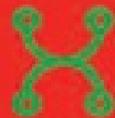


# The Book of Secrets

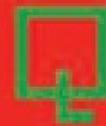
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Esoteric Societies and Holy Orders,



Luminaries and Seers, Symbols and Rituals,



and the Key Concepts of Occult Sciences



Through the Ages and Around the World



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Daniel Pineda

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Luminaries and Seers, Symbols and Rituals,  
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Through the Ages and Around the World

**By Daniel Pineda**

 **WEISER BOOKS**  
San Francisco, CA / Newburyport, MA

First published in 2011 by  
Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC  
With offices at:  
665 Third Street, Suite 400  
San Francisco, CA 94107  
[www.redwheelweiser.com](http://www.redwheelweiser.com)

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ISBN: 978-1-57863-485-9

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available on request.

Cover design by Barb Fisher/[levanfisherdesign.com](http://levanfisherdesign.com)  
Cover photographs © iStockphoto/Aaltazar  
Interior design by Kathryn Sky-Peck  
Typeset in Minion

Printed in Canada  
TCP  
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1992 (R1997).

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*O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adoreth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.*

—*Liber XV* by Aleister Crowley

*Thou wilt ask, What is the new regeneration? or how is that done in man? Hear and see, close not thy mind, let it not be filled by the spirit of this world with its might and pomp. Lay hold upon thy mind and break through the spirit of this world entirely; yield thy mind unto the kind love of God; make thy purpose earnest and strong to overcome the pleasure of this world and not to regard it. Consider that thou art not at home in this world, but art a strange guest, made captive in a prison; cry and call to him who has the key of the prison; yield thyself up to him in obedience, righteousness, humility, purity and truth.*

—*Confessions of Jacob Boehme* by Jacob Boehme

*. . . you are about to penetrate into the sanctuary of the sublime sciences; my hand is about to raise for you the impenetrable veil which hides from the eyes of common men the tabernacle, the sanctuary wherein the Eternal has lodged the secrets of nature, kept for a few that are privileged, the few Elect whom His omnipotence created that they may SEE, and seeing, may soar after Him in the vast expanse of His Glory and deflect upon mankind one of the Rays that shine round about His golden Throne.*

—*The Most Holy Trinosophia of Comte de St. Germain*, translated by Manly P. Hall

## Introduction

Have you ever taken a good look at a dollar bill and wondered what all those strange symbols mean or why there's so much writing in Latin, a *dead* language? Have you been too embarrassed to ask your grandfather about why he always wears that ring with the big *G* on it, or what that letter means to him? Do you have friends who regularly invite you to a ritual or ceremony that they claim will instruct you in the meaning of life? Are you searching for the invisible brotherhoods that have shaped the history of the world by using magic, alchemy, and other secrets only known to the upper echelon of humanity? Let's just say that if you are interested in these subjects (which can be safely assumed due to that fact that you are reading this book), you should take heart in the fact that these mysteries have been laid out before you intentionally, in the hope that you would strive to solve them for the betterment of yourself, and all humankind.

Secret knowledge can be hard to come by. Isn't a secret, after all, information that someone knows and purposely withholds or obscures from the sight of others? In the case of spiritual enlightenment, why would anybody actively stop interested parties from beholding the Kingdom of Heaven? The recurring literary and historical themes of the slaughter of innocents by tyrants fearful of a new era, and the stories of saviors murdered by the very people they had come to liberate might shed some light on the matter. In the case of the mystery tradition, secrets are not usually pieces of information being withheld by someone, but rather levels of consciousness that are hidden from our normal mental state. In most cases a secret is really just the acquisition of a new point of view. But learning to love instead of fear what you do not understand can be a long, difficult process—and perhaps some things are better kept as secrets.

At the turn of the last century, there was secret society fever. Everyone, it seemed, was a Freemason, Rosicrucian, or even an emissary of the Mahatmas of the Himalayas. This may have been simply a reaction against the industrialization of the world and the insistence of science on removing miracles from the existence of humankind, as many historians suppose. Or maybe the spiritual forces that govern life on our planet were communicating something: that science and religion were the two hands of reason, and a new age of their harmonious cooperation was to bring about the next phase in the building of the New Jerusalem. I can imagine that the later supposition seems a little far-fetched to most people. Yet, when we read the writings of modern quantum physicists, they sound less like the enemy of the mystic and more like his little brother—who has the right idea, but just hasn't been around long enough to test it all out. We have a long way to go until we as a species embody "The Method of Science, The Aim of Religion." Luckily, though, we are at the very genesis of what many wise men and women believe to be a new epoch in human evolution, and the possibilities are indeed limitless.

Throughout history, spiritual seekers of all persuasions have endeavored to connect directly with their ideal of being, labeled by some as divine. *Gnosis*, the Greek word for "knowledge," is the direct knowledge or personal contact with this divinity. There are many branches on the tree of occult knowledge, but the trunk of this tree, which unites all these seemingly contradicting worldviews, is Gnosis.

