

THE
TRAINING AND WORK
OF AN INITIATE

By
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FOREWORD

ALTHOUGH *The Training and Work of an Initiate* is complete in itself, and an entirely independent work, it is complementary to the author's previous book, *The Esoteric Orders and their Work*.

Consequently, many points which are dealt with at length in that book are only touched upon briefly in these pages.

The two books, taken together, cover the whole field of initiation upon the Right-hand Path of the Western Tradition. Information concerning the nature and working of the Black Lodges is given in another of Dion Fortune's books, *Sane Occultism*.

INTRODUCTION

Of all those who study the spiritual science that used to be called occult, or hidden, but is fast ceasing to deserve that name, not many will ever go on to the higher degrees of initiation and aspire after adepthood. We may reasonably ask, if this science is literally esoteric or reserved for the few, whether it is worth while for those who cannot dedicate their whole lives to its pursuit to study it at all?

It cannot be denied that the higher achievements in any pursuit can be obtained only by the man who gives his life to it. Esoteric science is no exception to this rule. Nevertheless, it has a very great deal to give even to those who only touch the hem of its garment. From its teachings there arises a philosophy of life which not only illumines our profounder problems, but shines on our daily path and reveals significances of which we have never dreamt. It shows us that our individual lives, and every happening of those lives, is an integral part of the cosmic whole ; it shows us our individual relationship to that whole. A knowledge of even the elements of esoteric science leads to a complete change of all our values. We see that things we considered of supreme importance are not the vital points we thought they were ; we see that things we did not think mattered at all are the real strategic centres of our lives.

Moreover, we find that there are certain powers in our minds, not in the least rare or supernatural, for we are using them every day, which, if developed and consciously directed, will produce the most remarkable results.

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Generally speaking, there is no reason why everybody who is drawn towards the study of occultism should not make a beginning with the use of these powers. Unless deliberately perverted to evil they can be productive of nothing but good, and the results which they will yield to steady and regular application, even if the time that can be given is no more than a few minutes a day, are amazing in their cumulative effects.

It is not everybody who is ready for initiation. It is said that it takes three lives of steadfast effort to find the Path ; but even if we see no likelihood of the goal being achieved in this life, let us remember that everything must have a beginning, and we cannot have a third life of achievement until we have had a first and second life of preparation. Even if we have no hope of making this life one of achievement we can resolve to make it one of preparation, and as time on the Inner Planes is measured differently from time on the earth-plane, it may be that we shall achieve more than we had ever thought was possible.

Some things at least we shall not fail to achieve, and that right speedily—a new interest in life, an unfailing spring of hope and inspiration, and the ability to straighten out some of life's lesser tangles. Above all, we shall be lifted into a serener air, clear of the accumulated heap of daily pettiness that threatens to bury us. We shall have ceased to wander aimlessly through life, day succeeding day and bringing us nowhere. The sense of aimlessness will be gone and we shall have got a key to the problems of existence.

The philosophy of the initiates can be brought home to men's business and bosoms, and throws light on many of the dark places of life. The wider it is spread among man-

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kind, the better is the purpose of the Inner Plane hierarchy served. Let no one turn away because they feel they are not ready for it or it is too profound for them. There is something for everybody ; each one can take just as much as he needs and make use of it. That which he has not got he cannot, of course, make use of ; but even that which the smallest cup can carry away is the true water of life.

Neither are we obliged to come once and once only to the well ; we can return again and again with our pitcher. Therefore let no one despair or be faint-hearted, there is room for all and something for everybody.

PART I

ETHICAL

CHAPTER I

LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

THERE has always been a widespread belief that some men know more than others, and that instead of sharing certain aspects of their knowledge with their fellow-men, as they were willing, nay eager, to do with certain other aspects of it, they kept them sedulously to themselves, or communicated them only to a chosen few, whom they either bound to inviolable secrecy, or permitted to impart the knowledge in their turn only to those who were prepared to assume the same obligations and who were judged worthy to receive this great privilege. This tradition meets us in the literature of all peoples in all periods of their history, and we find the belief generally held that these secret doctrines concern the inner nature of man and the universe, the aspect that is not observable by the direct action of the five physical senses, but for whose perception the higher senses have to be brought into play. Further, it was generally believed that a large portion of the secret teaching was concerned with the training of its students to use these higher senses for the purpose of observation, as the student of the physical sciences is trained in laboratory technique and the use of the microscope. It was also held that occult science had its practical aspect, and that the knowledge of its laws conferred power in the subtler worlds, just as knowledge of natural laws conferred power in the dense physical world.

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That this knowledge was carefully guarded by those who were its custodians was also recognised, and throughout the ages the same reason for their caution was assigned ; that in the wrong hands this power, if abused, could produce serious harm, because men had no right to make use of it for any personal end, since it was derived from the Great Author of the Universe. The men who held it were trustees and not owners, and might not appropriate this sacred power to their own uses without being guilty of a crime against their God and their fellow-men ; and we have many traditions of the swift and heavy punishment which befell those who thus offended, either at the hands of their fellow-initiates, or of the higher powers against whom they had sinned.

It was also held, however, that although this knowledge was kept so secret that none knew where were its colleges, its libraries, or its students, yet if a man by his character and his life rendered himself a worthy recipient, sooner or later he was brought in contact with those who were competent to instruct him, and then he also passed under the ban of secrecy.

Literature and history bear universal testimony to the existence of this belief among all people in all ages ; many times has this belief been expressed, and as many times contradicted, only to be reasserted in each succeeding generation. That there can be no smoke without fire, and especially such a large volume of smoke as we see here, will be acknowledged by most people, and that this knowledge and method of training do actually exist as an organised system can be vouched for by many who have encountered them at first hand.

As of old, it is declared that it is only necessary for the student to fit himself for this knowledge for the mysterious

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currents that play upon the universe to bring him in contact with those who can enlighten him, and many can vouch from personal experience that this belief is well founded. Whosoever formulates, even sub-consciously, a wish to study the higher knowledge, will be given the opportunity to do so. Life by life, he will be given the training necessary to fit him for its study, until finally, if, through all the hard discipline to which he has been subjected, it has still maintained its place in his esteem as the one thing worth while, this sub-conscious wish will work through into consciousness ; that which was formless will become articulate, and the man will deliberately take up the quest of the evidence of things not seen.

What, then, can a man do so to cultivate his mind as to be ready for this higher knowledge when it shall come to him? What can he do by way of preliminary training, working as a solitary student, to fit himself for the reception of the knowledge he desires? The student who is not grounded in the elements cannot understand the advanced teaching, he who has no knowledge of arithmetic cannot grasp mathematics. "Earn the means first, God surely will contrive use for our earning," said one who himself had trodden the path of knowledge. What can the student do who has not yet found his Master?—though many lives before his Master must have found him, or he would not have attained the articulation of his wish. What can he do to make the utmost use of the material that lies to his hand, so that, when the time of his training shall come, there may be nothing left undone that could have been done before, and his progress may be unimpeded by the absence of that necessary ground-work of mental culture which it was in his power to lay while as yet he was without the gate? Much time is wasted in teaching a man what he

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ought to have learnt in the schoolroom in order to enable him to grasp the import of the knowledge of which his initiation makes him free.

It is true that, although glorious glimpses are caught by the intuition unaided by the intellect, much more is lost from sheer inability on the part of the student to grasp the significance of his opportunity. Infinite things can be perceived by the spiritual intuition, but unless the intellect be fitted to co-operate, these things can seldom be rendered of practical avail for the solution of world-problems. The mystic has his moments of ecstatic emotion during which he reaches great heights, but he is seldom able to bring back water from the wells of life for those he has left behind. It is only when each vehicle of consciousness in man is in perfect correlation that the current of inspiration can flow through him and be translated into manifestation in the physical world in which we are living to-day ; and while a man can learn great things and store them in his subconscious mind, it is only during the life in which he has learnt to correlate his vehicles so that he can bring the spiritual through into manifestation, that he can be of service to his fellow-men.

I would, therefore, urge those who desire the higher knowledge to set immediately about the task of correlating their vehicles of consciousness, and especially the mental one, so that when the higher knowledge is revealed to them they may act as links between that which is above and their fellow-men who as yet stand upon a lower step of the great stair. I would urge them, if they need any spur to this effort, to remember how much it would have meant to them, when they themselves stood upon that self-same step, had the help which it will be in their power to give been available. No effort after development is wasted, even if

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he who strives seems to lose sight of his goal and turn aside. It is the passage of many feet that widens the path for the multitude ; we, in our day, will never have to face such trials as did the earlier initiates who broke the way for us.

With regard to the practical consideration of the problems involved in this correlation of the vehicles of consciousness, it is important that the student should think of his vehicles as something separate from himself, as tools which he uses to carry out his work ; for this purpose he sharpens and cares for them, and the higher the level upon which he can accustom himself to function, the better start he will have when his opportunity presents itself. Few enlightened people identify themselves with their physical bodies, but many can live in their emotions ; some can think freely and coherently upon concrete subjects, but only a few can reason in terms of the abstract, and only one or two in a generation can experience the intuitions of the spiritual plane in such a way as to be able to think in terms of inceptive and unmanifest thought.

The initiates of the occult sciences are taught to function upon these different levels, to use a terminology derived from the East ; or, to express the same idea in Western words, to think in these different ways. Before we are ripe for a Master's teaching we have to conquer the physical and emotional levels for ourselves, for to this stage the normal state of evolution enables us to develop without any external interference. We must render the body an absolute servant which has no longer the power to make its needs imperative ; it is to this end that much of the extreme asceticism of the Yoga methods of India is directed. We of the West, however, do not practise these methods ; it is enough that the body should be rendered a voluntary collaborator and not an abject slave. Turn a man's desires

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towards a higher level, and they will automatically lift him there ; as a great Initiate said : " As a man thinks in his heart, so is he."

The emotions must flow freely, without conflict or distortion, in the channels which Nature has appointed for them before they can be lifted to a higher level. You cannot sublimate a pathology.

The direction of the energies of life must be removed from the domain of the desires to that of the will. Until this is done there can be no steady progression in any direction, for the desires are called forth from without, not directed from within, and vary with the external stimulus.

Let us now consider the culture of the mind in preparation for occult training. It must be remembered that there are two distinct levels of the mind, the region of concrete thought and the region of abstract thought, and each of these requires culture. To a man who is accustomed to think in nothing but concrete forms, the abstract appears meaningless when first he comes in contact with it. Its terms evoke no corresponding image in his consciousness, but are just so many words to him, and it is necessary to habituate the mind to think in ideas instead of images. One of the readiest ways to do this is the study of algebra, for here the mind is forced into an elementary type of abstract thought and acquires the habit of thinking of proportions apart from things. From this point advance may be made to the study of philosophy and metaphysics, and a good introduction to this study is Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*.

With regard to the level of concrete thinking, we can do much by way of preparation for the higher training. The field before us is wide, so wide that it would be difficult to extend our studies beyond the bounds of usefulness. The

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larger the sphere of our knowledge, the more numerous are our points of contact with the cosmos.

The student who wishes to acquire knowledge direct from the Cosmic Mind proceeds in much the same way as a patient who is submitting to psycho-analysis, only in this case his attention is directed outward and not inward. He starts with an idea in his own mind, and follows the chain of associated ideas till he reaches the root-complex in the Cosmic Consciousness. So it will be seen clearly that unless he has a starting-point in his own consciousness, some clear-cut idea fairly intimately connected with the subject of study, he cannot begin to wind in the links of the association chain and so draw the root-complex within the field of his consciousness.

The good occult student should have a sound general knowledge of natural science, history, mathematics and philosophy. He cannot, naturally, have a thorough knowledge of all these subjects, but he should know their outlines ; he should be familiar with the principles of all the sciences and know the methods of philosophy. Then, when he acquires special knowledge, he will be able to see it in relation to the cosmic scheme of which it forms a part, and hence will *know* it in a very different way from the man who perceives it apart from its environment. The one has the living plant in the garden under his observation, the other has the dried specimen in the herbarium. The relativity of knowledge has long been realised, but the unity of knowledge has not yet received justice. Although a man can only excel by specialisation, it is essential that he should have a background against which he can see his knowledge in perspective.

For the occult student there is another reason for this framework of general information ; in seeking to study by

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contacting the Cosmic Mind he will often gain access to a mass of miscellaneous ideas, but will frequently let slip a piece of priceless information for lack of realisation of its worth ; or bewildered by an unfamiliar terminology, he may not grasp the import of what he is learning.

The professors of a university are not willing to ground students in the elements of knowledge that belong to the schoolroom, and when the student wishes to undertake the higher studies of esoteric science, he should come as completely equipped as exoteric studies can make him.

CHAPTER II

THE WAY OF INITIATION

THE great majority of our fellow-men are willing to take the world as they find it, and so long as it does not treat them too hardly, they are content. Others, however, question what lies behind the world as they see it, and until they learn the answer to that question, suffer from the divine discontent which has for ever urged men to "seek beyond the skyline, where the strange roads go down."

Most men are also inclined to take for granted the inevitability of suffering, and unless they are brought into personal contact with some flagrant case, or are themselves the victims, they offer no protest ; others, however, seem to be so linked with the human race that they suffer with the suffering of humanity, and cannot accept happiness or peace for themselves while any are in grief or pain. In the older days such natures were few and far between, but now they are very many, and none who are observers of mankind can fail to be struck with this sense of fellowship with all things which is becoming increasingly common among us.

When we consider these two types in relation to the problem of evolution we can see that they react to it differently, yet that the result of their attitude is fundamentally the same ; the one type seeks to improve upon evolution by the application of science, so as to hasten the slow processes of Nature, the other seeks to lessen the suffering which the working out of Nature's plan entails ; and both seek knowledge in order that they may more efficiently serve their fellow-men.

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If we study the lives and writings of these men and women who sought to know, not merely for the sake of the knowledge, but in order to apply that knowledge to the relief of human suffering, we shall be struck by the fact that these lives have many things in common, factors which mark them off from the lives of eminent men of other types. They usually have from early childhood a sense of some work which they are to do; sooner or later they find this work, and never falter in their devotion to it; and thirdly, whether they are agnostics or believers (we seldom find atheists in their ranks), they have a sense of being in contact with something higher than themselves which uses them as instruments for the service of their fellows; and we also see that these people, though often frail of body, possess an almost superhuman power of endurance when in the service of this power, and that they invariably ascribe their strength to a source outside themselves.

We cannot fail to be struck by the fact that all these men and women, whatever may be the particular piece of work they are embarked upon, look upon life from the same standpoint, that of universal sympathy. We notice, moreover, if we observe them closely, that some, though not all, have tricks of phraseology in common, which indicates that they are familiar with some subject which has a terminology a little out of the ordinary, and that, although this subject is never directly referred to, its phraseology has influenced their literary style and unconsciously creeps into their writings.

We see then, that these workers for humanity had, one and all, community of character, and that some must also have had community of study. We also see that, one and all, they are no longer content to be borne along by the slow tide of natural evolution, but have commenced

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to swim. Self-consciousness has transcended the blind urge towards other things, and they dimly sense their goal, as it is said a thirsty horse will sense the presence of water afar off. And finally we notice that from afar off comes the response, and some power, such as material science takes no cognisance of, seems to co-operate with their efforts, to guide them in doubt and to support them in difficulties. The history of these individuals gives weight to the claim that this contact with something higher than themselves is no figment of an over-wrought imagination, for they achieved what men have seldom achieved, and with frail bodies endured what would have availed to break down the strongest.

What is this power that great souls contact? Esoteric tradition affirms that they take initiation of one kind or another ; for there are two kinds, physical and non-physical, which are usually taken together, though sometimes only one and not the other is experienced. The physical initiation admits to the study of the esoteric wisdom acquired by generations of men who sought beneath the surface of existence, who sought the inner meaning of things rather than their outer forms ; it admits the student to the fellowship and confidence of these men, and disposes them to share their knowledge and to accept the initiate as a co-worker or pupil.

The second form of initiation is declared to be a spiritual experience, wherein the soul establishes contact with the higher powers and is admitted to the fellowship of great souls on the Inner Planes. Of these two forms of initiation, sometimes one and sometimes another comes first ; sometimes the physical, the lesser initiation, is the earlier, and the student is then taught how to prepare himself for the spiritual experience. In other cases it is the spiritual

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initiation that comes first, and then the student is shortly afterwards placed in the way of taking the physical initiation if he so desires ; but esotericists are all agreed that, although individuals may not necessarily take both initiations, the one always carries with it the opportunity for the other.

How is it, we may ask ourselves, that any individual should come to step out of the march of evolution ? We notice, in the first place, that it is only men of advanced character who take this step. What is it that causes this abnormal development of character?

