

About the Secret Doctrine of the Initiates

by Anonymous

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AMONG other things expected from candidates for initiation, was that they should be *willing, fearless, industrious, patient* and *discreet*. If not willing you cannot be fearless, if not fearless, you accomplish nothing". " He that does not work, neither shall he eat", nor can he reckon upon wages. Every sort of unnecessary care and worry must be banished from the circle of the Initiates, they must patiently wait for their time to come, resting assured, as well they may, that one day it *will* come. An Initiate has received instruction in the secrets of nature and of the human heart, once they are morally and psychically prepared for these teachings, which had been communicated, in the same order, to their teachers — previously. The rules for admission to the section of the Initiates are strict and immutable, and "many are called, but few are chosen". Because "strait is the gate, and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it". (Matthew vii. 14.)

But that gate is open never to be closed, and that road stretches out for evermore. So it is, so it has been from the dawn of time. The races of yore have disappeared, but their wisdom still remains, and can be gained by those who are *willing, fearless, industrious, patient* and *discreet*.

The men of the present, here in the West, may, perhaps, to a certain extent reconcile themselves to the first four conditions, but as soon as a question of silence and secrecy arises, they immediately send up a loud cry about the danger of it. This is done either out of stupidity or out of spite, — stupidity because they ignore that the Master from Nazareth, himself enjoined secrecy upon the Initiates when among those not worthy. In that well-known glorious Sermon on the Mount, he commanded his disciples: "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you". (Matt. vii. 6.) On another occasion the great Master said to them, " Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables. That, seeing, they may see and not perceive, and, hearing, they may hear and not understand". (Mark iv. 11, 12)

As pointed out by us above, the rule for Initiates has invariably **[Page 24]** been to interpret to the outsiders, solely through parables those truths which they themselves had received under the seal of silence. Therefore the Gospel goes on, "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables, and without a parable spake he not unto them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: (Ps. lxxviii. 2.) I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world". (Matthew xiii. 34, 35). In Revelation (x. 1-4.) an instance is given how Initiates were recommended to keep to themselves part of what they heard, and that the most important. "And I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed with a cloud; and a rainbow was upon his head, and his face was as it were the sun, and his feet as pillars of fire: and he had in his hand a little book open: and he set his right foot

upon the sea, and his left foot on the earth, and cried with a loud voice as when a lion roareth, and when he had cried, seven thunders uttered their voices, and when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write; and I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me: Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered and write them not ". " But what is the good of all this secrecy ?" some may ask. There are, of course, reasons for this. Why was the same sort of secrecy connected with the initiation into the Egyptian, Chaldean and Eleusinian Mysteries? And why, in distant India, does a Guru, up to this very day, demand from his *Chela* that he shall communicate what he has learnt, after probation, only to such as engage themselves in the same manner to hide what they have learnt of the holy mysteries and to reveal these in their turn to such among their disciples alone, who have been tried in the same way ? It is because in the study of those mysteries are involved intensely earnest researches and experiments, it is because in occult information is contained the key to the secrets of Nature. Such things should not be placed in the hands of untrained people; one should not allow children to play with fire or explosives, for they would risk thus to do harm both to themselves and others. Once every century (according to our chronology within its last twenty-five years) the bulk of mankind is afforded a glimpse into the meaning of those mysteries, by the guardians of ancient lore, — in obedience to laws governing their acts. At those periods they send one of their pupils, a Jacob Boëhme, a Robert Fludd, a Paracelsus or a Pico di Mirandola, with the object of turning away the attention of the world from the trifling, mean, little Martha-troubles of every day sensuous life to that "narrow path" which leads to light. And these emissaries always do succeed in some measure.

