strings? Those seven strings referred to the seven aspects of man, the seven planes of spiritual life, the seven tones or harmonics, the seven centres in man. Orpheus expressed through his music the greater mysteries of the higher worlds.

We note that behind all these mythical characters stood a teacher, a master. From time to time one of the White Brotherhood came to earth and revealed the same story—presented in different ways, but ever the same. This we can trace through the Greek mysteries, in common with the Egyptian, Persian, Scandinavian and Indian mysteries, all instituted to teach inner truths which develop and foster powers such as the gods themselves possessed—the secrets of nature, of the physical body, of the higher bodies, of the planets, of the seasons, of the four elements—all were revealed to the initiate according to the degree being taken.

In the Eleusinian mysteries, after the candidate had successfully passed the searching tests put to him to see if he were still resolute to pursue the 'Golden Fleece' (some call it the Holy Grail, the eternal light, the heavenly home)—if still desirous to go forward, he was admitted into the greater mysteries.

Only the few were admitted, those who had proved themselves worthy and ready. Great tests were put. The candidate endured physical and mental suffering, and proved that he was strong and sufficiently wise, that he would not abuse the secrets revealed to him, nor use them to harm his brethren, but only for the good of the whole race or community.

First he was taught how to unfold the powers of the soul or the psyche; he was instructed in the method of quickening the sacred centres of the body; the mysteries, the rites, were performed to test the candidate, to instruct him step by step on the upward path, to help him contact the seven planes of life. It is not possible to impart to you the methods conveyed to the candidate for the quickening of the centres, because they can only be given to those ready.

In these Greek mysteries we find beautiful truths of the spiritual life, though no more than many of you have already received in your present incarnation. The soul moves on the spiral, each cycle higher than the last; the consciousness is ever unfolding, so that the soul understands higher truths at each stage. Many tonight know these inner truths in a simpler and more spiritual way. Man no longer passes through these things physically, because the mind has so grown and developed as to appreciate and understand on the mental plane more easily than in those days of the Eleusinian and Orphic mysteries, and those of Bacchus.

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It is certain that the Greek mysteries took their origin from the lost continents. We trace it right back via Egypt and the East—exactly the same old story as in your Christian Bible. Note that Orpheus, one of the most beautiful of the Greek characters, when destroyed by his enemies and thrown into the other world, decided not to reincarnate again as a human being but as a swan. The swan is a symbol of an illumined one or an initiate. His lyre was symbolical of the seven spheres of spiritual life upon which he played his harmonies and thus revealed to the brethren the truth of the higher worlds.

Q. Were the Greek mysteries further advanced than the Egyptian?

A. Yes, the Greek mysteries were a restatement of the same truth, which had become distorted, much as today the pure Christian teaching has become misrepresented. When the World Teacher comes again, as he is due to come soon, we shall get a fresh and therefore advanced interpretation of these mysteries.

Q. Were not the Egyptian mysteries debased?

A. Yes, because the power which is released reveals to the candidate that which can be attained or received by certain practices. There is a temptation for the candidate to use the power wrongly. As time advanced, knowledge got into the wrong hands, and so the mysteries became debased and finally of course disappeared.

Q. After that particular race had served its purpose?

A. Yes.

Q. Would not the pictures or symbols be given for the candidate to interpret for himself, therefore he would only get illumination through his own light and not any outside teacher?

A. In all mystery teaching that is the way. In freemasonry\* for instance the inner truth is wrapped up in mystery and allegory, and it is for the candidate to extract what he can from those presentations. It is a question of the interpretation given to the soul from within. This is where some may have gone off the true path.

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

Q. Did not the debasement come when the priesthood tried to force their interpretation of the mysteries on the candidate?

A. Yes. Desire to gain power was the reason. The priests would resort to wrong methods in order to maintain their power.

Q. Are souls incarnate today, and which were incarnate at the time of the Greek mysteries, working under the same master still?

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A.No, it is not a rule. It is possible, even in the present day of life, for one master to take a pupil for guidance and then for that pupil to be handed over to another master for certain teaching. The masters are evolving, even as you are. They are not static. You may be linked to one who gave you help in the Greek mysteries, but he would be very much more advanced on the path today than then.

Q.The Greeks excelled in architecture and sculpture rather than music, did they not?

A.Please do not accept what we say as being the end-all and be-all, but we suggest to you that the Greeks presented an aspect of universal truth in architecture and art. The particular aspect of the Greek was the expression of harmony through form rather than through sound. At the time of the Greek mysteries the mystical and spiritual truths found expression only in beauty of form and architecture.

Q.When the candidate was being prepared for an experience on the mental plane, did they concentrate on certain centres at the base of the spine?

A.Yes.

Q.Were not the Greeks more concerned with the preparing of a developed physical body as a beautiful temple for the soul?

A.Of course; one of the aspects of truth presented to the candidate—the beauty and perfection of the temple in which dwelt the psyche, so that it should not endure too much ugliness and suffering.

We feel such a sense of limitation, in that we are unable to give you the tremendous truth we would like. If only you knew how much there is to learn, to receive, and to give as you travel the path of spiritual illumination! You are working on a different plane today from the days of the Greek mysteries. The stories were presented as the outer crust or shell; within was a kernel of truth and beauty which your light within may interpret far more beautifully than in the days gone by.

During the next week keep poised and calm and do your best to send forth in the world streams of light and love. Let nothing shake you. Bless and love all men—not one thought of darkness nor regret must be allowed to remain in your mind. Thank God for His love, and bless all men.

## Benediction:

And now may the peace of the eternal Spirit dwell with you all. O God, Thou knowest the aspirations of each heart; we thank Thee for the revelations of the spiritual world, and pray that we may have increased courage to go forward steadily on the path of life.

Amen.

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*Ancient civilisations, ancient religions, myth, legend, astrology, Greece*