Esoteric science has its traditional explanation of this problem also. It begins by premising that the evolution in which we find ourselves taking part is not unique, but was preceded by other evolutions and will be succeeded by still others. It also declares that evolution is not a blind, mechanical, material process, explicable in terms of physics and chemistry, but is essentially a mental process, a coming into manifestation, the embodying in a concrete form of an idea in the Divine Mind. Esoteric science further declares that the subjects of this evolution can bear a part and aid in the work, for as soon as we become conscious of an idea that the Divine Mind is expressing, we ourselves are expressing it, we have given it a concrete form and embodied it in our lives, and so have ourselves taken up the work of evolution ; we are consciously co-operating with God ; for it is seldom that anyone who has achieved to the realisation of the greater purpose remains passive ; this great idea fructifies within him so vigorously that he is compelled to colonise mentally ; as a vigorous nation colonises physically.

We take spiritual initiation when we become conscious of the Divine within us, and thereby contact the Divine without us.

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It is well known that like attracts like, and that sooner or later we tend to drift into the society of our fellows. Especially is this true of those who have contacted the Divine ; the great mental currents which play through the cosmos, just as the invisible magnetic currents play round the earth, bear him to his appropriate place. This is why esoteric science never goes out to seek its pupils ; it knows that its pupils will come to it. We never see the occult lodges advertised on the hoardings, but we do feel the setting in of a current in men's minds.

What are the ways whereby a man reaches the point when he is ripe for this deep spiritual experience? We have seen that it is a particular type of character that takes initiation ; how is that character acquired? Esoteric science gives the explanation under the doctrine of reincarnation, the theory that the immortal soul takes many bodies, acquiring experience and character-growth in each, discarding each as its use is fulfilled and taking a new one for new work. Esoteric science always thinks in terms of an evolution, whereas the ordinary man thinks in terms of an incarnation, a single life ; this difference of view-point fundamentally influences their attitude towards life ; to the one, death is the end of all ; to the other it is the end of a phase. To the one it is a cataclysm ; to the other a sunset.

If, in the course of the long ages of evolution a soul shows the educability and the capacity to profit by the fruits of experience beyond its fellows, those great Intelligences, the product of earlier evolutions, who are consciously co-operating with the Divine Mind in concreting the abstract idea of good—just as we ourselves do when we become self-conscious of the Divine—these Intelligences pick that individual out from the generality of his fellows

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and give him special tuition, not for his own benefit, but because they see in him a future co-worker. The more of these co-workers with the Divine there are to leaven the inert mass of evolving life, the quicker and smoother will be the progress of evolution. Esoteric tradition declares that as soon as a mind is sufficiently advanced to be able to grasp its significance, it is made aware of the esoteric theory of evolution, so that, knowing the plan, it may be able to co-operate with the work. But long before the individual is ripe for the conscious realisation of this great task, his mind is being schooled and prepared in readiness ; this training goes on for several incarnations before the realisation of the process to which he is being submitted works through into consciousness and the individual takes up the work on his own account.

If the record of the past lives of such an individual be recovered by means of certain methods known to esoteric science, the process of training can be plainly seen ; the lives show a distinct type of experience ; their course is much more adventurous than that of their fellows ; into a few short lives are packed many adventures. Their training also is harder ; but with the heavier burden there is also the greater strength. Life by life, this concentration of experience goes forward till the individual is finally brought in touch with the chance of physical initiation, usually into some minor degree, yet into a position which acts as a starting-point of opportunity. One is struck, in looking over these records, by the fact that the individual frequently becomes attached to a temple or some other centre of esoteric knowledge in a menial capacity, as a cleaner, a craftsman, or one employed in the routine of the ritual. The inner teaching never seems to be given on the occasion of the first contact with esotericism ; the ritual, the

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outer form, is the first thing with which we make our acquaintance. But enough is seen to arouse curiosity, and if a mind can once be stimulated to ask a question, it proves its readiness for the answer.

If we trace the record of this individual, we see him advancing and receding as the waves of the sea according to the use made of opportunities, but if he is to make good and become one of the greater initiates, advancing steadily through all set-backs, as does the tide, and working his way gradually into the deeper knowledge. In incarnation after incarnation taking his initiation into the Mysteries of his time and race; and using the experiences gained in each life as a starting-place for the next. It is interesting to note that what is acquired is never lost ; capacity remains although memory disappears ; that which has been learnt is stored in the sub-conscious mind and goes to the formation of character. In each life we quickly recapitulate the progress we have made in previous lives till we come to the point where we left off, then we begin the laborious process of acquiring the new. This fact accounts for the rapid progress made by some, while others slowly toil their way up ; but let it be remembered that the piece of road over which we so painfully struggle to-day, we shall rapidly recapitulate when the to-morrow of a new incarnation dawns.

Let us now consider what happens in our present life if we have followed this road in the past. To begin with, we recapitulate ; as soon as we begin to think for ourselves, we arrive at the mental state we were in when we left off. Though we have not yet got the actual data on which to base our opinions, yet we find our minds possessed by certain foregone conclusions, which, to those who do not look upon things from our point of view, seem to be

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reasonless prejudices, and yet which are so much a part of our deeper selves that no evidence or argument serves to move them ; we *know*, in the same way that we know we have hands and feet, because this knowledge has been ground into us by centuries of experience, and the pressure of a single life is insufficient to force us out of these deep-scored ruts. Thus it is that a man can go through life finding no sympathy or support for his views and yet remain unshaken ; but sooner or later, though it may not be until the point of death, he will be drawn into the company of his fellows.

These ideas seem to be inherent in the mind, so early are they recovered ; and every scrap of information bearing on the subject sticks in the memory as if it were endowed with some peculiar fascination of its own ; we all no doubt recall the reading of many novels the memory of whose plots has completely passed away, and yet some chance reference to the Mysteries has stayed in the mind. All studies of this nature come easy to the student, for he is in reality not learning anew but revising; he is not introducing ideas into his mind for the first time, but recalling to consciousness that which is lying dormant in the sub-conscious mind. It seems as if much of our sub-conscious mind carried on from incarnation to incarnation, it is the conscious mind only that we build again with each life.

The student will often recover from his sub-consciousness many memories of things he has learnt in the past, and these he may be inclined to look upon as of the nature of revelations, so foreign are they to his normal consciousness ; it is unlikely, however, that the student at this stage of his career would be reading from the "Akashic Records," he is much more likely to be exploring the depths of his own sub-conscious mind, whose wealth is far greater than he suspected.

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This tapping of the sub-consciousness may be mistaken by the student for external aid and teaching, and because this error is common it must not be thought that such aid is never available ; it is indeed ever present and its availability depends solely upon our power to avail ourselves of it.

External aid always comes to the student who has advanced sufficiently far to be benefited by it, and many will relate how apparent chance played into their hands so repeatedly that they could no longer look upon it as unmotived. It must be remembered however, in this connection, that the power of the mind over circumstances is very great, and we must not make the mistake of looking without until we have looked within. We can, moreover, do much to bring about that which we desire by realising the power of the mind. The potency of a clearly-formulated and long-continued wish is difficult to overrate.

So the earnest desire goes forth in search of the Master, and it has not far to seek. If the student is worthy he will presently be rewarded either by the inner knowledge that he has achieved this mental contact, or he will find that "chance" has placed him in touch with a source of occult information and training, and his conscious work has commenced. The gate is open, it is for him to tread the Path.

CHAPTER III

PREPARATION FOR INITIATION

IT is the aim of Initiation to bring about the illumination of the soul by the Inner Light; therefore, before embarking upon a consideration of the best means of preparation for that undertaking, it is necessary to explain what is meant by Initiation, for so many different concepts are current.

The word Initiate,* as used in these pages, means one in whom the Higher Self, the Individuality, has coalesced with the personality and actually entered into incarnation in the physical body. An Initiate, therefore, is one whose Higher Self it is that looks out at us through his eyes. The personality is reduced to a set of habit-complexes of living, leaving the Higher Self free to carry on its work with the minimum demands upon its attention from the physical plane.

This Great Initiation is invariably gone through out of the body. No ritual confers it, though ritual may have been, and in the Western Hemisphere usually is, employed in order to train consciousness in preparation for this transcendent experience. It is also gone through in full consciousness and the memory is retained. We are often asked whether it is possible to be initiated without knowing it. To this question we return an emphatic negative. On the face of it, it is absurd to think that we could be unconscious of receiving permanent extension of conscious-

* This is a high grade of initiation and is normally preceded by lesser initiations of graded intensity.

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ness. It frequently happens, however, that a Master has accepted someone as his pupil without that person being immediately aware of it owing to the undeveloped state of his psychic faculties, and realisation dawns only after the training has progressed a certain distance. In such a case a psychic would be able to inform such a person that he had indeed found acceptance as a pupil of the Great White Brotherhood and had set foot on the Path that leads to Initiation, but he would be wrong in saying that he had been initiated. The sigil of the Master is stamped on the aura of the pupil when he is accepted, and it shines forth to clairvoyant sight as a disc some six inches in diameter immediately over the head, the disc being coloured according to the Ray on which the Master is working ; when the pupil is entrusted with work to perform for the Master on the mundane plane, the corresponding band of colour in the aura lights up, showing that the Master's power is functioning through the pupil ; but it is not until the aura as a whole is illuminated that a man is an Initiate as the term is used here. This only takes place when he shines with his own light, not the borrowed light of his Master. Therefore it is that Initiation may justly be referred to as the dawning of the Inner Light, or coming into manifestation on the physical plane of the Augoeides, or Body of Light. The moon may be taken to represent the personality, waxing and waning through innumerable incarnatory phases of reflection of the sun's light or its deflection by the earth's shadow ; whereas the Higher Self, the immortal Spirit in man, is rightly symbolised by the sun, which shines perpetually in the heavens, whether we see it or not. These glyphs will repay meditation.

The Higher Self comes into manifestation in the physical body when Initiation takes place. We have only to consider the vast difference between the Individuality and

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the personality in the average man to realise the immense amount of preparation that must take place before such a manifestation is possible. Moreover, we cannot fail to see that if that manifestation were attempted before due preparation had been made, the incoming Self would find so great a disparity between itself and its vesture that, like a badly-fitting garment, the vesture would be split asunder by the attempt to wear it. This is an occurrence sometimes observed among occultists and accounts for many of the problems of occult fraternities.

Before it is possible for the Higher Self to manifest through brain-consciousness, the personality must be tuned to the same key as the Individuality. The Individuality carries on its existence in the spiritual spheres just as the personality carries on its existence in the mundane sphere ; the actions of the former are determined by its desire to maintain its harmony with the Divine Life of the Cosmos, whence it draws its being ; and the actions of the personality are determined by its desire to maintain its harmony with the world of matter, whence the life of the body draws its being. It is obvious, therefore, that the personality will have entirely to re-orientate its standpoint before it can come into line with the Higher Self. We must be prepared to shift the basis of all our motives if we want to receive Initiation. This requires singleness of purpose that baulks at no sacrifice—"Sell all that thou hast, and follow Me," said the Master ; and again, "Let the dead bury their dead. Follow thou Me." These are hard sayings, but experience proves them to be true. There is no reason why anyone should offer themselves as a candidate for Initiation, for they can achieve the goal of Divine Union by the winding path of evolution ; but, on the other hand, they must not declare that the ancient

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Secrets have been lost because they, not being willing to pay the price, have not received the Great Pearl.

The personality and the things of the senses have to be sacrificed in order that the Higher Self may manifest; there can be no dispute on this point. All the Initiates have declared it to be so. We are inclined to think that, having sacrificed the personality, we shall be bereft of all things. This is because the mind of the West still clings to its habit of believing that the death of the body ends existence. So we believe sub-consciously that the death of personality ends enjoyment of the fulness of life. We forget that the merchant who sold all he had was able to purchase the Great Pearl. True, he had realised all his assets, but they were re-invested in something of far greater value. The Gospel story implies that he bore off the Pearl in triumph. So it is with us if we make the sacrifice of the things of the senses that permits of the incarnation of the Higher Self in the physical body. There is a period of struggle as the threads that bind us to the desires of the senses are snapped, but as soon as an appreciable clearance has been made, the Higher Light begins to dawn. We are not left long comfortless.

" Halts by me that footfall :
Is my gloom after all
Shade of His hand, outstretched caressingly ? "

While consciousness is focussed in the personality we cannot contact realities direct, but can only see their reflections in the world of form. The call of the Higher Life is to arise and turn away from the mirror of form-consciousness and look straight at Reality, which is Life, not form. It is this turning round that constitutes the soul's task when it seeks Initiation.

As the personality is brought gradually into subjection to the Higher Self, the Inner Light begins to irradiate it.

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The sudden burst of illumination is rare, and proves blinding and disabling, as St. Paul found upon the road to Damascus ; therefore it is permitted only in the case of very advanced souls who have been trained to a high degree in previous lives and have reincarnated with this end in view, building their personalities accordingly. For the rest of the seekers after Initiation the Inner Light dawns gently and gradually, with many cloud-shadows obscuring it from time to time as the desires of the senses surge up again and again after they were believed to be overcome.

Having achieved this freedom from the bondage of the senses, two paths now lie open to the Initiate ; he may follow the Mystic Path, and go on to liberation, or he may follow the Occult Path, and return into the world of men equipped with the powers of the Higher Mind. It will be noted that mysticism does not teach reincarnation, whereas occultism does, and for this reason : that the mystic aims at escaping from the bondage of the flesh, never to return ; whereas the occultist designs to return to matter, bearing with him the fruits of his labours. Both are legitimate and justifiable ideals. The mystic, who goes on to take his freedom, does not cease to be an influence in the world ; by his achievements he works out a portion of the world's karma. That is why mystics invariably indulge in mortification long after any personal desires of the flesh have been purged away ; they are ab-reacting the world's karma.

The occultist, on the other hand, indulges only in sufficient mortification of the flesh to bring it into subjection and teach it to obey the sovereign will without murmuring. His design it is to build himself such a personality that his Higher Self can function through it without let or hindrance. It must be like a powerful and spirited horse

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that answers instantly to the heel and rein, needing neither spur nor curb. Its senses do not mislead him ; its passions do not blind him. He uses it as a transparent window of the soul that does not distort the view.

The mystic renders his personality negative in order that he may be a channel for the Cosmic Forces. "Be still, and know that I am God," is his attitude towards all the problems he is called upon to solve. He becomes still upon the mundane plane and allows the spiritual powers to find a channel into the group-mind through his meditations. The occultist, on the other hand, deals with forms, and uses his concrete mind in order to shape those forms into channels for the Cosmic Forces. The mystic works in the Higher Self exclusively ; the occultist brings the Higher Self into manifestation on the planes of form.

The mystic, having achieved liberation from the bondage of the senses, is content with the experiences of inner consciousness ; he does not seek to bring them into manifestation on the plane of earth ; the occultist, on the other hand, having won to the same realisation as that which the mystic desires, endeavours to bring about the reflection on the plane of form of the state of consciousness to which he has won. He does this, if he be a Brother of the Right-hand Path, because it is necessary for the Great Plan that certain ideals should be worked out in the world of form, but he never does it for the gratification of the senses. That is the test by which Our Lord was tested in the Wilderness, "Command these stones that they be made bread." He was both occultist and mystic, as was shown by such miracles as the turning of water into wine and the passage through closed doors, but He never used His occult powers save in the service of His mission, and it will be noted that, as He advanced towards His final achievement, He used them less and less.

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The great majority of liberated souls elect to follow the Mystic Path, thus going beyond our earth-sphere ; and it is only a few of those who have won their freedom who choose to sacrifice it to return again to the world of form, for they have no desires of the sense to draw them back into incarnation. To them it is rather an incarceration ; they are motived solely by a desire to lift the burden of the world's confusion. On the other hand, it must not be thought that the mystic deserts the world when he forsakes it ; his prayers are ever with it, and it is this great body of praying souls that lifts the burden of the world's karma on the Inner Planes.

The mystic serves in one way and the occultist in another. Both are necessary to the cosmic task of regeneration and evolution. There can be no function save by duality—the inter-action of the positive and negative aspects of the same force. The mystic is at one pole of the Christ-force and the occultist at the other. Obeying the well-known occult law of the alternation of polarity upon the planes, the mystic is negative on the planes of form and positive upon the planes of force ; whereas the occultist is positive upon the planes for form and negative upon the planes of force ; therefore he has always to invoke forces to aid him in his work, employing for this purpose ritual magic in its various types, from the simple invocation made with a sign to the elaborate forms performed in lodges.