To search for secret knowledge is to journey into the soul of humanity, for what is more deeply buried or obscured than the very center of ourselves? The word *occult* has, in modern Western society, dark and sometimes evil connotations; however, it simply means "hidden" or "secret." Any knowledge or method that is not easily perceived or obvious may be called occult. It will, for many, bring to mind images of black robes, ritual sacrifice, and communion with

dangerous spiritual forces. This popular image of occultism has distracted many from the central reason for, and tenet of, the initiated secret tradition that in many ways has not changed since the dawn of civilization—that Man can become God. In order to delve into the sometimes forbidden and unseen Spiritual World, the seeker must be armed with courage, love, and an iron will. Perhaps one of the great paradoxes of what has been called the sacred science is that the very thing for which you are looking, is actually essential to finding it.

## **PART ONE**

### **Key Concepts**

*Occult sciences are necessarily eccentric, for so soon as they cease to be eccentric, they cease to be occult.*

—*The Paradoxes of the Highest Science* by Éliphas Lévi



When you begin to explore the secret tradition, it doesn't take long to realize that you haven't just stepped onto a field of study, nor even a universe, but a multiverse—where symbols and methods that share the same name do not carry the same meaning, and nothing seems to inherently correspond with anything else. The masters of this invisible college seldom agree on everything—from the exact positions of energy channels within the body to the existence and function of nonphysical entities such as angels and demons. And then there's the discussion among believers in preternatural beings as to the existence of such a thing as nonphysicality, or whether these beings are repressed psychological impulses or independent life forms.

Just as no two people are exactly alike, yet can share natural similarities betraying a common ancestor, so the occult systems of the world are neither uniform nor entirely estranged. The nexus point that connects these divergent and sometimes contradictory dimensions of inner space is you. The occult theory of correspondence assures you that "As above, so below," yet you are the bridge between these two realms, as well as the ultimate judge of what constitutes them and the meaning they will have in your personal development.

Beginners will gain much in their study if they acquaint themselves thoroughly with the instances in which the masters agree and afterward endeavor to understand their reasons for disagreement. The foundation of the secret tradition lies not in its knowledge, but in its use of knowledge. The most valuable import of occultism is not what or where the first substance is, for the secrets of our shared spiritual heritage are said to be everywhere. The occult tradition's merit and relevance to the pilgrim's progress lies in its method. Following a clear methodology, keeping a record, and testing your results against the findings of others elevate the soul's desire for greater light from the stasis of doubt into the realm of investigation and, as a result, direct experience.

The sacred science is only sacred insofar as its end is the realization of human evolution, and only science as long as it evolves along with the discoveries it facilitates. The following are what can be called key concepts of the secret tradition, being both technical and philosophical ideas that may be found on most branches of the tree of occult knowledge.



## The Great Work

*There is, however, one form of miracle which certainly happens, the influence of the genius.*

—*Magick, Liber ABA: Book Four* by Aleister Crowley

The path of spiritual attainment is called the Great Work. In alchemy its completion is the creation of the philosopher's stone, and in magic it is called the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. It is the manifestation of genius, which can lead the world on its next great adventure. The Holy Scriptures and sayings recorded by the saints are all utterances of the genius.

Success in this quest is the *raison d'être* of the Western mystery tradition and all sincere religious faiths. The ambiguity with which they describe the Lord is intentional and practical, as are the injunctions against idolatry. The unknown must remain so until we experience it directly. Any conjecture may color our view and defile the holiest and most pivotal moment in our lives. This principle is also the foundation of science, being the proper method of all exploration—spiritual or otherwise. It is through this experience that the religious reformers of the past have been prepared to overturn the table of culture when the food set upon it had become rotten and poisonous.

The execution of the Great Work is the fulfillment of prophecy, and the continuation of an ancient dialogue between Man and God. Establishing a society where this undertaking can be pursued by any who are called to do so is the true *jihad*, *dharma*, *via dolorosa*, and path of the wise.



# The Universal Force, the Tao, Polarity, and the Four Elements

*All things are concealed in all.*

—*Coelum Philosophorum* by Paracelsus

## The Universal Force

According to initiated wisdom, prana, chi, astral fluid, and the ophidian vibrations are all terms for a universal life force that permeates and connects all things. The qabalistic texts call it *ChAI*, which means "life." Because of the transcendental nature of this force, also called correspondence or matter, our thoughts can take the form of actions, shaping our world.

Today especially, we are constantly reminded that there are various kinds of energy such as solar, wind, natural gas, coal, bio-electrical, etc. These seemingly different forms of energy are all actually variants of the same phenomenon we call movement. Matter at its most fundamental level is composed of pure energy. That is, it is moving. Science affirms that everything is energy, or can at least be said to have an energetic component. The goal of the ancient philosopher was to learn how to manipulate and experience matter at this fundamental level. In doing so, they began to read energy as movement.

