

THE KYBALION

Participant Study Guide

Session 1: Introduction & Chapter 1

Foundations of the Hermetic Teachings

SESSION 1: INTRODUCTION & CHAPTER 1 PARTICIPANT STUDY GUIDE

The Introduction and Chapter 1: The Hermetic Philosophy

Getting Oriented to the Book and Its Claims

I. HEADER

- A. **Reading Covered:** The Introduction and Chapter 1 (The Hermetic Philosophy)
- B. **Session Length:** 75 to 90 minutes
- C. **Session Focus (one line):** Understand the book's core claims, the meaning of readiness, and how to read Chapter 1 with both openness and critical thinking.
- D. **What to bring:** Your book, something to write with, and one real life lesson you were not ready to hear at the time but understand now.

II. ESSENTIAL VOCABULARY (INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER 1)

A. Read these terms before you read the session material

Vocabulary rule used: Terms are lowercase unless the book itself treats them as proper names or formal titles.

1. **adept:** a person highly skilled or deeply knowledgeable in a mystical or philosophical tradition.

- 2. alchemy:** historically the attempt to transform base metals into gold; symbolically, the transformation of the self and the mind.
- 3. arcane:** knowledge that is hidden, secret, or understood only by a few.
- 4. doctrine:** a set of beliefs or teachings held by a group or tradition.
- 5. esoteric:** intended for or understood by a small, specialized group.
- 6. gibbet:** an old term for a gallows, used in the text to describe historical persecution of mystical teachers.
- 7. Gnosticism / gnostics:** early spiritual movements emphasizing inner spiritual knowledge over external authority.
- 8. Hermes Trismegistus:** the legendary figure credited in the book as the source of Hermetic teachings.
- 9. Hermetic:** relating to the teachings attributed to Hermes Trismegistus; also meaning sealed or hidden.
- 10. hierophant:** a teacher or interpreter of sacred mysteries.
- 11. initiate:** someone admitted into deeper levels of knowledge or spiritual study.
- 12. Master-Key:** a metaphor used in the book to describe a principle that unlocks many other truths.
- 13. mystic:** one who seeks direct inner experience of spiritual truth.
- 14. mystery traditions:** schools of spiritual instruction where teachings were given gradually to prepared students.
- 15. neophyte:** a beginner on a spiritual or philosophical path.
- 16. occult / occultism:** literally “hidden”; traditions focused on subtle, mystical, or metaphysical knowledge.
- 17. scribe:** a person who records and preserves sacred or important teachings.
- 18. Secret Doctrine:** a body of teachings believed to have been preserved privately and passed down through select students.
- 19. Temple of Mystery:** a metaphor used in the text for deeper levels of understanding.
- 20. Thoth:** the Egyptian figure associated with wisdom and writing, historically linked with Hermes.

III. SESSION GOALS

A. By the end of the session, you will be able to

1. Explain what the book claims it is trying to do.
2. Define key terms (esoteric, initiate, Master-Key) in plain language.

3. Identify the key claims of the Introduction and Chapter 1.
4. Translate at least one quote into everyday language and apply it to real life.

IV. KEY CLAIMS (INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER 1)

A. Key claims from the Introduction

1. Ancient secret wisdom exists.
2. It has been passed down through time.
3. Only the prepared can understand it.

B. Key claims from Chapter 1

1. Universal principles govern life and mind.
2. Understanding these principles leads to mastery.
3. Failure to understand them is interpreted as unreadiness.

V. KEY QUOTES (INTRODUCTION AND CHAPTER 1)

A. Introduction

1. “The purpose of this work is not the enunciation of any special philosophy or doctrine,”
2. “Our intent is not to erect a new Temple of Knowledge, but rather to place in the hands of the student a Master-Key”
3. “From him they obtained the Master-Key which explained and reconciled their divergent views, and thus the Secret Doctrine was firmly established.”
4. “There is always a certain correspondence in spite of the contradictory features, and the Hermetic Teachings act as the Great Reconciler.”
5. “All the fundamental and basic teachings embedded in the esoteric teachings of every race may be traced back to Hermes.”

B. Chapter 1

1. “The lips of wisdom are closed, except to the ears of Understanding.”— The Kybalion.

2. "From old Egypt have come the fundamental esoteric and occult teachings which have so strongly influenced the philosophies of all races, nations and peoples,"
3. "Egypt, the home of the Pyramids and the Sphinx, was the birthplace of the Hidden Wisdom and Mystic Teachings."
4. "From her Secret Doctrine all nations have borrowed."
5. "And, likewise, when the pupil is ready to receive the truth, then will this little book come to him, or her."
6. "will bring lips and ear together-pupil and book in company."

VI. GUIDED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

A. Introduction

1. Is knowledge truly secret, or simply complex?
2. Does labeling something ancient make it more credible?
3. What does readiness actually look like in daily life?

B. Chapter 1

1. How could a universal law be tested or verified?
2. Can something feel wise and still be inaccurate?
3. When does mystery language become manipulation?

VII. PRACTICAL EXERCISE

A. Prompt

Write about a life lesson you were not ready to hear at the time but understand now.

VIII. PARTICIPANT WORKSHEET (SESSION 1)

A. Reflection Prompts

1. A truth I was not ready for five years ago:

2. What changed inside me to make understanding possible:

3. One belief I may still not be ready to question:

B. Logical Thinking Prompts

1. A claim in this chapter that assumes what it tries to prove:

2. An idea that feels meaningful but unclear:

3. A statement I want to challenge respectfully:

IX. NOTES