During more conspicuous historical epochs, some of the Initiates go out into the world to lay the foundation of a new creed or creeds, symbolizing part of the eternal truth, fitted for the time and locality, drawing men from [Page 25] materialism and selfishness, and many a Moses has succeeded in persuading his own people to abandon the Egyptian flesh-pots and to set out on the toilsome journey through the desert to the glorious Canaan of virtue and truth. In the Bible, the Kabbala, the Ji King, the Vedas, the Bhagavad-Gita, the Dhammapada, the Zend-Avesta and the Koran, the Eternal Light breaks through the prism in different colours, but is nevertheless at the foundation one and the same. In the works of Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Apollonius of Tyana, Philo, Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Proclus, Plutarch, Maximus, Numenius, Ammonius Saccas, Hierocles, Philostratus, Bishop Synesios from Cyrene, Origen, Albertus Magnus, Agrippa from Nettersheim, Emanuel Swedenborg, etc., etc., portions of the Secret Doctrine are found, although the aspects taken differ somewhat from each other. During latter years the Initiates have given information about themselves and their teachings, more especially through books by A. P. Sinnett and H. P. Blavatsky. This apparently proves the greater readiness now prevalent for receiving the Secret Doctrine, about the fundamental points of which a few short explanations may here be offered.

(I) The Divine Power is the only reality and unalterability — all else is changeable, and consequently unreal and illusory (*Maya*), from the Divine point of view and with regard to variety of manifestation. As to origin — or cause — *all* is real. We, however, although being changeable and illusory on our material side, are accustomed to look upon the purely physical as real — so long as we remain at our present stage. God is all-conceiving, but can be conceived by no one. Paul of Tarsus said in his address from the hill of Mars at Athens: "The Lord is not far from every one of us; for in Him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said: For we are also His offspring" (Acts xvii. 27, 28). Something similar was written by Jesus Sirach, in Alexandria in Egypt: " By Him the end of them has prosperous success, and by His word all things consist. We may speak much and yet come short, wherefore in sum — He is all" (Sirach xliii. 26, 27).

Regarding the right mode of confessing Him the Acts (x. 35) have it: "In every nation he that feareth Him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him". In harmony with this stands the well-known utterance of Brahma: "I am the shrine for the whole of the human race. Those who faithfully serve other Gods worship Me unwittingly. I am the One participating in all worship and the reward of all worshippers". In the holy Scriptures of the Brahmans we read: Had the Creator of this Universe wished to give preference to any religion in particular, this one would have been reigning supreme on earth; the fact of there being several proves the sanction to it of the Highest, for He has revealed to every nation the doctrine best suited to them and is pleased to be worshipped [Page 26] after different forms. God is present just as much in the mosques of Islam and in the churches of Christianity, as in the temples of Brahma.

(2.) Underneath all there is a hidden homogeneity, an inner relationship. "On earth as it is in heaven" — so far as a weak copy resembles its model. As below, so above, and "that which is on high resembles that which is in the deep" — so runs the inscription on the emerald board of Hermes Trismegistus. There is an affinity and a constant interchange between the divine and the human. The Hindoo followers of the Taraka Raja Yoga Philosophy hold that man consists of three earthly parts, *Steelopadhi*, *Suksjmopadhi*, and *Karanopadhi*, corresponding to Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, the three persons in the Hindoo Trinity (Trimurti) — together with one heavenly part, *Atma* — or the Spirit — which corresponds to the unknown Divinity (Parabrahm). The Brahman Vedanta Philosophers divide man into four or five earthly parts — in the latter case named: *annamaya*, *pranamaya*, *manomaya*, *vignanamaya* and *anandamaya cosa* — and *Atma*, the heavenly spirit. Something corresponding to this division of three or four parts occurs with the Indians in Minnesota and Dakota. *Le Sueur* related nearly 200 years ago about the Dakota Indians having three souls — but their own holy men assert that they have four. After death one remains *in* or *close to* the body; the second settles down in a bundle of hair or clothes having belonged to the dead man, which bundle is carefully preserved by the relatives until an occasion offers to throw it away on the ground of an enemy; the third goes to spirit-land; and the fourth takes up its abode in the body of a child or animal. (See Robert Grönberger's *History of Minnesota* (Minneapolis, 1889) page 38) Parallels to this are found in the world of their gods. Wahkinyan, one of the higher gods, is supposed to live in a dwelling on the top of a high mountain in the far west. This dwelling has four entrances, guarded by sentinels dressed in red down. A butterfly watches at the east, a bear at the west, a deer-calf at the south, and a reindeer at the north entrance (page 20). And the god Heyoka is represented in four persons (page 21). The adherents of the Secret Doctrine divide man in seven principles and the Universe also in seven corresponding to these. The principles of man are called: *Sthula Sarira* (the body), *Prana* (the vitality), *Linga Sarira* (the astral form), *Kama rupa* (the seat of desire), *Manas* (the mind), *Buddhi* (the soul), and *Atma* (the spirit).