When we observe movement, what we see are the effects of energy. The process of harvesting energy for electricity is that of converting movements into electromagnetic pulses. A good example of how this works can be found in how we harvest wind energy. The wind moves a turbine that turns a shaft. This shaft goes into a gearbox, increasing the rotation speed, while the generator uses magnetic fields, converting the rotational energy into electrical energy. The mystics suggest we use this same process of energy conversion—except in our power plant we are the turbine, shaft, gearbox, and generator used to capture the electromagnetic "winds," in this case being the universal force. The various occult sciences are all methods of harnessing and directing this force toward spiritual light and the development of a civil society.

## The Tao

Many volumes have been and will continue to be written about the Tao, which translates as "The Way," and its unlimited manifestations. Of the eternal Tao, however, we must remain silent in the manner of true silence. That is, there is nothing that can be said. Yet in our temporal existence may be found ways that are straighter and paths shorter, that our work may be done in harmony with the magnificent mystery. The Tao that may be spoken of—though limited in scope and virtue in comparison with that of which it is a shadow—remains to the eyes of man a brilliant star lighting his sojourn toward enlightenment. Of this Tao we say that it follows the path of least resistance and bows lowest, for it wears the greatest crown. All rivers flow to the ocean because it is below them, yet were it not for the falling rains, both would be dried up and forgotten. This mystery of the source, path and end of power, life, and liberty has been called the Tao by many a wise fool, seeking to name the mother and father of names.

## Polarity

From the One Universal Life Force arises the polarity of positive and negative. It is one

movement in two directions. This first movement is normally recanted in the Holy Scriptures as the initial step in the creation of the world, being the separation of light and darkness or of the heavens and the earth. In the secret traditions, these eternal twins have been known by names such as yin and yang, mercy and severity, right and left, and allegorically as Cain and Abel. It is the work of the Adepti to absorb and harmonize these forces. These two poles are the same in essence; their apparent difference arises from our assumption that our nervous system perceives the fullness of reality rather than only one side on the multifaceted diamond of existence.

## The Four Elements

From the primordial swirling of the ancient universe arose duality. Within this duality were further attraction and repulsion, existing as agents of the eventual reintegration of the Many into the One. On the side of the masculine force of propulsion can be found what the ancients called Fire and Air, the elements that they observed as seeming to move from their own internal source. These they also attributed to the will and intellect of humanity, as well as to the directions of east and south, being the source of light and heat.

Within the negative polarity, which exercises its feminine forces of vacuity, gravitation, and friction, can be found the elements of Water and Earth. These are seen as being passive, acting and being acted upon in a manner that conceals, dissipates, and absorbs. They were attributed to the directions of west and north, the sources of darkness and cold. These four elements form the cross of creation, combining to form the basis of all existence:



**Fire:** Hot and Dry, Summer, South

**Water:** Cold and Moist, Autumn, West

**Air:** Hot and Moist, Spring, East

**Earth:** Cold and Dry, Winter, North

All that is, is composed of a mixture of these four, with one element dominating, depending on its circumstance of birth. The four elements also correspond with the seasons and the four alchemical degrees of Fire.



## Magick and Mysticism, or The Left and Right Eye

*Whoso should wish to recount all the Arts and Operations which in our times be reputed and preached abroad as Wisdom and Magical Secrets; he should as well undertake to count the waves and the sands of the Sea*

—*The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*, translated by  
S. L. MacGregor Mathers

*Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change to occur in conformity with Will.*

—*Magick in Theory and Practice* by Aleister Crowley

*The Soul, being a brilliant Fire, by the power of the Father remaineth immortal, and is Mistress of Life, and filleth up the many recesses of the bosom of the World.*

—*The Chaldaean Oracles of Zoroaster* translated by W. Wynn Westcott

### Magick

Although any intentional act may be said to be a magical act, a less general description of the common use of the term *magic* is "the method by which one can cause what seem to be miracles to the uninitiated." In the past, these so-called miracles have included conversing with spirits, enchanting a lover, destroying an enemy, and at its highest level of practice, becoming God. The word *magick* comes from the theory that the art was first practiced by the magicians of Persia. The letter *k* was added to the spelling of the word by Aleister Crowley to distinguish his magick from that of the illusionist or sorcerer.

The practice of magic can be divided into two general categories: evocation and invocation.

To evoke is to call forth; the magician declares his divine authority as a servant of the Almighty ordering about various spirits, elementals, angels, and demons. A perfect example of this style can be found in the grimoire (book of magical instructions) *The Lesser Key of Solomon*, where the entity is made to manifest within a triangle enclosed with divine names.