The truest development, and the one aimed at by the disciplines given in the Society of the Inner Light, is achieved through a just balance of the positive and negative forces of the soul held in equilibrium by the will, so that the judgment can turn the balance in either direction. The soul that is naturally inclined to mysticism is therefore in the Lesser Mysteries always given an occult

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training ; and the soul which is naturally inclined to occultism is made to work upon mystic lines. It is not until the Greater Mysteries are reached that the soul is permitted to follow its natural bent and is given the training specially adapted to its capacities.

The reason for this apparent violence to nature will readily be seen ; if a soul, already inclined towards mysticism, is developed solely upon mystical lines, it is apt to acquire that painful lack of balance so often seen among those who dwell much in the Unseen. Its grip upon the planes of form does not keep pace with its contact with the planes of force ; therefore the forces break the bounds of form and are diffused into a bog of emotional spirituality and lost and wasted, like the waters of a river that has broken its banks and made a marshland of the valley. That marsh will produce a lush vegetation, but it is neither land nor water, and is useless for all practical purposes of human service.

The occultist, on the other hand, if permitted at the outset of his training to indulge his love for form and intellectualisation, will become walled up inside his forms and lose the living contacts which alone give life to the symbols of occultism. If, however, he be set for his discipline the task of contacting forces by purely intuition and meditative methods, he will acquire the power to make his contacts independently of the use of formulæ and ritual magic ; then, when at a more advanced stage of his training he is taught the traditional methods of the occult arts, he will bring through infinitely more power than the Initiate who has not been so trained. It is vital to all occult training that the student should understand the principles of occultism, and not use his formulæ blindly and superstitiously.

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A chain is no stronger than its weakest link.

Neither mystic nor occultist will be able to bring through
into the plane of manifestation more than they are able
to polarise within their own natures.

CHAPTER IV

THE PATH OF THE HEARTH-FIRE

TO many, the first knowledge of the existence of the Way of Initiation and the Masters who summon chosen souls to their service comes as a revelation and a trumpet-call. No arguments are needed to convince them, their whole soul rises up in response. The sacrifices and disciplines of the Path have no terrors for them ; all they pray for is opportunity.

But in very many cases these souls are not free to take the opportunity that offers ; they are bound by the chains of duty or of circumstances. Unless they are prepared to disregard the rights and welfare of others, they cannot set foot upon the Path. Is it to be considered right to sacrifice others to the service of the Masters? Which is the higher duty, the service of the Masters or the service of the family and home? This is a big question, and one that is constantly recurring, and its answer is not as simple as some would have us think.

When a soul thus spontaneously answers to the call of the Path it is obvious that it is not hearing it for the first time. In past lives it has passed within the veil of the Temple and the memory is latent in the sub-conscious mind. This being the case, why should it be that when the call comes in this life it should not be free to follow it without breaking faith and neglecting sacred ties?

It is to the law of karma that we have to look for an answer to this question. There must be something in the

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karma that has to be worked out before that soul is ready for the Path, and the bonds of obligations are laid upon it in order that they may be its discipline. The way which such a soul is destined to follow is known as the path of the Hearth-Fire, and is as true a way of initiation as any of the disciplines imposed by the occult fraternities.

Neither is it a quicker or slower way of initiation than any other. A builder may spend much time in gathering together the materials of the house he intends to build ; he may fashion those materials section by section and spend days and weeks at the work, and yet no wall begins to rise; then, after much careful and accurate work, he comes to the stage when he is ready to assemble the parts he has so laboriously constructed, and in a few hours the perfectly-matched sections are bolted together and the structure is up.

So it is with the preparation for initiation. The candidate may spend long years in the preliminary training ; disciplining mind and body, learning all the lessons of life, loosening his hold on the desires and dreams of matter, and patiently waiting for the longed-for admission to the Mysteries ; and then, after the long and weary task has been fulfilled, and he comes, perhaps in the evening of his days, to the opportunity so long forgone, he will find that the weary years of patient bearing of burdens have taken his consciousness through many degrees of discipline and initiation, and that when he comes to the Mysteries, he will pass rapidly through the Outer Court and find himself admitted to the Temple. If life has taught him the lessons of occult discipline the Lesser Initiator has no need to teach them to him, but, having tested him to prove his experience, vouches for him to the Great Initiator.

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A certain stage of experience has got to be reached before we are ready for initiation. The bonds of the senses must have begun to loosen of their own accord before we are ready for the Great Renunciation of a personal sense of life. There are three Initiators who bring us to the altar of the Mysteries ; the Great Initiator, who is the Master, the Lesser Initiator, who is the Teacher, and our own Higher Self, which trains us by means of the lessons of life and the realisations they bring.

The discipline of the Path cannot be learnt from books, it is experience alone which brings realisation. Let us therefore accept our karma as the first initiation. Let us strive for a mastery of ourselves and our circumstances which shall give us serenity under all conditions. What cannot be cured must be endured ; this is the first lesson which karma teaches us. The adept is a man of unruffled serenity, for he is a man of perfect self-control. Let us strive for mastery of the inner astral kingdom of the emotions ; once we have acquired this, we have the key of the astral plane in our hand ready for the time when the Initiator shall bring us to the door.

On the other hand, it is our bounden duty, as knights of God, to resist injustice and enforce the law of harmony in whatever sphere it may please God to place us. " Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." What can be cured should not be endured if human courage and ingenuity can mend it.

We should neither sit supinely down under remediable evil nor keep up a perpetual whine about the irremediable. We should either accept willingly and cheerfully, or reject courageously and determinedly.

If we live our daily life according to cosmic principles we shall work out whatever karma has been given us for

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our portion in this incarnation and win our freedom. Out of the experience thus gained comes the preparation of the soul and rapid advancement in the Mysteries when once the right of entrance has been gained.

There are several causes which bind us in chains of duty to personalities and to the humdrum task of life when our whole soul desires to serve the Masters and combat spiritual wickedness in high places. We may have failed in certain of our tests in a past life, and therefore have to take those tests over again. We can see examples of this around us every day. A student may have taken all the subjects of his degree with brilliance, but because he has failed in one of the subjects of a preliminary examination, may not be entitled to his certificate. He has to sit for the preliminary work again, and may possibly fail repeatedly before some elementary paper in mathematics or languages is properly worked. So it often is with the soul in which we see the lofty aspirations but who is yet bound to mundane duties ; that soul is in all probability completing some of the elementary lessons so essential to success in the tasks of applied occultism. As soon as these tests are passed, he will be eligible for the degree whose higher work he has already completed.

Again, it sometimes happens that souls which have advanced far into the Mysteries turn back at the call of human love and forge anew the chains of karmic ties. In subsequent lives the debts thus incurred must be discharged. Sometimes the turning aside is motivated by the passions and the senses ; sometimes a higher motive determines the choice, and out of pure pity a soul that is travelling fast may turn back to hold out a hand to a beloved one who is progressing more slowly. It is seldom possible to judge of the wisdom of a decision taken in a

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past life, but its obligations remain to be met ; and if the choice of pity and patience has been made, it must be abided by cheerfully and willingly if its good karma is to be reaped.

It is not enough, however, to recognise that a bondage to the duties of the home may be a karmic debt, nor yet to realise that it is indeed a Path to the Light. If the home is to become a Temple of Initiation for the soul, its duties must be worked as a ritual. As long as we hate the humble duties of the home, even if we perform them faithfully, that home cannot be a temple ; and if we perform them badly, we "fail to initiate," and that, as every student of occultism knows, is a very serious thing for the candidate.

In order to make the home a Temple of Initiation for the soul, its duties must be dominated by two ideals—love and beauty. Its services must be rendered with sympathy and joy, and we must make its humblest details beautiful. Even in the barest room there is a beauty of perfect cleanliness and order. If we would merely eliminate the superfluous from our homes and keep what remains in perfect order we should have achieved true beauty, as many a bare convent refectory can show.

If our home problems prove very difficult, let us, in imagination, always put a chair at the fireside and lay a place at table for the Unseen Guest, and live our life and do our work in the light of that Invisible Presence.

If we rule our homes in a spirit of selfless love and serenity of heart, asking no return, but doing our duty for the sake of the need of those to whom we minister, our house will be a true Temple of the Hearth-Fire in which we can receive our initiation. But let it be remembered that the serenity of heart must be there as well as the faithful performance of duty. It is this serenity which is the proof

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of karma overcome. As long as we are kicking against the pricks we have still something to learn from our circumstances.

Let us try to keep our homes always in readiness for the coming of the Wayfaring Christ, Who, as the old story has it, goes up and down among men saying: "The foxes of the earth have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has not where to lay His head."

For His coming it is not enough that the house should be swept and garnished, the spirit of the home must blossom on the hearth in peace and good will and, above all, in serenity, which is the true keynote of home.

CHAPTER V

THE INITIATE'S IDEAL

WHEN we speak of the Path we mean much more than a course of study. The Path is a way of life and on it the whole being must co-operate if the heights are to be won. When the Seeker awakes to the possibilities of Initiation and sets out on his quest of the Great Initiator he will not be long before he finds someone who is willing to direct him, and his perplexity as to the direction of his search will be exchanged for anxiety as to the right choice of a guide.

We cannot remind our readers too often that the Great Initiator comes in the Silence to the higher consciousness, and is never a human being, however supernatural and secluded. All that can be done by the servants of the Masters on the physical plane is the preparation of the candidate. It may be of value, however, to indicate the type of character which it is necessary to develop in order that the Seeker may be accepted as a neophyte in the Temple of the Mysteries, that temple, not built with hands, eternal in the heavens.

The discipline of the Path in its earlier stages is directed primarily to the production of a definite type of character ; whatever variations of intellectual quality and calibre there may be, the character-type is constant. It is the first thing that impresses one in meeting those who may justly be reckoned as initiates.

There is a simplicity of life and a serenity of demeanour. The initiate is entirely unperturbed amid catastrophe and

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horror. He possesses many of the qualities of a traveller in wild lands, especially an ability to arrive right side up and smiling in the most surprising circumstances. He is equally contented and at ease in the humblest cottage and the most imposing and ceremonious surroundings.

This harmonised, free-moving poise is the inevitable result of the discipline to which he subjects himself, for he learns control of emotion and desirelessness. It is not easy to upset the equanimity of a man who has achieved these qualities. He loves simplicity, cleanliness, and quiet, but if he cannot obtain them, he walls himself up in a shell of his own thoughts and maintains his equanimity undisturbed.

It is not easy for him to hide his light under a bushel, for the discipline he has undergone has put its mark upon him and people feel that he is a man of power, withdrawn and remote even in easy social intercourse. The true initiate, however, never makes himself conspicuous by eccentricities; he desires to avoid the attention of the outside world and to come and go about his affairs as unobtrusively as possible. The long black cloak, the flamboyant hat, the mysterious jewel, are never sported by the true student of the Sacred Science. It is the charlatan who seeks to attract attention to himself.

The adept, the man who has achieved the heights, is serene. Sensitive he must be, owing to the work he does, but with that sensitiveness goes the knowledge and discipline that can control it. If he cannot defend his sensitiveness by the appropriate means, he will not last long upon the stormy path of occultism. The occultist who is a "bundle of nerves" has gone wrong somewhere in the course of his work. The pursuit of occultism no more necessarily produces ill-health than the pursuit of athletics,

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though in both cases demands are made on the stamina and if there are any latent weaknesses they will be found out, and unless they can be corrected, their victim will have to give up the idea of training. One would hardly have thought it necessary to point out that any system of training which produces physical debility and mental unbalance must be on wrong lines, but there are certain well-known systems which do these things with such regularity that their adherents accept them as part of the Path.

It has been my experience that those who may justly be reckoned as among the more advanced students of the occult, and especially such as are expert in its practice are possessed of unusual bodily strength and wide culture and are skilful in the use of their hands. The hand plays an important part in occult work, and the person who cannot express his will and imagination through the fine muscles of the hands will seldom be able to perform the practical operations. The importance of manual work is well known among students of the occult.

The range of information upon general subjects possessed by the adept is amazing. This is probably due to two causes : first, his trained mind endows him with a retentive memory and intellectual alertness ; and secondly, light is thrown upon occultism from many unsuspected quarters, and a wide range of knowledge is necessary for its full apprehension.

The physical powers of the trained occultist are remarkable, for he is able to influence many of the bodily faculties which are not usually under the control of his will. He is usually very sensitive to the influence of any drug, and consequently needs reduced doses, and any of the anodynes which dull consciousness, such as bromide, must be used with great caution. On the other hand, he usually

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takes a general anæsthetic exceptionally well, being without fear and accustomed to go in and out of his body. His control over his emotions reduces surgical shock to a minimum and, owing to his access to the sources of energy, his recuperative powers are amazing.

Among his immediate associates, and especially his pupils, the adept usually inspires the greatest devotion and affection, but on the rare occasions when he comes in contact with the outer world, he is often reckoned cold and forbidding. This aloofness is very characteristic of the occultist ; his attitude towards life is so different from that of his companions, his ways of thought so alien from theirs, that intercourse is rendered difficult and he takes refuge in silence to avoid misunderstanding.

Many people are estranged from the occultist because love is not his outstanding characteristic. The difference between his attitude and that of the lover of humanity may be likened to the difference between the person who keeps animals as pets and the one who breeds them for show purposes. The latter sets out to bring the species to the highest degree of perfection of which it is capable, and with that end in view, he is ruthless with the individual. The standard of training in the higher degrees is very exacting and few achieve it ; these few are those whom tradition regards as super-human. But they are not super-human, they are human beings developed to the highest pitch of which the human vehicle is capable. Such excellence in any walk of life is obtained only as the reward of arduous labours, and these leave their mark on the adept. He travels too fast for the average humanity, and they resent it ; but of those souls who delight in great adventure he is the chosen companion and beloved friend.

CHAPTER VI

DAILY LIFE UPON THE PATH

THE rule of the Path is not a written code that demands an outer conformity, but a dedication to an ideal, and involves self-discipline in order that the ideal may be attained. Those who follow the Path, whether they be leading a Community life or following Community ideals out in the world, learn certain spiritual principles which, as underlying cosmic laws, govern all things.

No rules are made concerning the application of these principles to the affairs of life; each student applies them to his own circumstances and problems according to his understanding ; counsel is not proffered unless it is asked, for until the need for guidance has been realised, guidance is seldom acceptable. It is of more value that a soul should learn than that it should do the right thing. If the cosmic laws are obeyed, results are obtained ; if they are disregarded, there follow the inevitable consequences of a broken natural law.

The growth of the soul takes place through many incarnations, and different attainments are required of it at different stages of its development, therefore no objective standard of achievement is set ; a principle is taught, an ideal upheld, and each student is counselled to apply that principle and follow that ideal in the circumstances in which he finds himself, for it is only as he is faithful over few things that he will be entrusted with many.

The principle is the same whether it be applied to the ordering of a cottage or a palace, and if that principle be

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realised and faithfully applied in the cottage, it can speedily be adapted to the palace. The person who makes a muddle on a small scale is hardly likely to succeed if entrusted with work on a large scale.

The first principle to be learnt concerns the nature of the cosmic laws and their inviolability. Students must accept the concept of the absolute rule of law—that nothing is fortuitous, accidental or incidental. Whatever happens is the result of a cause; whatever is going to happen is also the result of a cause. Being aware of this law, the initiate never grumbles or repines, but accepts calmly and unresentfully whatever may befall him, knowing that nothing comes to him which is not his due. Acknowledging the justice of karma, he accepts the reactions of the past ungrudgingly. It is this serene and cheerful acceptance by which the initiate can always be known. His one care is to keep in tune with the cosmic harmony, and whether he bow his head to study his lesson or lift it to sing and rejoice, his face never loses its serenity.

When reincarnation is held as a fact of experience, the attitude towards human problems differs profoundly from that which prevails when it is believed that all problems begin and end in this, the present life. The initiate may accept his lot with a calmness which amazes men whose impulse it is to curse or pray according to their nature, but his acceptance does not necessarily imply passivity. To accept one's fate without murmuring does not pledge one to make no effort to better it. Knowing the power of concentrated thought, the initiate makes use of it in all the problems of life. His method, however, is not that of direct attack in which he "wills" the change of the unpleasant condition, but is directed to bring about certain changes in his own consciousness, for he knows that it is his own

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temperament which is the real instrument of karma. It is only through those factors in his own nature which react that karma can affect him. He knows that certain conditions come to him in order that they may provoke certain reactions in his own nature, and according to his handling of these reactions will be his karma, even in the present life. When he has harmonised these reactions, he has worked out his karma.