(3.) The divers principles (or stages) of the universe are rightly understood only by the corresponding principles within man. Paul says: "the natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinth. ii. 14).

We — with our materialistic tendencies — are not able to understand God, and we ought not to attempt confining Him within the narrow limits; of our conditions; and attributes. [Page 27]

(4.) Just as there are sundry grossly material species in Creation, likewise there are many of more refined kinds of whose existence we cannot be aware under ordinary circumstances. We have to be transferred to their own plane in order to be made cognizant of their presence, by means of the oral and

visual senses.

(5.) There is a root-religion, out of which all the others have sprung. The divine revelation, altogether absent from none of these doctrines, constitutes what is true in them all. The encroachments of dogma, however, have either concealed or altered most of these truths. And the motto of the Initiates is: "there is no religion higher than *truth*". "If you would find the origin of all religious systems, you must look for it in Tibet and Great Tartary," was the assertion of our compatriot, Swedenborg. It is in Tibet the supreme lodge of the Initiates is placed even at this moment. In fundamental religion is found a key to all the different creeds. Everyone of the ancient doctrines points to a theosophy older than all of them. "The key which unlocks one must unlock the rest, otherwise it cannot be the right one", Dr. Alexander remarks in his *Eclectic Philosophy*.

(6.) The whole of manifestation must pass through many stages from a lower to a higher, ever circling onward in spirals, Man is undergoing continuous development into something higher, from one incarnation to another. Like the Egyptians and the Jews in bygone days, Brahmans, Buddhists and Confucians believe up to this day in re-incarnation, which doctrine among the ignorant masses takes the shape of metempsychosis, where not unfrequently is met the notion, equally absurd and illogical, of the human soul entering the body of a beast. The theory of re-birth does not imply a retrogression from human to animal forms, but an uninterrupted evolution to something higher. In the New Testament this is taught with positive assurance in several places. Jesus speaks unreservedly of his pre-existence ("before Abraham was, I am".....) like what Buddha, half a century earlier, had done about his own, John the Baptist was generally supposed to be either Messiah or one of the Prophets, Elijah or Jeremiah. The Angel Gabriel had predicted about John (Luke i. 12) that he should have "the spirit and power of Elijah", and Jesus once pronounced about him: "if ye will receive it, this is Elijah, which was for to come" (Matt, xi. 14), A proof of how general was the belief in re-incarnation at the time of Christ, is furnished by the question of the disciples, when Jesus once cured a man who had been born blind: "Rabbi, who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind" (John ix. 2).

(7.) Special emphasis is laid by the *Secret Doctrine* on *Karma*, or the immutable law of cause and effect, unfolded through successive periods of manifestation during which Karma decides of the individual's position in earth life, his temperament, etc., etc., according to merit and demerit in past [Page 28] incarnations. Thus it is the just law of Karma, and no injustice, that places one man in a low sphere of society, and another in a high one; all depends of themselves, of their acts in a former re-birth. "What a man sows, he shall also reap." The mechanism of the whole universe is all regularity and law.

Everything, *per se*, is natural and necessary — has its own "raison d'être"; it all can be explained by something else — in one word nothing on earth is independent enough not to be modified by some other thing. An effect points to a cause, this may be hidden and not easy of discovery, but nevertheless does exist. In order to produce a photographic picture, there is need of sufficiently strong light, a camera, chemicals, and a cliché prepared just the right degree of susceptibility. If all these conditions are not present and utilised after a certain manner, no picture will be produced. It is the same with everything else. All that happens or is done in this world testifies to the law of cause and effect and is subjected to its own specific regulations.