Invocation, on the other hand, calls in the desired entity (only the highest gods or one's own Holy Guardian Angel are invoked due to the dangers inherent in spirit possession). As the ceremony continues, the magician deepens his identification with the deity, assuming its form, power, and consciousness. In this case, the god manifests within the magical circle, and therefore floods the magician's being. The Adepti of ancient Egypt were skilled in the use of this technique, leaving us excellent instructions in their funerary papyri. This form of magic is undertaken in order to balance the magician's personality by invoking deities whose attributes he lacks or feels are underdeveloped.

Modern magicians are trained in all forms and methods of the magical arts, in the hopes that they will be able to use any means available to accomplish the Great Work, or Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. To this end, he also employs many ritual objects or magical weapons, each symbolic of a spiritual state or philosophical concept. These include the Baculum or Wand of Will, the Cup of Understanding, the Dagger of Intellect, and the Pantacle of Corporeality and Change. The most potent weapon available to them, however, is their own

purity of purpose; this will sustain them in drought and guide them when abundance tempts their soul to abandon the difficult path set before them.

## **Mysticism**

In regard to their theoretical and operative methods of spiritual attainment, mystics are in many ways the complete antithesis of the magician. They do not march forth unto the horizon of being, but turn inward in search of their secret center on the path of self-annihilation. Siddhartha Gautama, known to the world as the Buddha, uttered the ultimate mystical statement, "Anatman," which translates as "no self." The attainment of non-attainment, the AIN of the Qabalists, is the god whom mystics invoke. And in this way, they resemble magicians.

This path is exalted in simplicity, but beset with danger. The mystical impulse for the dissolution of the ego has driven many unfortunate men and women to become averse to life, nature, and the processes that protect and perpetuate their cycles. The very mind itself is the opponent of this work, and the mystical operation at times appears like a squall on open waters, the vessel of spirit being caught in its grip, with water both above and below, and the wind beating from all angles. Escape from this predicament is impossible. Explorers must be as hardened captains and simply wait out the storm in intense concentration. If aspirants persist in the work and continually strive for balance, then these obstacles will become the very steps by which they will mount the summit.





## Yoga

*In the Master is the perfect seed of Omniscience.*

—*The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*, translated by Charles Johnston

*Yoga* is a Sanskrit word that means "union," sharing the same etymological root as the English word *yoke*. There are many different methods or types of yoga, such as Kriya and Hatha. The goal of each is the dissolution of the ego and therefore spiritual union with either a particular deity or with the entire universe.

In the 2nd century BC, Pantanjali authored the Yoga Sutras, setting down the first collection of ground rules for attaining control of the mind and liberating oneself from the bondage of materiality. In his system, yoga has eight "limbs" or practices:

1. **Yama:** Discipline and Control; known to Semitic peoples and their philosophical descendants as the thou-shalt-not routine.
2. **Niyama:** Virtue; the active side of discipline is doing the right thing.
3. **Asana:** Posture; the ability to sit perfectly still for long periods of time is considered to be extremely important in training the body to obey the mind.
4. **Pranayama:** Literally "breath-control"; variations on breathing patterns affect the body's chemistry and therefore consciousness. This forms a bridge between the first three practices, which are predominantly somatic in nature, and the next three, which are mental.
5. **Pratyahara:** Withdrawing the mind from external stimuli; the result of this training is most popularly known as the ability to not feel any pain. This is the first trance most aspirants will experience. It is the mental equivalent of Yama.
6. **Dharana:** Single-pointed concentration; the mind seems to stay on the object of concentration without any conscious effort. It is the mental equivalent of Niyama.
7. **Dhyana:** Meditation; this practice involves being absorbed into the object of concentration until it no longer appears to the mind as separate from itself. It is the mental equivalent of Asana.
8. **Samadhi:** Attainment of union; both subject and object are annihilated, and the boundaries of identity dissolve into what has been described as infinite bliss.

Other forms of yoga that have been grouped in with these as well, such as:

**Mantra:** Union through the repetition of a word or sacred verse

**Bhakti:** Union through love and worship

**Guru:** Union through obedience to a Guru or teacher

**Karma:** Union through work or deeds

While some of these methods may seem foreign or strange to a Westerner, they all have corresponding practices within mainstream religions. Pious Catholics who recite the Lord's Prayer, for example, practice Mantra Yoga daily.



## The Siddhis or Magical Gifts

*Thou therefore who desirest Magical Gifts, be sure that thy soul is firm and steadfast; for it is by flattering thy weaknesses that the Weak Ones will gain power over thee.*

—*Liber Librae* by Aleister Crowley

Once spiritual seekers begin to tread the magical or mystical path, they begin to acquire certain abilities that are classified as *siddhis*, or attainments. These are magical gifts that act as proof to aspirants that they are on the right path. Siddhis are, however, considered to be distractions from the one goal of union with the divine. Listed below are some of the powers and abilities that may arise from the practice of an occult discipline.