He knows, therefore, that although he cannot determine the conditions under which his life must be lived, he can determine his reaction to those conditions. It is this fact which he bears constantly in mind in all his dealings. It is this realisation which enables him to raise his head above a sea of troubles and view them from the standpoint of cosmic law and spiritual principles. Although he cannot command the conditions to which he awakens from the sleep of birth, he is nevertheless the master of his fate, for he can manipulate those conditions in such a way that they shall bear him whithersoever he will, just as a ship can tack against a head-wind ; and the worse the conditions and the stronger the wind, the swifter his progress.

The initiate is always revaluing things according to cosmic principles. He knows that his real life is lived in his higher self, (the unit of evolution), and that this human personality is but a phase of his life, and that his real existence is never immediately involved in it. From the experiences of this phase he derives the food whereby his real self grows through the vast aeons of evolutionary time. To him, it is his real self that matters, not his series of transitory personalities, and so he dares to take risks with his mundane prospects which most men would not dare to take. Consequently, although he may not amass the things of this world, his life has a significance, a richness, and a

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freedom which are lacking to the man who dares not so adventure lest he lose his all. The initiate lives gloriously because he lives dangerously. Nevertheless, his risks are more apparent than real, as were the risks of Columbus, who staked his success on a mathematical hypothesis. He depended for his safety upon the truth of the theory that the earth was round ; if, as most people believed, it was flat and at the world's end was the precipice of outer space, he would never return from his great adventure of sailing towards the West in order to reach the East.

So it is with the initiate, he dares to trust his fate to an esoteric theory. If, as the average man believes, he is wrong, he has made ducks and drakes of his life ; but if, as he believes, he is right, he will find the Indies.

What is the testimony of experience on this point ? How many men who have served Mammon in his house of flesh have not recanted on their death-beds ? for when they come to die they know that they have never lived. Yet the initiate goes to meet the King of Terrors as to a crowning, for to him death is not the end of the world, but the North-West passage.

PART II

THEORETICAL

CHAPTER VII

A GROUND-PLAN OF ILLUMINISM

I

WHEN we are considering such a vast and ramifying subject as the super-normal sciences, some schematic classification is necessary, for they range from psychism to ceremonial magic, and from the mystic's Divine Union to pacts with non-human entities, who may or may not be the Devil.

Our first task in such an undertaking should be to mark off our ground and differentiate it from the subject-matter of natural science and the ordinary workaday world. This is no easy task, for no hard-and-fast line can be drawn. Who shall say when shrewdness becomes intuition, and intuition becomes vision?

Neither can we satisfactorily leave to natural science the physical plane and the observations that are made through the five physical senses, for the Unseen, which is the acknowledged subject-matter of Esoteric Science, interpenetrates the material plane as intimately as water interpenetrates the strata of the earth.

The nearest approach to accuracy may be to say that occult science begins where natural science ends. This unquestionably is true as far as it goes, and is a useful practical definition ; but, unfortunately, the boundary-line, though clearly marked, is not fixed, but resembles rather the line of demarcation between land and sea on a falling tide.

Esoteric science must be distinguished from natural science by method rather than by subject-matter. It starts

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from first principles on the spiritual plane, and works downwards, through mind, into matter. Whereas natural science starts from the observation of phenomena on the physical plane, and may—given as many aeons as esoteric science has required for its development (which cannot justly be denied it)—eventually work upwards through mind into spirit. Natural science starts with data, and deduces therefrom the principles that explain them. Esoteric science starts with principles and looks for the phenomena which may be expected to ensue. The one is laboriously working out the correlation of units into an organic whole ; the other is equally laboriously exploring the ramifications of primary principles. In the one, experiment must precede knowledge ; in the other, knowledge must precede experiment.

But although it is impossible to plot on a map the exact line of demarcation between land and sea, nevertheless, no one standing on the seashore would have any difficulty in seeing it. So, although the clear-cut separation of exoteric from esoteric science is a thankless task, nevertheless, it is possible to indicate by a single word that which all its students will recognise as being the pursuit in which they are engaged.

What, then, shall this single word be ? It must be a word whose significance shall indicate the subject under consideration, but which shall not have been appropriated to the description of a partial aspect of that subject. Occultism will not do because it excludes the mystic ; and mysticism will not do, because it excludes the occultist ; neither is spiritualism a suitable term, for it has its definite connotation as signifying a particular aspect and method in these studies, and cannot conveniently be extended without causing confusion.

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Our subject is altogether in a parlous condition as regards nomenclature ; burdened on the one hand with a Sanscrit terminology which has been wrenched from its original significance by the usages of modern Theosophy, and on the other by a barbarous jargon derived partly from the Mysteries of Greece, partly from the Qabalism of Israel, and partly from Mediæval Alchemy, which employed bastard Latin to conceal its thoughts.

Two other sources of illumination are also available, and throw much additional light on our subject—the voluminous literature of Christian Mysticism, and the equally prolific analytical school of psychology ; to these we might perhaps add modern physics, whose findings are increasingly confirming what has hitherto been the exclusive preserve of occult cosmogony.

Each of these schools of thought has its own terminology and, its own system of classification, and some effort must be made in the near future to correlate them all if esoteric science is to come into its own.

In the limited scope of these pages no such attempt can be made ; and indeed it is a work requiring the co-operation of specialists rather than the necessarily generalised knowledge of a single mind. We may clear the ground by a preliminary survey, showing the sub-divisions into which super-physical science naturally falls. None of these, however, are watertight compartments ; for the pursuit of any one of them a generalised knowledge of several others is essential, and although specialisation is as necessary in this pursuit as in any other if any high degree of achievement is to be reached, yet that specialisation should include a sound general knowledge of the whole subject, so that the work of other specialists may be appreciated and their special gifts utilised as occasion requires.

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Since we have discarded the word Occultism as a generic title for the field of our studies, we must endeavour to replace it by another. Our choice is limited, for the word chosen, as we have already seen, must convey an adequate mental picture to the outsider who looks up its meaning in a dictionary, and must not have been appropriated by any specialised school.

In its essence, the whole subject under consideration is the extension of consciousness to planes of experience which are not available for the physical senses, and out of that extended experience comes the whole gamut of supernormal experience. Might we not agree, then, to denominate the whole field by the term ILLUMINISM and to subdivide it primarily, into two branches—MYSTICISM, and OCCULTISM? Into these two divisions it will be found that all the different transcendental movements can be assigned as their affinities lean towards the one or the other.

Let us now define further what we mean by these two terms.

MYSTICISM aims at the speediest possible attainment of the Divine Union of the soul with its Source. In order to achieve this it eliminates all that causes separation. A cardinal doctrine in all mystic schools is that of Unreality. Whenever we find a school of thought which distinguishes sharply between the Unreal and the Real, and seeks to eliminate the former from consciousness in order to possess the latter, we shall be justified in classifying it as an essentially mystical system.

OCCULTISM, on the other hand, accepts the phenomenal as actual enough if not real, if we use the term “real” in its technical mystical sense as eternal and self-existing. The aim of the occultist is to organise and master phenomena and bring them into harmony with the eternal law of the Real.

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The mystic discards the phenomenal universe and endeavours to escape into the Real ; the occultist, even after he has glimpsed the Real, stops on in the world of phenomena and endeavours to bring it under the control of his will.

The occultist, while he agrees theoretically with the mystic's proposition, prefers the terms ETERNAL and TEMPORAL to REAL and UNREAL ; for he maintains a thing may be theoretically Unreal, yet actually very much in evidence in all practical calculations made in time and space.

To this the mystic replies that the soul is best freed from the temporal by accustoming it to think of everything except the eternal as Unreal.

In this controversy between occultism and mysticism one is reminded of the story of the Bishop who visited the Sunday-school, and addressing the pupils, said—"I suppose all you little boys and girls want to go to heaven?" and waited amid an embarrassing silence till a little voice piped up with the unexpected, but very sound answer— "Well—not yet!"

We might liken these rival schools of thought to two colonists, the one of whom escapes from the problems of residence in a tropical and savage land by taking ship and going home, leaving unsolved problems which do not directly concern him ; while the other remains on and fights the tribes and builds roads and brings the ground under cultivation. In politics, the one is an Individualist and the other an Imperialist ; in religion, the one is a Mystic and the other an Occultist.

There is much to be said for both points of view ; unfortunately the difference between occultists and mystics are apparently irreconcilable, because they are a matter of

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temperament. Like the knights in the old story, they are fighting over a black and white shield, each seeing his side of it and no other.

To argue with either of the combatants is a waste of time ; let us see rather how this two-fold classification can be used to correlate the different transcendental movements and show their relationship one to another. We are quite aware that each one of them claims to have received its teaching direct from God, and heartily damns all the rest, especially such of the rest as are closest akin to it, but the unprejudiced onlooker, knowing something of the workings of the human mind, may perhaps be able to trace sources of inspiration. To say this is not to belittle the message which each founder of a school of thought may have brought to mankind. No man's work is lessened by showing its derivations, for all work must necessarily be derivative at this late day of human history. Everybody is indebted to his predecessors, and it is only the egoistic or the ignorant who refuse to acknowledge it.

According to our classification as already defined, we would assign such religions as Buddhism and Christianity to the Mystic Path ; together with such secondary movements as Christian Science and the crop of New Thought and Higher Thought schools which have sprung up like saplings from its root.

To the Occult Path we would assign such religions as Hinduism and Qabalistic Judaism ; also such derivative movements as Theosophy, Alchemy, and Spiritualism.

Such a classification must be taken rather as an attempt to clarify understanding by examples than to be exhaustive. Probably few of those thus assigned will agree as to their inclusion in any classification ; it being a peculiarity of inspired organisations to want to be regarded as a special

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creation, and their works as miraculous; but the unprejudiced onlooker, if there is such a creature, sees them all as specimens in the natural history of the human mind.

Still less, we fear, will the examples we have cited like the company to which they have been assigned. Rather will the lion lie down with the lamb than Christian Science and New Thought, or Theosophy and Spiritualism agree to be bed-fellows. Nevertheless, the root-ideas of all of them are not original, and can be traced back through many different enunciations into remote antiquity, as Mme. Blavatsky has so convincingly shown.

Having made our primary division, let us now seek a further classification which shall enable us to understand the different tendencies of these two different Paths.

In Mysticism, whose method of approach is by feeling, rather than by knowing, we find two broad divisions into Nature Mystics and Spiritual Mystics. The Nature Mystics we may most conveniently denominate PANTHEISTS, for they see the Manifestation of God in Nature, and seek union with Him through a return to Nature. Of these are such of the ancients who sought identification by ritual and invocation with natural forces; and of the moderns, such thinkers as Walt Whitman and Algernon Blackwood. The Pantheists we may further subdivide into the BEAUTY and the POWER Schools.

The Beauty School, of which Walt Whitman is an example, contact Nature by their love of her beauty, and never employ any ritual. The Power School, whose viewpoint is so well expressed in the works of Algernon Blackwood, seek to share in the functions of natural forces, and invariably use some form of ritual (using the word in its broadest sense as actions intended to be symbolic) in order to achieve their aim.

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The RELIGIOUS School of Mysticism seeks its God apart from Nature, and desires to know Him direct, at first intention, as it were, and deprecates all secondary expressions as idolatry. This School may again be subdivided into the Path of Service and the Path of Contemplation. The Salvation Army is upon the Path of Service, and the Carmelite Order upon the Path of Contemplation.

The Christian Science movement, to which we have already referred in connection with Mysticism, is somewhat difficult to classify at first sight, for it effects service through contemplation, and moreover contains a considerable admixture of occult practice, if not of occult principle. We may, however, most expediently assign it to the Path of Service, for it is essentially a way of redemption through works.

CHAPTER VIII

A GROUND-PLAN OF ILLUMINISM

II

OCULTISM differs from Mysticism in that it makes no attempt at any direct or immediate approach to its goal, but rather seeks to establish a graded way to the Divine Union which it recognises, equally with Mysticism, as the ultimate goal of evolution. Working from this standpoint, it neither condemns nor disregards the material conditions in which we find ourselves, but accepts them as part of the soul's discipline and proceeds to study them, first, with a view to harmonising the soul with its environment, and, secondly, with a view to exercising a controlling, or at least a modifying, influence over that environment.

It may be alleged that the above is a counsel of perfection, and that occultists seek knowledge and power for their own sakes and with no higher motive than to manipulate their environment for their own benefit rather than to transcend it. This is undeniably true of many students of the Occult Arts, but a profession cannot justly be judged by its black sheep. Let us rather consider what Occultism is in the hands of its worthiest exponents.

The aim of occult initiations, rightly understood, is to lead the mind by a graded way to clearer and clearer apprehensions of spiritual truth as fast as consciousness becomes fitted to realise them. It is impossible to take the average man direct from his ordinary state of mind into the higher kinds of prayer and mystical consciousness, but

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it is quite feasible to lead him step by step through successive interpretations of a symbol-system to such an understanding and realisation. This is what an occult initiation should aim to do, and it falls short of achievement if it stops at any intermediary stage on the Path and declares that here is the ultimate enunciation of the Truth, for Truth can never be enunciated at all in its ultimate form, as is well known to all mystics.

In the end the Occult Path must terminate at the Mystic Goal, it has no end of itself; but as the mystic's way is steep and direct, so is the occultist's by contrast circuitous, but nevertheless, being circuitous, it is graded to a gentler incline. And indeed it is doubtful whether, at the present stage of evolution, it would be either possible or generally justifiable to abandon humanity to its problems and go straight up the Hill of Vision. After all, the occultist remains in touch with the lower slopes, ascending and descending upon the Jacob's Ladder of psychism and bearing his brethren company upon their journey.

When all is said and done, however, the choice of the Mystic or the Occult Path depends upon temperament; as the old saying has it, it takes all sorts to make a world, and no doubt a world composed exclusively of either the one or the other would prove unworkable. We cannot therefore undertake to contribute to the long-outstanding dispute between the occultist and the mystic except by the suggestion that both have their place in God's scheme.

Having said this much in the hope of justifying the occultist in his refusal to leave his nets and immediately follow the Mystic Way, and tried to show that such a refusal is not mere perversity on his part, wherein, having seen the higher, he deliberately rejects it for the lower, but

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that his refusal may be grounded in a natural necessity, let us now embark upon an analysis of occultism itself.

It falls into three primary divisions :—

1. Harmonisation with Cosmic Law by means of right understanding.

2. Adjustment of disharmonies by means of the right use of the power that knowledge gives.

3. Purification of the soul by good works on all planes.

All these three things belong admittedly to the plane of the phenomenal universe. There is nothing intrinsically spiritual about any of them, yet nevertheless they are the first three steps of the stair that leads up to the heights of Spirit, and it is to be doubted whether those who in any given incarnation essay the immediate way of the mystic have not trodden these three steps in earlier incarnations.

Under right understanding is comprised the various aspects of esoteric studies which form the theoretical side of occultism, and without this grounding in the theory and philosophy of the subject, any attempt at its practical application must be a very hit-or-miss, rule-of-thumb affair. On the theoretical side the primary study must be cosmogony. Unless the sphere in which the soul evolves is adequately understood, no start can be made in the Great Work. Such a study must immediately fall into two further divisions ; the study of the noumenal and the study of the phenomenal, or, in other words, the cosmos and the universe. We cannot go further into this division in the present pages, but those who are familiar with the deeper aspects of the subject will realise its significance.* This study itself has two aspects, the descriptive and

* The reader is referred to *The Cosmic Doctrine*, by Dion Fortune (published by the Society of The Inner Light), for details.

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classificatory, and the tracing of the course of evolution. In other words, we must approach the subject from its static and kinetic aspects ; we must have a clear bird's-eye view of manifestation at the stage to which evolution has brought it at the present moment, and equally we must have a panorama of the course by which it has come and that by which it may be expected to proceed to its final form.

Equally, we must have a clear and detailed understanding of the nature of man ; and be it noted that the occultist makes no distinction between the soul and the body, regarding them as too impenetrably interwoven for any such distinction to be possible, but studies them both under the generic title of esoteric psychology. This study again divides itself into that of the normal states of consciousness, the pathological states, the psychic states, and the esoteric psycho-therapeutics which is their outcome.

From all theoretical studies practical applications inevitably spring, and from the study of occult cosmogony arise two very important aspects of the occult arts—the System of Correspondences and Ritual Magic.