Thought-reading and thought-transmission, psychometry, clairvoyance and other phenomena, hitherto

little known by the public at large, have all their own proper causes and appear under certain fixed conditions. So also with the varied electro-magnetic and hypnotic phenomena, which are now being studied with such great interest. In the lodges of the Initiates, these natural phenomena, as yet so little observed by our times, form to themselves a branch of investigation, among others.

Not all men have been born thought-readers, nor are they all gifted with the clairvoyant far-sightedness. Quite true! But no more was there ever anyone born with knowledge of English or mathematics, *etc.*, *etc.* It has to be learnt — provided the capacity for learning is there. For not all were gifted by nature with linguistic talent or a knack for solving mathematical problems. There is, however, no doubt that many might be taught both, at least in a measure, if only they were persistent in trying. But trying is indispensable.

The Hindu Yogis, the Mahommedan Sufis, the "sorcerers" of Egypt, the Chaldean magi, the Kabbalists, the Essenes, the Pythagorians, and Neo-Platonists, who made natural and psychic phenomena an object of careful, practical investigation, declared a plain mode of living necessary for attaining any marked success. Liberation from attachment to the world of sense and unceasing aspiration towards the pure realm of spirit, is the most essential, from which, as an ultimate result, will follow a cessation of further rebirth. This, consequently, should be the goal and aim for which we are, all of us, struggling all the more as the struggle is, in itself, beneficial for every purpose. It brings about a quick development of all the higher faculties of the mind, the far-sightedness (clairvoyance) becomes [Page 29] immensely increased; new domains are opened up to the excessively sharpened senses, and the man thus endowed acquires a deeper insight into the truth which is the foundation of all. This we ought to be striving for "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v., 48.)

A simple, natural diet is the ideal one, and its result is wonderful. We know from Moses that vegetarian food was ordained for the primary inhabitants of the garden of Eden. (Gen. ii., 18, 19.) At the time of history when human beings attained the greatest age they were vegetarians. Noah was the first to receive the command: "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things". (Gen. ix.; 3). Only the Nazarenes, those marvellous men of God were directed to take unadulterated nourishment, to lead an ascetic life and to abstain — together with their mothers — from tasting "wine and strong drink". (Numbers vi., 2-4; Judges xiii., 45; I Saml. i., 11; Luke i., 15.)

The same enjoinder regarding intoxicating drink was given to the priests of Israel (Numbers x., 9-10), and truly occult societies of all epochs have followed their example with great profit to themselves and to their members. Among other rules considered important, are love of mankind, chastity, the conquering of all the lower passions (violent temper, indolence, weakness, *etc.*, *etc.*) and others of similar tendencies. The greatest stress is laid by the Initiates on ethics. Without ethical progress no spiritual insight, no real perception of the occult powers in nature.

The sketch of the Secret Doctrine attempted in these lines is, unavoidably, most incomplete. If, notwithstanding its brief outlines and short hints (maybe obscure), it could convey even the faintest notion of the Initiates and their Secret Doctrine, the object with which this paper was written would have been reached.

AN EGYPTIAN ALLEGORY

(From "*The Book of the Dead*")

Over the dark fields, heavy as a pall,
Lit by no gleam of sun, or moon, or star,
Hangs the dark air, nor any sounds at all
The sombre silence jar .

Still as the weed below a frozen sea,
The pale sheaves of the ghostly harvest stand,
And through the serried row unceasingly
There moves a spectral band.

All that have lived are there, and from their eyes –
Whether of king or beggar, maid or wife-
Gleam terror, and dismay, and wild surprise.
At the result of life.

For this the harvest is of all their deeds,
This "corn of Aanroo, seven cubits high";
Their good and evil actions sowed the seeds
They reap when once they die.

Gleaning their sheaves they go, with restless feet,
Each for himself plying the crescent knife;
And if their deeds were good, the grain they eat
Gives them eternal Life.

But if 'twas evil. that their life did sow,
The grain is poison, and the ghostly breath
They drew in Aanroo ceases, and they go
To everlasting Death.