- The ability to converse with spiritual intelligences
- The acquisition of a familiar spirit
- Transmutation
- Healing
- Clairvoyance
- The preparation of tinctures and potions
- Knowledge of sciences
- The discovery of hidden treasure
- The creation of talismans
- Bilocation
- Invisibility
- Flight
- Shape-shifting
- The ability to control and converse with wild animals

The attainment of these abilities is an outgrowth of solid study and dedication to an occult regimen. The key to success in any undertaking is repetition, analysis, and keeping an open mind concerning the specific method in which a certain technique can be applied to your specific circumstance. Students must maintain courage, patience, and mental equilibrium in the quest for personal mastery.



## Esoteric Anatomy, the Chakra System, and the Aura

*Man has indeed all the forms of all the three worlds lying in him; for he is a complete image of God.*

—*Signature of All Things* by Jacob Boehme

### Esoteric Anatomy and the Chakra System

In the secret tradition, the human body is considered to be the ultimate symbol of the universe. Each part of the body corresponds to a spiritual ideal, a star constellation, or an alchemical element. In this way, the ancient philosophers connected themselves directly with all things, and through that connection could influence the world around them, knowing by intuition what their senses could not yet perceive. Among the most widely used systems of esoteric anatomy is that of the Yogic Chakras.

Chakras are like pools of energy connected by many flowing streams located within the body. There are seven major Chakras, or wheels, each representing a state of mental and spiritual functionality, as well as moral evolution. When one or more of the Chakras is blocked, it is due to an imbalance in the flow of energy. Through meditation and working directly with the Chakras, aspirants can clear these blockages, achieve balance, and gain greater insight into the nature of their purpose in life.



The first Chakra is the Muladhara (Root Chakra). Its color is red, and it is located at the base of the spine. It represents the survival instinct and is the first requirement for physical limitation and therefore manifestation.



The second Chakra is the Svadhithana (Sacral Chakra). Its color is orange, and it is located in the sacrum and is responsible for the health of the reproductive organs. It is the source of creativity and healthy sexual expression.



The third Chakra is the Manipura (Solar Plexus Chakra). Its color is yellow, and it is

sometimes said to be located in the solar plexus, and at other times at the navel. Its functions include managing the digestive system, the cultivation of confidence, and the discovery of the spiritual impulse.



The fourth Chakra is the Anahata (Heart Chakra). Its color is green, and it is located in the heart, thymus, or center of the chest. Anahata governs the immune and circulatory systems, as well as relationships. It corresponds to compassion, devotion, and selfless service and also forms a link between the first and last three Chakras.



The fifth Chakra is the Vishuddha (Throat Chakra). Its color is light blue, and it is located at the base of the throat. This Chakra is responsible for communication and expression.



The sixth Chakra is the Ajna (Brow Chakra). Its color is dark blue or indigo, and it is located in the center of the forehead. It corresponds to the pituitary gland and governs our ability to perceive truth beyond appearances.



The seventh and last of the major Chakras is the Sahasrara (Crown Chakra). It is either violet or bright white in color, and it is connected with the pineal gland, being located at the very top of the head or sometimes also depicted as just above it. It represents pure being and the light of consciousness itself, along with understanding, wisdom, and a mature spiritual viewpoint.

The path upward from the first to the seventh Chakra, unlocking the secrets of the yogic path, may take a lifetime to experience in full. Working with these energy centers helps spiritual seekers to focus their mind on one aspect of consciousness at a time, fully engaging and discovering the latent potential within.

The body as a manifestation of consciousness is a concept that has evolved over time. From the belief that deformities are curses from malevolent spirits, to the modern medical theory of

psychosomatic illness, we have always connected the unseen world of the mind with our tactile experiences. As humanity marches forward in its study of nature, science and religion will continue to merge into each other, just as the line between mind and body has been all but erased.

## **The Aura**

The Aura is an energy field composed of astral fluid that surrounds the physical body. It can be seen by the naked eye in low or reduced lighting, but can also be observed by using mechanical methods such as Kirlian photography. It is not only visually sensible, but can also be felt, and even smelled by a particularly psychic person.



Spiritual Adepts have learned to use the aura in order to illuminate the space around them or to become invisible. When visible, the aura displays many different colors depending on the mood, health, or spiritual development of an individual. The interpretations of these colors correspond with the Chakra colors and their meanings. Auras can also vary greatly in size—there have been Adepts whose auras could be felt for miles.