That form of study known as the System of Correspondences has, like all else that is occult, been subject to much abuse and misinterpretation. It has been confused with the Doctrine of Signatures, which is profoundly misleading. The Doctrine of Signatures declares that there is an analogy between different things if there is a certain superficial resemblance. For instance, infusions of plants with kidney-shaped leaves were considered to be good for diseases of the kidneys. The System of Correspondences, rightly understood, is very different from this. It is based on the doctrine that the visible is but the shadow thrown

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by the invisible, and it endeavours to ascertain what it is that is throwing a specific shadow. In other words, esoteric science holds that matter is built up on a framework of spirit ; that spirit emanates matter, not matter spirit ; working upon this hypothesis, it seeks to discover what spiritual factor has emanated the particular material object under consideration. In other words, it seeks to find the relationship that, *ex hypothesi*, exists between the seen and the unseen.

Further, it holds that the roots of many material manifestations can be found in a single spiritual principle, and that therefore these must be inter-related among themselves. Finally, the Doctrine of Correspondences, philosophically understood, implies that there will be mental and astral states of the said spiritual principle in its descent into matter and mental and astral congeners of its manifestations, and that these are inter-acting among themselves and profoundly influence the material conditions with which they are allied.

A System of Correspondences, therefore, consists in the knowledge of the astral, mental, and spiritual affinities of any given object on the material plane. From such knowledge come immediate and practical results ; for if the relations and reactions of the subtle planes of the system can be discerned, it will follow that the relations and reactions existing between their physical counterparts will be understood. In the study of Correspondences, therefore, is the basis of divination. Divination, in fact, is simply cosmic diagnosis and prognosis ; there is nothing more miraculous about it than can be found in the prophecy of a speedy death from consumption after the use of the stethoscope. Data have been rendered available which previously were not available to the unaided senses,

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and deductions are drawn therefrom in the light of experience. For instance, the prognoses of astrology rest on the known correspondences existing between the planets, which are each associated with the development of certain phases of evolution, and the aspects of the human organism which correspond to those phases. Equally, the divinatory method of the Tarot rests upon the deliberately designed correspondences of the Tarot cards with the various cosmic and psychic forces and factors.

But men are not content merely to understand and foresee, they desire to put their extended knowledge to practical application, and with this end in view innumerable methods have been worked out whereby, utilising the principles of Correspondences, influences can be brought to bear upon the subtle causative factors in the chain of manifestation. All ritual and all symbolism is designed to produce an artificial set of Correspondences with the astral spiritual factor which it is designed to work upon, and by applying the power of the re-inforced will to these symbols, to enable it to act upon their subtler aspects, and thereby modify their causative action.

Magic further divides into White and Black, despite the bigoted denials that there can be such a thing as good magic. White Magic aims at re-inforcing and concentrating the process of evolution and redemption, and Black Magic seeks to employ the same powers to manipulate causation for selfish ends regardless of cosmic law. The difference between the two is the difference between the art of the doctor and the art of the maker of intoxicating drinks and the poisoner. Ritual magic may well be defined as the therapeutics of the subtle planes. True, the use of therapeutics without hygiene is unsound, and the hygiene

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of the subtle planes is ethics. It therefore follows that the mistake which is made by many occultists is to apply the powerful alterative action of magic without also employing the hygienic measures of ethical righteousness ; but, rightly used, the potent medicament of magic can do for both soul and society what no other measures can achieve so speedily or so effectually, for it can break the vicious circle of psychic infection that otherwise would have to be left to the slow processes of time. The difference between magic and meditation methods is the difference between drugs and diet—medicines will do swiftly what diet can only effect slowly, and in critical cases there is no time to wait for the slow processes of dietetics, so it must be either medicines or nothing. Nevertheless, drugs are no substitute for right diet and wholesome régime, and although magic enables a speedy and potent result to be attained, it is only by means of right understanding and right ethics that the position which has been won can be held.

Black Magic differs from White Magic not so much in the methods it employs as in the source whence its powers are drawn. White Magic seeks to reach upwards and draw down power from above. Black Magic seeks to reach backwards into an outgrown phase of evolution and release forces which have long since been equilibrated into a static form. It is as if the burning alkali and acid that went to the making of a neutral base were freed once again. In Black Occultism a breaking down of organised form into lower types of force takes place, and the two elements employed for this purpose are sex and blood. Into the details of these methods it would not be desirable to enter in these pages.

In addition to the utilisation of these two physical sources of subtle force, the black magician makes use of

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the evocation of spirits and pacts therewith. The spirits may be the innocent natural forces of the elements, or Nature spirits, which he may elect to use for either idle or evil purposes ; they may be those evil imaginings of men's hearts which are the evil spirits of the earth-sphere, or they may be drawn from that overplus of unbalanced force emanated during the earlier processes of evolution which formed the raw material of those forms of existence which are known to Qabalists as the Qliphoth.

Finally, the black magician avails himself of the powers of certain drugs to produce clairvoyance. This subject need not be pursued here, as I have already dealt with it in detail in the pages of "Sane Occultism."

CHAPTER IX

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III

AS a result of his training, the initiate should develop certain definite powers, and if he does not develop them, it should be reckoned that his training has failed of its purpose. I have no patience with the schools of occultism which declare that they are purely ethical and speculative, and that any attempt at a practical application of their teachings is dangerous and wicked. The presumption may not unreasonably be that they are unable to communicate secrets they do not possess.

Let us consider what a student has a right to expect as the result of his training, provided he himself has done what was required of him.

The practical results of the study of occult science may be divided into two aspects—the art of the seer, or vision ; and the art of the magus, or power. The trained occultist ought to be able both to perceive and to act in the invisible worlds.

The seership of the fully-trained adept includes much more than immediate psychic perception of the subtle aspects of his immediate environment ; it includes also the power to range in consciousness through both time and space ; to return up the river of time and live once again in scenes that have passed away. In the literature of spiritualistic research there are innumerable records of phantasms of the living ; the adept should understand the art of producing this phantasm, or astro-etheric form, and be able to do so at will.

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From the power of the seer to perceive the Unseen comes naturally the possibility of comradeship and co-operation with the dwellers in the Unseen. These associations are of two kinds. He may merely meet in passing the denizens of the Astral Plane, the plane of Maya, or illusion ; or he may be able to get into touch with beings of a very much higher type and greater potency.

One of the chief advantages of initiation into a fraternity having a long line of tradition behind it lies in the fact that many souls will have entered into their freedom through its discipline and be working on the Inner Planes, and into their comradeship the newly-initiated brother enters. He is therefore in a very different position from the psychic who ventures on to the astral by means of his own unaided psychism. The latter is like a person who comes to live in a great city without any letters of introduction ; it will be a long time before he gets to know anyone, and those with whom he scrapes casual acquaintance will not be among the best of its citizens.

Of great importance to the occultist are what he calls his "contacts." These contacts are not altogether analogous with the "controls" of the spiritualist, although the idea has much in common. "Contacts" are not made so much with individual entities as with orders or fraternities. For instance, a contact may be made with the Druidical schools of initiation that existed in these islands in prehistoric times, or with one of the magical schools that existed in the Jura in mediæval times ; the initiate who holds such a contact will not merely be in touch with the souls of those who were members of that school, but with the forces which they concentrated by means of their ritual.

Perhaps a further example will help to make this concept still clearer. The devout Catholic does not pray to the saints for their own sakes, but in order that through their

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intervention he may come into touch with the powers behind the Christian Church, that is to say, with the Christ, and through the Christ, with God. The same principle applies to all occult contacts, though they may not aim at such lofty sources.

The contacts which are available for the initiate are of two types—with the Elder Brethren and with beings of other evolutions. The Elder Brethren are those who are freed from the wheel of birth and death and continue their evolution on the Inner Planes, having nothing further to learn from matter. They are usually referred to generically as the Masters, but there are many different types and grades among them, from the soul but recently freed from the body and undertaking its first simple tasks as an Invisible Helper, to the Star Logoi, the Christs of the Rays, for certain of the Star Lodges are now ruled by the Lords of Humanity.

The beings of another evolution must never be thought of as evil spirits or devils. They are aspiring, even as ourselves, but of a different form of life. We might compare the different evolutions occupying our solar system to the different programmes coming through the ether on the wireless. They are all using the ether simultaneously, but we only get the one to which we have tuned our receiving-set. Should we, by any chance, get snatches of another programme we are very much annoyed, and declare that there is "interference."

So it is with our contacts with other evolutions than our own. The accidental reception by our consciousness of their vibrations constitutes psychic "interference," but the adept may elect to alter the tuning of his mental receiving-set and "get" the deva kingdom.

The second aspect of the initiate's work concerns the work of the magus, or power aspect. It is often called the

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ceremonial aspect, because certain formulæ are used for achieving its aim. These formulæ are used in the same way as the craftsman employs tools in order to reinforce his manual skill. The works of magic could theoretically be done by the power of the mind alone, without the use of any ritual form, but in actual practice a craftsman might as well attempt to carve a statue with his bare hands. Man is a tool-using animal, even on the astral plane.

Magic may be defined as the use of some form of ceremonial, ranging from the simple mantram or spell to elaborate rituals of which the Mass of the Church and the ceremonies of the Freemason are examples. These are two representative types of magic, whatever their exponents may like to say to the contrary. The Mass is a perfect example of a ritual of evocation, and the Masonic ceremony is what it is designed to be, a ritual of initiation, as is well shown in his very interesting books on the Masonic Initiation by W. L. Wilmshurst.

The whole idea of ritual magic centres about the contacting of a being on the Inner Planes who will assist the operation by concentrating a cosmic force of a particular type. If that being is evil, the Mass will be a Black Mass or the initiation that of a Black Lodge ; and the result will be the reinforcing of the corresponding aspect in the natures of the participants. If the being invoked is good, the result will be the intensification of his especial virtues in the souls of those who share in the ritual designed to commemorate his life or death.

The Word of Power in any ritual is the Name of the Being to whom the participants look as the channel of the power they are seeking to contact. In addition to the use of words, signs or symbolic movements are also employed, and these are designed to commemorate the most striking

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or most typical incident in the life of the Master. These signs are further crystallised into symbols, which also represent the crisis of that Life. For instance, in the Mass we have the invocation of the Sacred Name of Jesus, the Sign of the Cross, made by the devout Christian on breast and brow, and the Cross itself, or Crucifix, which, when consecrated, is a true talisman. The same principles apply equally to all ceremonial magic, save that different entities are invoked.

Whether it is justifiable to do so is a matter of opinion, and the only people who are qualified to express an opinion are those who have had practical experience of ceremonial magic in the hands of competent operators. The general opinion appears to be that the powers thus handled are very high potencies, and that in the event of an accident, they can do serious damage. An accident in a high-powered, swift-moving car is a serious matter, and it is not everyone who is temperamentally suited to drive such a car; but the big advances in motor engineering have come through speed-tests where, under carefully chosen conditions, specially trained men have established new speed records.

We do not say that the six hundred horse-power racing car is a suitable road vehicle, but we do say that it is only through the use of these high-powered cars under special conditions that the necessary knowledge becomes available that shall advance engine-design in general.

So it is with the works of magic. It is to the average devout man seeking spiritual things what the racing car is to the average motorist—not for him, but the source whence comes the knowledge that is applied in designing the car that he uses with so much pleasure and profit.

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We come now to the vexed question of trance. One can hardly take up a book of advice to aspirants without encountering the most serious words of warning against going into trance, but there is no attempt to explain what trance is. One of the difficulties with which present-day psychic science in the Western world has to contend is the wide-spread introduction of Eastern methods and systems of development which are quite unsuitable to European conditions ; experiences based on the use of these methods outside their proper sphere do not necessarily hold good for the use of the traditional methods of Western magic.

Of the authors who give such solemn warnings against trance, how many have had any experience of it ? If they had, they would know at once that there are two types of trance, the negative and the positive. In the negative trance, the consciousness of the operator is put in abeyance; is, as it were jammed, stopped on a dead centre, and another mind operates the nerve-endings of the physical vehicle by means of telepathic suggestion to the subconsciousness. Whether that mind is incarnated in a physical vehicle or not, is immaterial ; the process is the same. This method is, of course, open to serious abuse in the hands of the ignorant and unscrupulous, and under such circumstances deserves all the hard things that are said about it. But the fact remains that in clean and careful hands it is used without evil results, as the records of the wide range of spiritualistic experiments show. It is useless to deny a range of experience as extensive as that available in spiritualistic literature.

Positive trance is quite another matter, and is used extensively by every occultist. For certain astral work and for certain functions on the Inner Planes, the body is left in a profound psychic sleep which is quite different from ordinary sleep. Even during brief moments of vision, of

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which most students of the occult sooner or later have some experience, the material surroundings fade from view and one is oblivious of all save the vision. An observer would find during that brief moment that respiration and pulse had altered their rhythm, the eyeballs were fixed and the muscles rigid. If this is not trance, what is?

There are a good many shibboleths in occultism which are the result of hearsay, not experience. It is the custom to decry trance, and therefore the people who make use of it are chary of admitting that they do so, lest they be included in the condemnation; but the fact remains that at times consciousness is withdrawn from the physical plane and the body is of necessity unconscious.

To experiment with trance save under proper conditions and experienced guidance is undoubtedly risky. The occultist has to learn to function on the Inner Planes; so long as he has a physical body they cannot be completely his native element and he also must recognise his limitations; but just as the person who goes in for boating ought to know how to swim in case he falls in, so the person who attempts practical occultism ought to know how to go out of and return to his body for the same reason. Suddenly to find oneself in touch with another form of existence without knowing how to deal with it is an exceedingly unpleasant experience, even if there be no real cause for alarm.

Finally, to sum up, the occultist who is going to undertake any serious work in his chosen subject must be perceptive, must be able to be sensitive at will, and must have a working knowledge of ceremonial magic. To say otherwise is to say what is not true, for occult science is very much more than a system of ethics based on a belief in super-physical planes of existence, the Masters, and reincarnation.

CHAPTER X

THE HEAD-WATERS OF OCCULTISM

WHERE do occultists look for the source of their science? What are its classics, and when was its Golden Age? People are sometimes surprised that the occultist should take seriously the scientific views of the ancients, concerning himself with "humours" and all the jargon of alchemy. All such things, it is said, have been outmoded ever since the Renaissance; why waste time on such exploded superstitions?

The reason that the occultist seeks his inspiration in the remote past is because the nearer the source, the purer the stream. The wisdom of the initiates is not so much a body of doctrine that has been built up by experimental research, each worker handing on the fruits of his studies to his successors, as, in large part, a revelation received from sources other than those to which humanity normally has access. This revelation, once received, is developed and applied, but in its essence it is a gift to humanity brought by the Elder Brethren; it is, firstly, the garnered fruits of previous evolutions; secondly, it is the pioneer work of those who have gone on ahead of evolution; and, thirdly, it is brought down from planes of existence which human consciousness cannot normally contact.

Out of these varying elements the body of doctrine called esoteric science has been elaborated and adapted to the needs of different ages and races. All its fundamental principles in the present age have been received as "the gifts of the gods" and it is only its practical applications

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that humanity has had to work out for itself. For a proper understanding of the Wisdom Tradition we must therefore know something of the means by which this gift of primordial wisdom was brought to mankind.

For a force to manifest on the planes of form, it has to be expressed through a form ; otherwise there is no manifestation. The Christ Within functions when we realise, even momentarily, the perfect love which makes all things one ; but for the Christ-force to function through the group-mind there has to be group-realisation of its nature, and therefore it is that we have the Christs of the Rays, and not one manifestation of an impersonal force for the whole universe and all evolution.

Each Ray manifests its force in a phase of evolution, and the positive and negative aspects of the Rays are the Lesser Days and Nights of Brahma. The Secret Wisdom tells us that the Rays come into action in turn, like the shining forth of beams from the One Light, and of their dawn and dusk the precession of the equinoxes is the cosmic clock. Each Ray works out a phase of evolution, and each phase of evolution recapitulates the work of its predecessors before it commences upon its own. In order to expedite this task, the fruits of the previous evolutions are brought to it by certain entities who are known to the Secret Tradition as the Seed-bearers. The entities of each life-wave, having achieved equilibrium, are stabilised as co-ordinated systems of reactions ; the Lords of Flame are the forerunners of the Devas of the Elements ; the Lords of Form range from the Rulers of Building Elementals to the Geometrising Consciousnesses who "guide Arcturus with his sons," and the Lords of Mind are behind the laws of biology.

The Seed-bearers who come at the beginning of each life-wave are drawn from the evolution immediately

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preceding, but as the Rays represent sub-cyclic activities which do not recapitulate but rather manifest forth a special aspect, the Seed-bearers to the Rays are drawn from the previous life-wave which has a correspondence with the work to be carried out in that particular Ray-phase of evolution. These Seed-bearers are known to tradition as the culture-gods, and it will be noted that each of the ancient races had a tradition of a divine progenitor, a priest-emperor who gave it its culture.