## Qabalah

*Every magician, therefore, should study the Holy Qabalah. Once he has mastered the main principles, he will find his work grow easy.*

—*Magick in Theory and Practice* by Aleister Crowley

*Qabalah*, or QBL as it is spelled in Hebrew, is a word meaning "to receive" and refers to a system of classifying various phenomena as well as discovering the hidden meaning of the Bible and other Holy Scriptures. Many distinct philosophical movements use qabalistic symbolism and methodology, each attributing their own meaning to its mystical concepts and parables. Among these are the Jewish and Hermetic interpretations. Though Qabalah is a Hebrew word, it did not arrive from Judaism fully formed, borrowing from Greek, Arab, and Egyptian philosophy and dogma to form its deep and transcendent character. These other sects also borrowed from the Jewish sages, and in time, the advanced students could begin to see an underlying unity connecting all ancient philosophy.

In modern occultism, the Qabalah forms the theoretical and operational foundation. It is the language of the secret tradition shared by practically every group. Its study can be divided into three parts: the Literal, the Practical, and the Cosmological.

Study of the Literal, or written, Qabala may be divided into three parts:

1. **Gematria:** Discovering the hidden meaning of words by calculating their numerical value. Some ancient languages tend to have alphabets in which each letter may also represent a number. For example, the Greek words for will (*Thelema*) and love (*Agape*) both add up to ninety-three. It is therefore to be assumed that there is some sympathy between these two concepts, or that one word will shed light on the meaning of the other.

2. **Notariqon:** Finding a secret message by either taking each letter of a word to be the first letters of words forming another sentence, or doing the reverse and taking the first letter of each word in a sentence and forming a new word. For example, *BRAShiTh* is Hebrew for "in the beginning," and can be expanded to *BRAShiTh RAH ALHIM ShiQBLV ThVRH*, or "In the beginning Elohim saw that Israel would accept the law."

3. **Temura:** The permutation of a word into another word using a cipher. For example, by using the method of *ALBTh*, or *Albath*, in which the Hebrew alphabet is folded in half, and the letters of a word are substituted for its match, the word *KOL* or *Kol*, "master," is transmuted into *ChMA* or *Chema*, "heat or fury." According to this method, we can gain deeper insight into the nature of the master, meditating on the sentence, "The master may reveal himself as the fury of fire." By using this method we can make many wonderful discoveries, each aiding in the apprehension of spiritual truth.

The Practical Qabalah involves the use of symbolism and scripture in the creation of spells, amulets, astrological interpretation, and ceremonial magic. Among the most famous instances of

the use of the Practical Qabalah, is the story of the Golem of Prague, created by Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel in the 16th century. Rabbi ben Bezalel used the golem (a creature made of clay that is brought to life by reciting special incantations) to defend the Jews from an antagonistic and corrupt government. He finally deactivated the creature after the Holy Roman Emperor promised to end the persecution of the Jews. It is said that to this day, the golem lies dormant in the attic of a synagogue in the Czech Republic.

## **The Qabalistic Tree of Life**

Qabalistic cosmology has its foundation in the *Otz Chayim*, or Tree of Life. It is a glyph that allows Adepts to catalog all experiences and ideas in its twenty-two paths, and the ten Sefira or emanations. Preceding these emanations are three veils of negative existence (AIN, AIN SOPH, and AIN SOPH AUR) expressed numerically as  $(-1) + (+1) = 0$ . In this case the word "negative" refers not to numerical value, but to the pre-manifest state, the prerequisite polar tensions of potentiality necessary to manifestation. The universe cannot know the particular without first limiting itself, thus the first Sefira, called Kether (The Crown), is the point of view, being one, individual, and eternal. From Kether issues forth the other Sefira until reaching the tenth emanation called Malkuth, or the Kingdom. Below this are the Qliphoth, the shells or husks of materiality that are empty images and are considered to be evil by most schools of qabalistic philosophy.

Each Sefira represents a state of divine consciousness, acting like the layers of an onion, enveloping the innermost core of being. The twenty-two paths each correspond with a Hebrew letter, connecting the Sefira to one another and instructing mystics on the proper method of peeling away each layer from the cosmic onion.



### The Four Worlds

Within the Tree of Life are Four Worlds, or levels of being. These Worlds each have their own function and correspond to the Tetragrammaton, IHVH:

י ה ו ה

י  
ה  
ו  
ה

I, Yod: The First of these is Atziluth, the realm of pure divinity.

H, Hé: The Second is Briah, the realm of creation and archangels.

V, Vav: The Third is Yeztirah, the realm of ideas and formation.

H, Hé: The Fourth is Assiah, the realm of materiality and the heavenly bodies.

Armed with this symbol, Qabalists can organize their mind and thoughts while affirming the underlying unity of phenomenal cause. They ascend the Tree of Life, from Malkuth to Kether, touching every possible plane of existence along the way while balancing each idea with its opposite.



## Alchemy

*He who can guide and control the power of life is an alchemist.*

—*With the Adepts, An Adventure Among the Rosicrucians* by Franz Hartmann

Alchemy is the art of transmuting base metals into gold, refining gemstones, and creating various tinctures from plants and minerals. It is the predecessor of chemistry, and many occult scholars believe alchemy to have been founded in ancient Egypt, positing the idea that the word may have come from the Arabic name for the land of Egypt: *Khemi*.

The two primary operations performed by alchemists are those of precipitation and of transmutation. In precipitation, the alchemist causes the subtle, invisible matter to become dense; this is also known as fixing the volatile. Transmutation deals with the spiritualization of dense matter, the consecration of the Eucharist being a parallel religious ceremony.

### The Elements of Alchemy

The three main alchemical elements are Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury. Sulphur represents expansive, masculine force. Salt represents contraction and is considered to be the feminine component of the alchemical trinity. Mercury is the medium of equilibrium. These three manifest themselves in the four natural elements of Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, in different combinations, the arrangements of which form the foundation of the phenomenal world.

There are also the seven sacred metals each representing steps on the path to divine consciousness, these being:

- Silver: Reflection and Intuition
- Mercury: Communication
- Copper: Devotion
- Gold: Completion
- Iron: Defense
- Tin: Compassion
- Lead: Discipline and Patience

### The Four Worlds or Kingdoms of the Alchemists

The alchemist sees the world as a logical, hierarchical structure that builds upon itself, from simple to complex. This is also true of a human being. The basic components of both human beings and the universe are divided into four parts.

The simplest of these is the Mineral World. It contains what can best be described as inanimate substances, although this is not altogether accurate, as the Mineral World is also known to have a consciousness of its own order. This kingdom forms the basis for the chemical reactions that give birth to organic life. Next is the Vegetable World, composed of plants, trees, and flowers. Third is the Animal World, made up of beings that must consume other forms of organic life in order to survive. Fourth is the Spiritual World that includes all the internal thoughts and ideas of living things.

Alchemical symbolism may either represent solid chemical processes or the stages in the

spiritual evolution of humanity; it depends greatly on students' point of view. C. G. Jung, the pioneering psychoanalyst, saw in alchemy the language of the subconscious mind, dedicating much of his life to understanding its mysteries.



## Astrology and the New Age

*It is a matter of common knowledge among mystics that the evolutionary career of mankind is indissolubly bound up with the divine hierarchies who rule the planets and the signs of the Zodiac.*

—*Message of the Stars* by Max Heindel and Augusta Foss Heindel

### Astrology

Astrology is the study of heavenly bodies and their influence on world events—marriages, births, deaths, and even physical appearance. Every great civilization of old had its own system of dividing and interpreting the stars. Connecting them all is the general theory of correspondence found in the hermetic maxim, "That which is above, is like that which is below." The principle symbols of astrology are the zodiac, the planets, the sun, and the moon. Each of these has a special significance that aligns with plants, animals, and human passions.

The planets, far from being considered merely lifeless objects caught in our solar system, were conceived by the ancient philosophers as sentient and powerful mediums of divine influence. Classical astrology was limited to the seven moving heavenly bodies of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, Mercury, the sun, and the moon. Later, other bodies such as planets invisible to the naked eye, comets, and asteroids were discovered and added; but these newer members of the astrological family have yet to be tested. Their influence is still not entirely understood.

The zodiac, or circle of animals, is the circle of twelve constellations along the yearly path of the sun as it seems to traverse the sky. Each constellation was named after an animal or mythological creature according to its observed influence on earth.

### The 12 Signs of the Zodiac



Aries: The Ram



Taurus: The Bull



Gemini: The Twins



Cancer: The Crab



Leo: The Lion



Virgo: The Virgin



Libra: The Scales



Scorpio: The Scorpion



Sagittarius: The Centaur/Archer



Capricorn: The Goatfish



Aquarius: The Water Bearer



Pisces: The Fish

## **The New Age**

Astrological signs and symbols are used for more than mere divination. Properly understood, they tell the story of the creation of the cosmos and the spiritual destiny of humankind. Ancient civilizations as well as modern mystics have divided the history of the world into astrological ages. These are known as the precession of equinoxes, and they occur at intervals of approximately 2,150 years. Rather than moving from Aries to Pisces, the ages proceed in a retrograde, or backward direction, as our solar system is currently moving from the Piscean to the Aquarian age. Although the precise date and time of the beginning of the Aquarian age is not agreed upon by all researchers, the majority of the secret traditions believe that it is now at hand. The changes expected due to this astrological shift include a growing interest in the occult and spirituality as personal expression, an aversion to traditional patriarchal societal structure, and a global movement toward political and economic liberty.



## Divination and the Tarot

*Man's task is to discover means of recognizing and reading the signs which a generous nature spreads before his eyes.*

—*Jewish Magic and Superstition* by Joshua Trachtenberg

Divination is the practice of telling the future or discovering hidden information through the use of a medium such as a deck of cards, tea leaves, or a pendulum. Diviners invoke the spirit or energy that they feel will be the most helpful, interpreting the movements or positions of their tools into an answer from beyond. In order to succeed in this, diviners must be entirely detached from the outcome of their operation, lest they unconsciously influence the result, compromising the accuracy of the reading.