This priest-emperor, being a perfected soul of a previous evolution, is immeasurably superior to the rudimentary consciousnesses to whom he comes, for, having completed his evolution, he is of the Plane of God, and intuition, recognising this, invariably treats him as a divinity because Divinity is made manifest in him. He plants in the group-soul of the evolving race those archetypal ideas which are faculties ; this process is analogous to that whereby the individuality transmits the fruits of its evolution to each successive personality in which it manifests. The civilisation thus inaugurated runs its course to the nadir of its material evolution, the point furthest out from God, metaphorically speaking ; it is at this point that it has to turn about and come back on the evolutionary arc, and it is here that the Star Logos or Christ of the Ray comes to it upon the physical plane. Before His coming, the Ray is an outpouring of the Divine Life, governed by the laws evolved in previous evolutions, but the Star Logos says, "A new law give I unto you."

The function of the Star Logos, incarnating as man, is two-fold ; its exoteric aspect is to live the archetypal human life (the life that all men of that Ray will live when they have achieved perfection), and thereby to impress that standard of life and action on the group-mind ; and so

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He is not only "Perfect God," being divinity made manifest, but He is also "Perfect Man," or the archetypal ideal of humanity for that phase of evolution, and what He is during His brief earthly manifestation, all men must be when they are "made perfect even as our Father which is in heaven is perfect."

The Christs of the Rays always manifest on the physical plane during the sub-cycles of the Ray which corresponds in number and colour with the Ray itself; thus, it was on the fourth sub-cycle of the Green Ray, in the fourth sub-race of the fourth Root-race, that the Manu Narada founded the Temple of the Sun in the City of the Golden Gates in lost Atlantis. The Manu Narada was a Lord of Mind, for the Atlanteans were evolving the conscious mind.

It was in the same way that the archetypal ideas were brought to mankind by the Manu Melchizedek, who was a Lord of Flame and also of Mind, and to this school it is that the most ancient initiations of our present race are traceable, and therefore it is that the highest of our Initiates are referred to as "High Priests after the Order of Melchizedek," that is to say, they trace back their spiritual lineage to a primordial initiation.

Alcohol, whatever may be said of its abuse, was originally the Western equivalent of the Soma juice, the means whereby the brain was enabled to respond to the vibrations of abstract mentation, which it is the function of this root-race to develop, just as the Atlanteans developed the concrete mind and bequeathed it to us. Drunkenness is one of the characteristic evils of Europe. What alcohol was to this sub-race, the knowledge of using the endocrine glands will be to the next sub-race. This knowledge has long been the secret of the initiate, and forms the basis of the Yoga-breathing systems, but exoteric science is now

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discovering these truths on its own account, and therein are contained the seeds of destruction.

It must not be thought, however, that because the Manu of a Ray functions as a Priest-king only at its inception, and the Star Logos of a Ray as its Christ in the sub-cycle that corresponds in its number of the Ray, humanity is ever left without guidance. Each sub-cycle of a Ray, each sub-race of humanity, has its Great One. These entities may be distinguished from the Star Logoi by the fact that of the Christs it is always recorded that They manifested through Virgin Birth and died the sacrificial death, and in this there is a deep occult significance.

It may not unreasonably be asked, How can the foregoing statements be verified? No one who has developed rational consciousness can be justifiably asked to accept finally any statement on faith, and therefore, as obliged by the laws of his nature, he demands evidence. The evidence in these matters is based on the Law of Correspondences. "As above, so below." What is true of the microcosm, man, is true of the macrocosm, and what is true of man is true of the amoeba, and what is true of the amoeba is true of the macrocosm. Unless the findings of a psychic fit into the Cosmic system they cannot be considered accurate. Therefore it is that the psychic who is not also an initiate is at a grave disadvantage, for he can never compare his measures with the Great Pyramid.

There are no exceptions in the cosmic law; neither do the metaphysics of the different occult schools vary when understood in their purity, and it will be found that the scheme set forth in the preceding pages, though derived from the Western Tradition, in no way conflicts with the scheme which Mme. Blavatsky outlines in the "*Secret Doctrine*," and which she received from the Eastern Tradition.

CHAPTER XI

THE SOURCES OF THE ESOTERIC CHRISTIAN TRADITION

THE different pantheons of the great cosmic faiths, Egyptian, Greek, or Christian, represent the symbol-systems wherein the abstract truths taught by their Founders, the Sons of God, are enshrined. The Christian is a very abstract system; it has been far less anthropomorphised than most of the others. In Christianity, therefore, we see a very spiritual presentation of the One Truth, and for its full apprehension a very highly developed spiritual intuition is necessary. Consequently, where that intuition is lacking, Christianity makes less appeal, for it lacks the intellectual interpretation which is the food of the concrete mind; and herein lies a weakness of Christianity and its incompleteness.

The great Founders of the faiths give a spiritual teaching and a spiritual impetus only; it is the priesthoods who subsequently work out the theology and ceremonial. The men who made primitive Christianity were drawn from two sources, initiates of the Mysteries and non-initiates. Of the former, St. Paul and St. John the Divine are examples, and the influence of their Mystery-training can be clearly seen in their work. St. Paul distinguishes between the things which he can say openly to all and the things at which he may only hint for the benefit of those who can take the hint.

There naturally sprang up a keen rivalry between the two types of Christians; those who had accepted the

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teaching of Our Lord without any previous Mystery-training depended entirely upon spiritual intuition and good works; those who were already accustomed to the methods of the Mysteries sought to express the Christian truths in the language of the esoteric philosophy of their day. The first chapter of the Gospel according to John is an excellent example of the process whereby men already highly trained in mystical knowledge correlated the new teaching with that which was already familiar to them. In this Gospel we see the influence of the Greek Schools of initiation, but in the Apocalypse we see the influence of Qabalistic thought.

The Gnostic Schools were the Christian Mysteries, made by initiates of other Mystery Schools who had become converted to Christianity and sought to establish within the Christian dispensation the methods to which they were accustomed.

In the struggle between the two types of Christians, the initiates and the non-initiates, the latter eventually gained the day, and forthwith the order for persecution and abolition went forth against the Mysteries of Jesus. The orthodox element then gradually developed, as was inevitable, something of a Mystery System of their own in the sacraments, which are ritual magic pure and simple, as is agreed even by such an authority as Evelyn Underhill.

But with the development of the sacramental system did not, unfortunately, go the metaphysical interpretation thereof. Superstition has been defined as the use of a form whose significance has been forgotten. The sacraments, instead of being the symbol-systems of the Mysteries of Jesus, approach perilously near to vain observance in the hands of those who regard them with superstitious

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awe rather than an understanding of their psychological and esoteric significance.

Consequently there is an unbridged gulf in our modern Christianity between the mysticism of its deep spiritual truths and the symbolic and magical ceremonial of its ritual. This gulf it is the task of the modern Mystery Schools to bridge. These, however, have in many cases re-illumined their fires at an Eastern altar, so that the bridge they build does not lead to the Christian contacts of the West. Those of their followers who seek initiation, instead of having revealed to them the deeper issues of their own faith, have to change their religion and follow other Masters.

How are we of the West, therefore, to bridge this gulf ? We must do what the original gnostics did: seek to express in the metaphysical language of the Mysteries the teachings of Our Lord, and thereby establish an esoteric Christian School—the Initiation of the West. The Gnostics drew their inspiration from two main sources: the Mysteries of Greece and the mysticism of Israel, the Qabalah, with which Our Lord was obviously very familiar. These are the sources wherein we shall find the mental and magical interpretation of our religion which shall supply the missing keys.

The elements which were discarded from Christianity must be replaced if it is to become a true Wisdom Religion, and unless it can answer to the needs of the intellect as well as of the heart, those who need the food of the intellect rather than the heart will seek it elsewhere, and we cannot blame them.

Equally it follows that unless the relationship between occultism and religion is clearly recognised, the sacred science, deprived of its spiritual inspiration, will speedily degenerate on to the Left-hand Path. Occultism, rightly

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understood, is the servant of religion, and not an end in itself. Its task is to bring through to the astral plane and within reach of the apprehension of our finite consciousness those spiritual forces which, without the concentrating formulæ it employs, diffuse and are lost in the sands of mortal mind. Occultism is the method *par excellence* of manipulating the human mind, and if it be used as the handmaiden of religion, it brings spiritual influences to bear in dark places that otherwise would be unapproachable.

Let us grant, therefore, that in any school of Western Mysticism the author and finisher of our faith must be Christ Jesus, the Great Initiator of the West, and that in His Name we may safely do that which, unprotected and unsanctified, we dare not attempt. All the gettings of occultism must be dedicated to God's service ; otherwise there is no justification for this intrusion on Nature's mysteries and the forcing of the higher faculties to birth before their time. The highest degree of initiation is crucifixion for the salvation of mankind, the vicarious abreacting of racial karma. Let those who aspire to initiation bear ever in mind what reward it is that will crown their efforts with a crown of thorns. Unless we have so great a love for humanity, so great a sympathy for suffering, that we are not only willing but anxious to avail ourselves of the opportunity in some small measure to offer ourselves as a sacrifice for the sins of the people, there is no point in setting out upon the Way of Initiation, for its goal will be dust and ashes to the man who remains unregenerate. The aim of initiation is neither magical power nor marvellous experience, but simply the ability to offer an acceptable sacrifice that shall be effectual for the neutralisation of cosmic karma.

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As we have already seen, there have been repeated attempts to develop an esoteric aspect to Christianity. Our Lord and some of His immediate followers were unquestionably versed in the Qabalah; and Greek and Alexandrine influences had touched most of those who were the builders of the primitive Church. These influences crystallised into the Gnostic aspect of Christianity. Later, however, there were other attempts, and the three most notable of these were, first, the School of Initiation which had for its symbolism the Grail and the Round Table, and which drew its inspiration from Druidical sources. This school disappeared in the general disorganisation of society during the Dark Ages. Secondly, the Knights Templar who, while fighting the infidel in the Holy Land, came in touch with the last survivors of the secret tradition of Israel and from them received initiation. They brought back to Europe the secrets thus gained, giving them a Christian expression, until their suppression in A.D. 1307. Thirdly, that curious movement which announced itself by the publication of the *Fama Fraternitatis*. This gave rise to Alchemy.

A separate book would be required for an adequate study of any of these sources of inspiration, but enough has been said to indicate to the reader where he may look for the head-waters of Western Occultism and most profitably pursue his studies.

CHAPTER XII

THE ALPHABET OF THE MYSTERIES

ALL esoteric systems use a symbolic method of notation in their teachings. Each of the symbols employed indicates a spiritual potency, and the ideas associated with them indicate its method of function; their interrelation represents the interaction of these forces. If we have the key to one symbol-system we can readily equate it with all the others, for fundamentally they are the same.

All the gods and goddesses in a pantheon, with one exception, represent Nature-forces and fundamental spiritual principles, for the one is but the obverse of the other. This system of symbology is capable of translation into terms of each plane of the manifested universe. Upon the physical plane they equate with what we will call, borrowing a term from the East, the mundane chakras; that is to say, the points upon the physical plane where the contact is made between the Unseen and the Seen. Different types of force have different points of contact.

These are represented by the twelve signs of the Zodiac, the seven planets, and the four Elements, and have their correspondence upon the different planes of existence with the different grades of the celestial hierarchy. The knowledge of these is always one of the carefully-guarded secrets of the Mysteries, and is never revealed outside their portal.

These cosmic symbols are further represented by the letters of a sacred language, which, in the Western

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Tradition, is Hebrew. Out of these letters are formed the Sacred Names and Words of Power, which are simply algebraical formulæ resuming potencies.

Thus is the universe represented to the initiate, and he is able to trace the correlation between its parts and see what invisible realities are throwing their shadows upon the world of Maya, illusion. Employing this principle, rituals are constructed which are designed to bring the soul of man into touch with the potencies represented, and divinatory systems are worked out which reveal the combinations and movements of these invisible forces. Do not let it be forgotten that divination, which is the discernment of the Unseen, is a very different thing from fortunetelling, to which it bears the same relation as scientific medicine to catch-penny nostrums sold at a country fair.

In speaking of the pantheons of the gods it was noted that each god stood for a spiritual principle or a natural force—with one exception, the Sacrificed God, and He stands for the soul of the initiate, to whom He is also the Great Initiator.

The pantheon can, then, be approached from two aspects, the external and the internal. It can be discerned in Nature or in the soul of man. In its final aspect the two become one. This is the aim of the work of the Mysteries.

There is no such thing as polytheism in the sense in which the term is usually understood. A Father of the Gods is always recognised who is the Great First Cause of the universe, and from whom all things emanate. We may, however, distinguish between the religions which look upon God as artificer as well as creator, and those who recognise delegation of function to lesser deities.

But even in such a rigidly monotheistic faith as Judaism it is recognised that the direct action of God in all matters

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is inconceivable, and so we get the concept of the Divine emanations, or Sephiroth, and their manifestation in the four worlds of the Qabalists by means of angelic hosts. In this concept there is no fundamental difference from that which underlies the Egyptian or Hindu pantheons, save that the angels of the manifestations are distinctly recognised as God's servants, not His fellows. The correspondences can be clearly traced between all three cosmogonies with the help of astrological symbolism.

The student of the Mysteries needs therefore to know his cosmic symbolism as set forth in these pantheons ; and although he will take one of these systems as his key-system and make it his own, he will be well-advised to familiarise himself with others, because each has its own special development and application, and can throw much additional light on the system of his choice. For instance, the deepest natural magic is to be found in Egypt, and the highest metaphysics in India.

But if he desires to make practical application of his studies, the initiate must investigate the soul of man as well as the nature of the universe, and the progress of the soul through its initiations he finds symbolised in the life-history of the Redeemer or Way-shower, who is for him the Grand Master and Great Initiator. He will find herein an epitome of the course of the soul from sensory consciousness to Divine Union.

In the interaction between the different levels of consciousness and the corresponding planes of manifestation lies the essence of occultism. The psychic is one who functions negatively in this interaction ; he reacts to the conditions he contacts, and thereby perceives them, but he exerts little or no influence upon them. The adept, on the other hand, while perceiving, does not react, and therefore functions positively in his relations to the subtle worlds,

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sending out his influence upon them instead of receiving their influence into himself. The magician might be distinguished from either of these two as one who knows how to influence subtler worlds, but, being unable to perceive them, is unable to operate directly thereon, and is obliged to depend upon intermediaries whom he evokes to serve his will. The true adept is not dependent upon the intervention of spirits, whether divine or diabolical, but himself works directly upon the plane of his choice ; and as it is in the evocation of spirits and their subsequent banishment that the chief risks of occultism lie, it will be seen that the magus is in a very different position from the magician in his relations with the subtler planes.

But in addition to his studies of subjects which are essentially occult, there are other sciences with which the student ought to be acquainted if he is to do justice to his task, for unless he has a working knowledge of them, he will be unable to appreciate the significance of a large portion of his occult researches. First and foremost of these is psychology, for without a thorough knowledge of the nature of consciousness he will be totally unfitted to cope with the intricate problems of consciousness which are constantly presenting themselves in the course of his studies, where, as a matter of fact, everything turns upon the nature of consciousness and its relation to the ego and the different levels of manifestation.

The ordinary scholastic psychology, such as he would learn if he were going to be a school-teacher, will have little interest for him, however, and after he has learnt its simpler lessons in relation to modes of apprehension and the classification of consciousness, he may safely leave the behaviourist school behind and proceed to the investigation of the analytical schools, especially the Jungian, for they

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will yield him far richer results ; after some acquaintance with their methods and concepts he should investigate the phenomena of hypnosis and suggestion and of hypernormal states in general. He will find that both the spiritualists and the Catholic mystics have much to tell him on these subjects that will repay his attention.

Thus equipped with data which shall enable him to form judgments, he is in a far better position to investigate the Unseen than if he ventured forth clad in nothing but the armour of faith. The consciousness of the seer and the powers of the magician are not things apart from natural laws whose operations can be seen and studied in other spheres as well as those of practical occultism, and it is through this comparative study that most light is thrown on their operation.

A working knowledge of anthropology, archaeology, and folk-lore is also exceedingly valuable ; for different systems, especially those existing among primitive peoples at the present day, throw much light on the ancient cultures and enable us the better to grasp their metaphysical significance. A general knowledge of physiology is also essential if the relationship between mind and body is to be understood, and the new work in physics is of especial interest to the student of occultism, explaining as it does the nature of the etheric substratum of the manifested universe. Finally, there should be some training at least in the methods and concepts of philosophy and the findings of comparative religion. Thus equipped, the initiate will have the necessary cultural background to enable him to approach his chosen subject in a scientific spirit and produce results worthy of serious consideration.

PART III

PRACTICAL

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CHAPTER XIII

THE TRAINING OF THE MIND

THE grimoires of magic give instructions for the preparation of the magical instruments to be used by the magus in his work—the wand, the sword, the pen for drawing pentacles, and all the rest of them ; but these grimoires themselves are the work of the uninitiated, with half-understood and misrepresented secrets stolen from the Mysteries.

This materialistic concept has persisted even among students of the subject who ought to know better. It is not in the elaborate processes used in the preparation of a material article that the virtue lies, but in the condition produced in the etheric counterpart of that article by the handling and thought-concentration that it undergoes in the course of the operation. It is magnetised, firstly by the personal magnetism of the operator ; secondly, an aura of thought-forms is built up around it ; and thirdly, by the right use of the imagination and the will, it is made the physical vehicle of an invisible, cosmic force, contacted by the operator and concentrated by him.

It will be seen from the foregoing considerations that the essence of all practical operations is mental. It follows therefore that in the powers of the mind we find the key to the whole process. But although everybody has a mind, they have not by any manner of means all got the conscious use of these powers, though there are more people who have the subconscious and involuntary use of them than is generally credited. A large part of the training of an initiate must therefore consist in the development of these latent aspects of his mind.

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For the purposes of our study we may consider the mind under three heads, as is usually done in psychology—feeling, will, and reason. But instead of considering them as the psychologists do, as separate units, we shall consider them as the Qabalists do, as successive emanations resulting in equilibrium. We should thus see feeling and reason in polarity, and the kinetic will as resulting from their union. But this is not enough. According to Qabalistic principle, a trinity thus formed must be resumed in a fourth principle upon another plane before it can become functional. If the plane under consideration is a lower plane, they will be resumed in a physical body which gives them expression upon the plane of matter through instinct ; but if the plane under consideration is a higher plane, they will be resumed in that little-understood faculty, the imagination. It is from this synthesis upon a higher plane, and from this alone, that occult power issues forth.

We have to consider therefore the process by means of which the would-be adept is enabled first to dissect out these separate factors from the general co-ordination of his mind, purify and concentrate them, and re-synthesise them upon a higher arc. This, of course, is the real process of alchemy, the Great Work.

Dirt has been well defined as misplaced matter ; purification consists in returning to its proper place whatever has become misplaced, thus mingling with, and thereby adulterating, that which is different from itself. Thus, if emotion intrudes into any intellectual process, it contaminates it and falsifies its results, for intellectual processes should be carried on in terms of reason alone in order that the ultimate issue may be truth. It follows that as a preliminary to all mental processes we must acquire such control of the emotions that they shall not function

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involuntarily. Such control is not obtained by the comparatively simple expedient of repression but by the far more difficult process of sublimation, so that the force generated by an external stimulus, instead of producing an immediate reaction of emotion, which might take place where it was not wanted, is directed to a more remote reaction, and discharges harmlessly upon another plane. Thus, an immediate reaction of resentment is transmuted into compassion and has its issue in charity.

This is the first and hardest lesson that the seeker of the Way has to learn ; but once mastered, the powers thus acquired can be applied to the overcoming of other difficulties, for the momentum of the Path is cumulative.

The next task to which the neophyte has to apply himself is the training of his will. It may be thought that for some people that is a hopeless task, for they are naturally weak-willed. The will, however, is not a separate organ of the mind which may function adequately or inadequately. The will does not secrete force as the liver secretes bile. The will is simply the power to concentrate the available energies. It does not matter how strong-willed a man may be, he cannot drive body or mind beyond a certain point ; nor does it matter how strong-muscled a man may be, he will not exert anything approaching his full power unless he concentrates his will.

The strong will is really the single-pointed will, as we see all too clearly in the drunkard who is too weak-willed to stick at any work, but shows an amazing tenacity in obtaining alcohol.

The secret of a strong will, therefore, is to concentrate it upon a single object ; this can only be achieved by eliminating all competing objects which divide the attention of the will and so fritter away its energies. This is one

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reason that sacrifice is said to be the first step in the Mysteries, for it is only by sacrificing ruthlessly all irrelevant interests that the single-pointed and potent will is obtained.

It may be argued that a person thus concentrated would be unbalanced ; this is a just argument, and the initiate overcomes it by employing the principle of rhythm. He says that although the bow must be tight-strung to give flight to the arrow, the bow that is always strung loses its resilience, so he is careful to unstring his bow when it is not in use. Nevertheless, the object of a bow is to be bent, and therefore he never casts away the cord.

In the earlier days of his training an initiate goes through an exceedingly strict discipline, and every departure from the law of the Path meets with immediate and severe punishment. There is but one way of safety for him, and that is a way as narrow as the blade of a sword and as straight as its edge. No human hand metes out this discipline to him ; his teacher, the adept under whom he works as an apprentice, does all in his power by example and advice to save him from error, but he cannot constrain him, any more than he can avert the consequences of a broken cosmic law. Action and reaction are equal and opposite upon the Path as elsewhere, and the neophyte has to receive the reaction of the forces his every thought sets in motion. By these forces he is uplifted or bruised as the case may be.

After this section of the Path has been passed, the way opens out, and the initiate may then safely take up again those things which he laid upon the altar of sacrifice which stands before the gate. The more richly endowed he is, the more he has to bring to his work. But after the discipline of the straight and narrow way he will never again become attached to external things as he was before ;

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he will always be their master, able to use them without becoming obsessed by them ; so that, being free from the bondage of things, he can use and enjoy them to the enriching of consciousness. But the preliminary discipline, the cautery of freedom, is essential.

The trained initiate comes to his work with the ability to clear the decks for action at the word of command, and go through and over everything without looking to the right hand or to the left until he comes to his goal. After he has achieved, but not before, he takes an inventory of the breakages and binds up his wounds, and it is frequently found that the speed of his rush has carried him through comparatively scatheless. In actual life it will be found that there are very few people, or organisations of people, who will stand up to the bull-rush of the disciplined will, and there is nothing magical about its triumph ; it is only when the knowledge of the cosmogony of the subtler planes is employed that the work of the will becomes occult ; it is only when it is used to direct cosmic forces that it becomes the magician's rod.

It must never be forgotten in considering these matters, that such forces must always be directed in strict obedience to cosmic law or the reaction will return full-circle and crush the magician. It is only at the growing-point of evolution that we find free-moving forces, not as yet stereotyped into form, which can be thus directed by the human will, and therefore it is only in the service of the Hierarchy by whose means God " guideth Arcturus with his sons " that we find the white magician employed. The neophyte following the Path uses the powers of his dedicated and disciplined will upon himself, not upon external Nature.

We now come to the consideration of the training of the intellect itself. This is an oft-debated question among those

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who seek the Inner Light, for many are of the purely mystical temperament, whose path is that of the Bhakti Yoga, the discipline of love. These are unsuitable for the occult path, whereon intellectual qualifications are essential. So many come to that Path with no equipment save ideals and aspirations and complain bitterly of the conditions exacted, conditions with which they are temperamentally unable to comply. Is not their devotion, they ask, enough to take them to God? It is indeed enough if they are content with the Path of Devotion, but it is not enough upon the Occult Path, which is the path of the trained and enlightened intellect.

Intellectual capacity is essential upon the Occult Path, and where it is not forthcoming, it is useless to attempt that path, just as it would be useless to attempt a university career.

The mind of the initiate needs to be well trained in the discipline of logic and philosophy. If he lack either of these, he will assuredly fall into the most serious errors, for he will mistake the appearance for the reality. Viewed metaphysically, all the planes of manifestation are different types of existence, and the seven bodies of man, not excepting the physical, are different modes of consciousness and different types of organisation of force. Unless we know exactly what consciousness is and how apprehension takes place, we shall be unable to translate our consciousness from one mode to another. The process may be likened to that of transposing from one key to another in music. The amateur who can vamp a little may not necessarily be able to transpose. The great mistake to which the untrained psychic is liable is that of confusing the planes, and thinking in terms of one plane when functioning on another. That is how we get such anthro-

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pomorphic concepts of God and the unseen universe. It is against this error that the mental discipline of the initiate is designed to guard.

But however true our metaphysical concepts may be, however clearly we recognise the significance of the change of mode of consciousness between the planes, unless we have perfect control of our thoughts we shall not be able to prevent one kind of consciousness from flowing over into the province of another and causing confusion. We all know from bitter experience how difficult it is to keep our thoughts from wandering in church or in class. Supposing we were functioning out of the body upon the astral plane and our thoughts wandered, we would immediately change our position in space, metaphorically speaking ; if we were thinking of Egyptian magic and our thoughts wandered to Atlantean magic we should find that we had changed both our continent and our century. Unless we can be sure of holding a thought steadily in consciousness without mind-wandering for a considerable period it is useless for us to attempt any major operation in practical occultism.

The neophyte, therefore, pursues a graded course of mental exercises designed to enable him to attain a high degree of concentration. No one is capable of the deepest occult meditation who cannot meditate in a railway station while waiting for his train. This involves two things, the power to go so deeply into meditation as to be completely withdrawn from the physical environment, and the power to keep count of time and return at will. Without the latter, the former is a dangerous and disorganising accomplishment and is the cause of much inco-ordination among occultists.

Consciousness is raised to a given plane by inhibiting the thoughts of the modes of consciousness of all the planes below it. This of course requires perfect concentration.

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When the train of association of ideas between the different planes is completely severed, just as it is when an actor suddenly forgets his part and stands speechless upon the stage, consciousness is free to function outside the body upon the plane of its choice.

But immediately we are confronted by another problem. Consciousness having once been set free, how is it to be recaptured? We can no more command its return by will when a complete dissociation has taken place than the actor can command his tongue to proceed with its task. Another device has to be employed, and that is the setting of the subconscious alarm-clock we call the time-sense. This, and this alone, can call us back to the body, just as it can wake us from sleep in the morning. Anyone who goes out on to the inner planes without setting the time-sense is taking an undue risk, and its results we not infrequently see in the sudden deterioration or change of calibre that sometimes overtakes the student of esoteric subjects, whether mystic or occultist; he has dissociated his personality for the purpose of going out of his body on to the inner planes, and he has not been able fully to re-synthesise it. He is therefore still living partly on the inner planes and is not fully conscious of his physical environment nor able to employ its modes of thought. For him, therefore, a thought is a thing and a wish its own fulfilment.

Finally, we come to the consideration of the fourth element in our mind-training, the work of the imagination, the image-making faculty of the mind; in other words, that which makes the astral matrices. If the work of the three previous aspects has been rightly performed, we shall have little difficulty in synthesising them into the fourth. The process itself presents no problems provided the preliminary work has been properly carried out. Our only

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care need be to build these thought-forms according to cosmic law, for if we depart from this law in our operations, they will either be dangerous or useless. It is for this reason that the initiate must have a thorough knowledge of esoteric cosmology, for it is according to the laws of the cosmos that he has to build, for he himself, when attempting this work, has joined the ranks of solar archons, devas, or building spirits, and the line between the Beni Elohim and the Fallen Angels is narrow.

It will thus be seen that the equipment of the adept is pretty extensive, and that none but those who start with a certain degree of natural capacity, are inured to discipline, and are willing to work, and work hard and continuously, abandoning all else save the labour necessary for their minimal support, stand any chance whatever of "making the grade." It was said to me by a certain adept under whom at one time I had the privilege of working, that unless men work at occultism as they work for the prizes of their professions, they will not achieve.

There is one book which, above all others, I would recommend every aspirant after initiation to read, and that is that old-fashioned and despised volume of Victorian idealism, *Self-help*, by Samuel Smiles. He will see therein how the great pioneers of industry toiled to achieve. He will read of Pallissy, the great potter, burning the furniture of his house to keep his furnace going and reducing himself to the most miserable poverty in pursuit of the lost secrets of the glaze. He will also read that few of these men were rewarded in their lifetime, but died poor and neglected. Their reward was in the knowledge of work well done and secrets wrested from Nature to enrich mankind. Like Prometheus, they had brought down fire from heaven and vultures gnawed their vitals for reward. Having pondered these things well, let the student then set out on the Path that leads to adepthood.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TRAINING OF THE BODY

THE key to practical occultism is in the mind, but no occult operation can be reckoned to be completed unless it is brought through to the plane of matter, even if the bringing through consist only of a recollection in brain-consciousness. Otherwise any experiment must be reckoned as abortive. We must therefore consider the physical conditions that help or hinder our experiments.

The practice of the ancients, based on traditional experience, is usually a reliable guide in these matters, provided we can find it unadulterated by superstition. The practice of modern psychics is all too often based on hyper-sensitive caprice, guided by spurious information.

The link between matter and mind is to be found in the etheric sub-planes of existence. Be it noted that the occultist does not class the ether and its sub-divisions as a separate plane, but as among the sub-planes of the physical plane, thus clearly indicating that no hard and fast line can be drawn between matter in its denser states and matter in its etheric states ; the difference is one of degree, not of kind. The three denser sub-planes of the ether are associated respectively with heat, light, and electricity, and the fourth, of which the modern scientist knows nothing, is the Akasha, or Astral Light of the ancients, the point of contact of mind with matter and the raw material of magic.

The Akasha is capable of being moulded by the emotional forces of the astral plane, and in its turn is capable of influencing the other etheric sub-planes, but it cannot influence dense matter. The ethers, however, in their

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kinetic states as heat, light, and electricity, can influence dense matter, and so, if we know how to use it, we have a line of communication between mind and matter, via the Akasha, or Astral Light, and it is this Jacob's Ladder that is used by initiates in their work.

Every manifested form has a certain modicum of Akasha built into its substance, some more, some less. About every form, whether it is a diatom or a planet, there is an electric field of magnetic stresses. It is this electromagnetic field, plus the modicum of astral light, which is the vehicle of the life-forces and transmitter of the messages of mind. Consequently, when the occultist performs operations on the physical plane, it is this etheric body he is working with, and not dense matter. If he uses material objects or substances at all, it is solely on account of the etheric element in their composition. For instance, crystals and pure metals have the largest proportions of etheric substance of anything in inanimate Nature ; alloys, or any composite substance, are practically useless from the occult point of view because their etheric double does not form a cohesive whole, but is of two types of vibration. It is these substances therefore, highly refractive crystals and pure unalloyed metals, that were used by the ancients for the construction of charms and amulets. That their faith in them was not rooted in pure superstition is proved by the fact that the electrician also finds that he requires pure, unalloyed metals in his batteries and circuits, and that the crystal is used as detector in wireless telegraphy because it is susceptible to the vibrations of the ether, thus confirming the occultist, who says that the crystal is the most magical of physical substances because it is the most etheric.

The occultist aims at making of his physical body a vehicle that shall impede him as little as possible in his

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psychic activities. That is to say, it must be as refined as possible, using the word in the metallurgist's sense, not the social sense. Secondly, it must be of a strength and toughness to be able to endure the exceptional forces he requires it to transmit. The adept therefore is not an etherialised person, like the conventional saint in a stained-glass window. A trained occultist is, by virtue of his training, capable of great physical endurance and exceedingly tenacious of life, as is witnessed by the extraordinary happenings in connection with the murder of the infamous Rasputin, who resisted cyanide of potassium and bullets through the heart and brain, and had finally to be literally hacked to pieces before life was extinct.

The occultist does not regard the brain as the vehicle of mind, but rather as the organ of motor co-ordination and sensation—a very different matter. For him, the vehicles of mind are the seven chakras, as they are called in the East, or, in other words, the endocrines. A little thought on this point will reveal its implications.

The ductless glands pour their secretions into the blood-stream, and the blood is literally the essence of the man. Alter the chemical composition of the blood, and you alter consciousness, as witness the phenomena of both anaesthesia and insanity, many types of the latter clearing up completely when septic foci, such as tonsils and teeth, are eradicated, and other types responding to the addition of the products of certain of the ductless glands to the blood-stream, in which previously the due proportion was lacking.

The occultist, therefore, for the delicate processes of specialised consciousness in which he indulges, must have an absolutely pure blood-stream that will not in any way distort or falsify consciousness. It is the neglect of this

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elementary precaution which is at the root of much psychic trouble, and one of the most frequent and common causes of so-called obsession is constipation. The blood-stream, loaded with impurities re-absorbed from the intestines, affects consciousness, and consciousness thus debased, contacts its corresponding astral aspect and the psychic faculties do the rest, revealing to the sufferer the nature of that with which he has been brought into touch. Calomel is the simple and efficient exorcist in such cases, and with the clearance of the degraded substances from the body, the degraded contacts will be broken.

Any abnormal or diseased condition of the generative organs also renders practical occult work risky or impossible, and any marked disproportion or deformity of the bony framework of the body is also a serious disadvantage. Accidental injuries or deformity due to disease, however, do not appear to be any detriment, and a man who had lost a limb would still be able to work a ritual, whereas another with a comparatively slight congenital deformity would not. It is also noteworthy that the more important parts in some rituals are best done by tall and powerfully-built men.

It is exceedingly undesirable to attempt any practical occultism when exhausted or feverish. In the former state, one is not able to keep a grip on the forces, and in the latter state, a low form of psychism opens unpleasantly easily, and the result is delirium.

The question of diet is an extremely vexed one in occult circles, and I have dealt with the subject at some length in my book *Sane Occultism*, and will not, therefore, repeat the discussion in these pages. The ethical and humanitarian aspects do not come within the scope of the present discussion ; they are a matter of opinion and conscience,

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and I cannot enter upon them here. From the point of view of practical occultism, the first requisite is a sane mind in a sound body, and whatever diet produces that result is a satisfactory diet. It will always be found however, that the presence of food in the stomach, even in small quantities, renders work upon the subtle planes more difficult or even impossible, therefore it is advisable to have no food of any sort for at least two hours before undertaking any practical work.

The Eastern Tradition, and those organisations that derive from it, inculcate a strict vegetarianism, both on psychic and humanitarian grounds. The Western Tradition does not. The effect of a vegetarian diet is greatly to increase the sensitiveness of the nervous system and thereby render easier the perception of subtle forces. The drawback to the use of this sensitising method in the West is that the resulting sensitiveness unfits for the rush and drive of urban life, and unless seclusion can be secured, the subject is very apt to become neurasthenic and to suffer from neuritis, neuralgia, sciatica, nervous dyspepsia, and similar complaints. The initiate of the Western Tradition overcomes his comparative lack of sensitiveness, and also the density of the atmosphere in which he has to work, by concentrating the forces by means of ceremonial. It is exceedingly difficult to obtain definite results in Europe without the use of ritual. One thing is quite certain, however, the person who means to employ the concentrating rituals of the Western Tradition must not at the same time follow the sensitising régime of the Eastern Discipline. Each is effective in its own way and sphere, but it is fatal to mix them. The sensitised person will be completely "bowled over" by the forces generated in a ceremonial working.

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Great importance is attached to Asana, or meditation-posture in the East, but the attitudes therein inculcated are practically impossible for the Westerner. Posture is, nevertheless, not without importance. The principle to bear in mind is that the physical body is literally an electric battery, and that during meditation it must be a closed circuit. Any position in which the body is symmetrically disposed in poised balance will be satisfactory so long as the spine is straight, the feet together, and the hands either joined, or touching some other part of the body. To cross the legs is bad because it is unsymmetrical ; for the same reason, lying upon one side, or curled up, is also unsatisfactory. Either flat on the back on a bed or couch, or sitting very upright in a straight-backed armchair, is best. The position should always be such that if meditation should deepen into trance, there will be no risk of a fall. No one wishes to return from an astral journey to find a front tooth has been knocked out. Moreover, the sense of insecurity as the body passes into trance will be quite enough to rouse consciousness and prevent the trance from deepening.

The two best positions for meditation are either flat on the back, with a low pillow, legs straight and heels together, and hands lightly folded over the solar plexus or crossed on the breast, in fact, the position in which the dead are laid out ; or sitting bolt upright, heels and knees together and hands laid along thighs, in the position in which the gods of the Egyptians are sculptured. With a little practice it will be found possible to maintain a stable equilibrium almost indefinitely in this position. These are the Asana postures of the West. Some of the well-known postures of the East have a phallic reference, and are best avoided.

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The law of the rhythmic breath is very important and very potent, but it cannot safely be practised save under the personal guidance of an experienced instructor, so we will not enter upon it here. It has to do with the direction of magnetic currents in the etheric double and their concentration on the different chakras. If done ignorantly, it will throw the endocrine system out of gear.

The observation of times and seasons in occult work is, or should be, far from a vain observance. There are certain very definite tides in the Unseen, and according to the direction in which we are going, these will be either for or against us. There are also times when the invisible intelligences which are the vehicles of the cosmic forces, "change guard," and the conditions which have been established during the previous tide are no longer operative and have to be renewed. The hours of the day, the phases of the moon, and the seasons of the year are all of great importance in practical occult work, and so are the rising and setting of the planets and their passing over the meridian. All this is part of the technique of the occultist, and an inadequate knowledge thereof is one of the commonest causes of failure in an occult experiment. So long as we are working on the physical plane we are obliged to submit to the conditions of that plane, and these phases we have referred to are really etheric tides—the ebb and flow and set of the magnetic currents in the aura of the earth. These are constantly changing, for they represent the sum total of several different sets of factors, all with cycles of different lengths, and moreover the various types of occult operations are differently affected by them. An operation under Saturn will respond differently to the waxing or waning of the moon from one under Jupiter. The deeper one goes into practical

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occultism, the more delicate the operations become, and the more influence these subtle factors exert.

Places also exercise an important influence in occult operations; some spots upon the earth's surface are naturally highly magnetic. These have usually been discovered of old time by the ancients and their possibilities developed, and according to the type of development employed will be their influence at the present day. There is a very great difference between a place which has been used for initiations and one which has been used for evocatory rites involving blood-sacrifice.

Occultists having the necessary knowledge avail themselves, as far as they can, of places with magnetism already developed; but failing this, they magnetise a place for themselves, but it takes considerable time and work to do this. The astral atmosphere has, as it were, to be brought under cultivation. The single performance of a ritual, even a consecrating ritual, is insufficient for this, and occult work has to go on steadily for months before the atmosphere gets really "warmed up."

It is extremely undesirable to allow such a spot to be used for other purposes. The magnetism becomes disturbed and broken up and a fresh start has to be made all over again.

Colour also is of importance in occult work. For one thing, it has considerable influence upon the state of consciousness, and for another, it acts largely as a means of bringing a force from the etheric to the physical plane. There is no such thing as a best colour for this purpose. Different colours are used according to the different forces that are being operated. Each person, according to his Ray-type, will find one or another colour best for the purposes of his private meditation, and should make use

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of that colour in the decoration of his sanctuary or shrine.

For the pursuit of deep occult work it is absolutely essential to have a room set apart for the purpose into which no one except the operator and his assistants is ever allowed to enter. There are two analogies which are very valuable guides in the study of the principles underlying magical operations, and these are Bacteriology and Electricity. The principles of insulation and magnetism, infection and inoculation are as applicable on the subtle planes as on the dense.

CHAPTER XV

INITIATION AND CELIBACY

A QUESTION upon which there is much difference of opinion in occult circles is that of celibacy. Some schools teach that it is essential to the higher occult work, and some do not. To explain the matter fully would only be suitable to those pledged by their initiation vows, for it concerns the deepest and most carefully guarded aspects of occultism. I said a good deal in my book, *The Esoteric Philosophy of Love and Marriage*, and have also dealt with certain supplementary aspects in *The Problem of Purity* (V. M. Firth). The latter book was written solely from the point of view of the psychologist and social worker, but it is based upon the esoteric teachings on the subject, and those who have sufficient esoteric knowledge to read between the lines can learn a good deal.

In these pages I can only discuss the immediate practical import of this question from the point of view of the seeker after initiation. What is to be his attitude in the matter? The final court of appeal must always be to practical experience, and this tells us that neither a sex-life which is under tension from repression, nor one which is fed full to repletion, affords a satisfactory condition for practical occultism. In the one case the nervous tension will betray the operator on the astral, and in the other, there will be a lack of etheric force essential for any occult operation.

The problem is not a simple one to solve among the many inhibitions and conflicting interests of modern life, where it is more often a case of what one can do than of what

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one would do. The ideal is undoubtedly a mating in which husband and wife co-operate in the Great Work and bring to their mutual relationship an understanding of its occult significance. All authorities agree, however, in advising continence for a period varying from three days to a month before any important occult operation.

The occult position of those who decide to defy public opinion and take the divorce laws into their own hands is very unsatisfactory. They have roused the antagonism of the group-mind of their race, and in anything they may attempt it will be against them, and they will find themselves opposed by all manner of obstacles.

The question of distinguishing between morality and conventional respectability is a difficult one at the best of times, and it is not easy to judge righteous judgment, but anyone who is coming within measurable distance of the divorce court should, out of fairness to his brethren, take no part in group-work until he has drawn clear of that purgatorial experience, for all occultism of the Western Tradition depends largely upon the group-mind of the race for its function, and if those engaged in its operations are at variance with the group-mind, their presence will prove disruptive and things will go wrong.

All mystery schools, in all ages and races, except those given over to phallic rites and black magic, where such things have a use, unite in refusing admission to the hermaphrodite and the eunuch, or any one who is in any way sexually abnormal, whether by reason of homosexuality or frigidity.

The question of virginity is also a curious and complex one in occultism. The old books have much to say on the subject, the first requirement for many occult operations being a pure virgin or boy below the age of puberty. Occultly understood, only those are virgin of either sex,

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who have not known desire. But although the virgin soul is best suited for any operation involving passive psychism, such as an oracle or watcher of the sacred mirror, only the soul which has come to its full stature and known all the sacraments of Nature will ever take the supreme degrees.

One final word of caution is necessary; it is undesirable that a pregnant woman should take part in any occult ceremonial after quickening has taken place, because the unborn child is a very ready channel of evocation, and the manifestation of any force invoked in the ceremony may take place through it. Algernon Blackwood gives an account of such a happening in his exceedingly valuable book, *Julius le Vallon*, and works out its result in the sequel, *The Bright Messenger*, and I myself have personally known several similar cases. In some cases there seems to be definitely a changeling, a fairy child, brought into the world, and in others the original child is born with a very peculiar and highly sensitised nervous constitution.

I cannot repeat too often that occultism is very far from being fool-proof ; and many experimenters depend for their safety solely upon their inefficiency.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WESTERN ESOTERIC SYSTEMS

THIE Western Esoteric Systems spring from three main roots, the Qabalistic, the Egyptian and the Greek, and all mediæval and modern derivatives can be traced to one or another of these.

To give a detailed account of any one of them is work for a specialist who has given a lifetime to the study, so in these pages we can only indicate the broad outlines and underlying principles, but at least, it is hoped that enough may be given to throw some light upon an obscure and much misunderstood aspect of the Path.

Each of these three great systems was developed in response to the needs of a special phase of human evolution, and each one has brought certain aspects of occult science to a high pitch of perfection while correspondingly and inevitably neglecting others.

The Greek system is characterised by a pantheon which incarnates natural forces ; it is primarily a philosophical system. The Egyptian is characterised by animal-headed gods which represent these forces brought through into human consciousness, and is primarily an initiatory system. The Qabalistic is characterised by having no gods at all, being strictly monotheistic, and it is essentially a magical system wherein the magus takes the place of the god.

In the intercommunication of peoples these systems have mutually influenced each other and had innumerable special developments in different places. The modern stream of Western esotericism not only contains a blend of all of them, but also much that has been derived from

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Eastern sources through the mediation of the Theosophical Society. Some of the Eastern terms, such as Karma, the Chakras, Manus, etc., have practically replaced the Western terms. No body of knowledge can be kept in a watertight compartment; there must inevitably be an interchange of ideas wherever there is an association of peoples. Analytical Psychology and New Thought have also been laid under contribution, and the result is a kaleidoscopic philosophy which requires much sorting before it reveals any coherent pattern.

In practical occultism it is always necessary to go back to the original root-stocks, because here alone can we strike the trails that lead into the Unseen—the pilgrim ways that have been trodden by innumerable feet. By the meditation and ritual of centuries an organised aura of thought-forms has been built up around these ancient systems, and it is this prepared mental atmosphere that is of such value to the occultist. I do not say that it is impossible to pass on to the Inner Planes save by one or another of these traditional corridors, but the difficulties of such an undertaking are very great.

An occult school is not built in a day, any more than a great public school is built in a day. Tradition and a highly organised group-mind play a vital part in both. Moreover, there are certain planes of manifestation which were worked by the Mystery Schools of previous epochs which are not readily accessible to-day. Evolution has moved on, and we contact the Unseen at a different level. It is very necessary, in any work of practical occultism, that we have access to the full range of the planes, because every operation is composite and has its relations to the planes above and below that upon which it takes place. The occultist finds it essential, therefore, to avail himself of the corridors constructed by his predecessors, to whom

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the Elemental planes were open. He will therefore always make use of one or another of the ancient systems according to the task he has in hand. Some are best suited for one contact and some for another. It is not advisable to mix the symbols in an operation, because the same forces function differently on different contacts, but it is very necessary for the initiate to have access to the different stages of development and different levels of contact.

There are many methods of consciousness which are entirely modern in their origin and method, and which do not claim to be anything else. These are seen most conspicuously in the many different schools of thought which form the composite New Thought movement. Like all else that deals with the manipulation of the mind, these make use of the principles that have always governed the process of raising consciousness, whether practised in the Mysteries of Eleusis, the Egyptian temples, the consulting-room of the hypnotist, the office of the Christian Science practitioner, or the lodge of initiation of some fraternity.

Where the system employed has no contact with the root traditions, it will be found that the results obtained are purely subjective ; it is only when one of the ancient systems is used that contacts are made with the Nature forces, the Elemental and angelic kingdoms, and the earth-soul, because, as has been already noted, these contacts are inaccessible to the operations of the conscious mind of the civilised white races. They belong to an earlier epoch of development.

It may be asked why it is that a civilised man should wish to contact these levels of existence if they belong to an inferior stage of development. The first answer to that question lies in the esoteric principle that nothing God has created is unclean, all issuing from the same source.

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There is difference of function, but no inferiority; moreover, everything that has reached a more highly developed stage of evolution has passed through the more primitive stages, and these form the foundations of all subsequent developments, and the part they play in our economy, physical, mental, and psychic, can be readily demonstrated by the person who knows what to look for, as psycho-analysis has shown us. Unless we understand the nature of the basic principles of our existence we can never hope to raise the lofty superstructure of the trained and initiated consciousness.

These archaic levels of manifestation are exceedingly important to the occultist, because it is here that he finds the reservoir of Elemental forces whence he derives his power. As the psycho-analysts have clearly demonstrated, here are the springs of man's life; here is the fountain-head of genius and all forms of vital energy, mental and spiritual as well as instinctive. The psycho-analyst seeks to tap these reservoirs in order to free his patient from inhibitions. The occultist seeks to tap them in order to increase his psychic powers. In one case the abnormal is being made normal; in the other, the normal is being made supernormal.

There is unquestionably an unbroken tradition of initiation in Europe, which has been handed down from adept to neophyte right from the ancient Mysteries. To give demonstrable proof of this fact to outsiders is not easy. Documentary evidence, by the nature of the work, its carefully guarded secrets and the severe persecution to which it has been subjected, being very scanty, and even what little we have is much mutilated and often of doubtful authenticity; but whoever has seen an initiated adept at work cannot doubt that he is in touch with something very

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potent, and something, moreover, which can be transmitted to another. It is this subjective experience, although it cannot be offered as proof, which forms the most valid evidence of the reality of that which is sought in the Mysteries.

To pick up the contacts of one of these great initiatory systems of the past is like touching an electric battery. They are charged full of psychic force and, like Leyden jars, give out sparks when touched. Any school of occultism which is not contacted on to one of these traditional sources of energy is like an electrical installation which is not connected up with the power-house—however much switches are turned and levers are pulled, nothing happens.

Many folk, because they have never been present when power is actually in manifestation, are content to take the alteration in the position of the switches as being the Great Work, but if they had ever seen the sudden flashing on of the light as the current comes through the wires, they would know what is to be expected of occultism and be satisfied with nothing less. The state of the personality, charged full of power and an exceedingly potent form of vitality, is the evidence of the reality of initiation. To what ends this power is turned is a matter which rests entirely in the hands of its possessor, but unless it be rightly handled and kept in the cosmic circuit, it is a thing which will turn to the destruction of the vehicle of its manifestation. Received from the cosmic power-house, it must travel in the appointed circuit, otherwise there is a "short." If we elect deliberately to put ourselves in the track of these cosmic currents and invoke them to use us as their channels, we must be prepared to become ourselves links in this circuit from spirit to matter and back again.

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Herein lies the critical point in the work of the adept. Is he in circuit or earthing ? This is the distinction between the Right- and the Left-hand Paths.

The Society of The Inner Light, founded by Dion Fortune, has courses for those who wish seriously to pursue the Study of the Western Esoteric Tradition.

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TABULAR CLASSIFICATION OF ILLUMINISM