Here are some of the major methods of divination used in antiquity and today:

**Astrology:** The interpretation of the movements of heavenly bodies

**Aeromancy:** Divination by interpreting atmospheric conditions

**Bibliomancy:** The use of randomly selected pages from books, usually a holy scripture

**Cartomancy:** The use of various card decks including playing cards and the Tarot

**Cheirography:** Palm reading

**Catopromancy:** Divination with the aid of mirrors

**Dactylomancy:** Divination by interpreting finger movements, also linked with automatic writing and talking boards such as the Ouija

**Dowsing:** The use of a rod or pendulum for divination

**Geomancy:** Either the study of the number of marks made on a surface at random, and the translation of the marks into mystical symbols known as geomantic figures, or the interpretation of geography used for divination

**Necromancy:** The questioning of the spirits of the dead

**Pyromancy:** Divination by reading either a flame or the ashes of a ritual sacrifice

**Tasseomancy:** Divination by reading tea leaves or coffee grounds

**Zoomancy:** Divination by interpreting the presence of a particular animal as a good or bad omen

The priesthood of every culture has practiced and refined techniques for deciphering the will of the gods. In antiquity, it was a common practice to disembowel an animal as a sacrifice, and to read how the stomach and intestines spilled out upon the altar, gaining a glimpse of what was to come. Perhaps the most famous divinatory device in history was the Oracle of Delphi in ancient Greece. Here, a priestess of Apollo would sit on a tripod above a cavern that emitted vapors from the rotting corpse of Pytho, who had been slain by the god. She would enter into a violent trance and utter prophetic words. The priests of Delphi would then organize the message into poetic hexameters and disseminate it to the worshippers as an answer from the Deity himself.

It is important to remember that regardless of method, the invocation of the proper intelligences is a vital component to successful divination. Before undertaking any experiment with divination, a short prayer should be said in order to make the right connection with the Spiritual World, as well as to set up barriers against interference from undesirable entities.

## **The Tarot**

The Tarot, or the Book of Thoth as it has been called, is the visual record of the initiatory path in its entirety. Used by fortunetellers, occultists, and many ordinary people interested in dabbling in the unknown, this deck of seventy-eight cards has intrigued Western civilization for the past five hundred years. The deck is divided into two parts: the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The word *Arcana* means "secrets or mysteries," for it is the greater and lesser mysteries that are revealed in the study of the Tarot.

The Major Arcana are made up of twenty-two cards, traditionally corresponding to the various planets, zodiac signs, and elements, as well as the letters of the Hebrew alphabet.

The Minor Arcana contain four suits, each of which represents one of the four elements. The small cards are numbered from ace to ten and represent the ten sacred numbers of the qabalistic Sefira. Then come the court cards, usually king, queen, knight, and page, being the Four Worlds and elements of the Tree of Life.

There are many opinions on the origin of the Tarot deck. On the one hand, we have evidence that the Tarot is derived from a card game whose existence dates back only to the 15th century. On the other hand, many occultists believe that the deck is the repository of all occult wisdom, and that the game was only a defilement (or intentional concealing) of the secret and sacred symbolism of the Arcana Arcanorum. These competing theories, although seemingly of little practical relevance to the modern esoteric practitioner, hold in their synthesis another valuable clue to the mystery of spiritual development in humankind.

There are some occultists who are just as insulted that their Tarot is considered to be the offshoot of a humble card game, as there are scholars and religious leaders who fail to understand why an old deck of playing cards can hold the attention of the public much longer than they ever could. Let us recall for a moment the intellectual maturity necessary to create a game. Game play requires rules and agreements, symbols for gain and loss, as well as an ultimate end where successful and skillful play is rewarded with either a point or a win. In other words, game play is a mark of intelligence. Is not society and culture another type of game, or even an extension of the games of children? Being that every human being began as a child, would it not be wise to embed the secrets of the universe in a game, where adults could once again access these secrets with childlike purity? Perhaps the secrets of the universe were discovered while playing this game—and the gods have followed the worshippers from the parlor to the temple, with only the youngest of the little children noticing their presence.



## The Astral Plane

*Such is the equilibrium of all in the universal heaven that one is moved by another, thinks from another, as if in a chain; so that not the least thing can [occur from itself]: thus the universe is ruled by the Lord, and, indeed, with no trouble.*

—*Spiritual Diary* by Emanuel Swedenborg

The astral, or ethereal, plane is a world within and surrounding our everyday mundane existence. It is governed by its own set of laws and principles, and it is inhabited by fantastic creatures and an infinite number of sub-realms. Most of the spiritual beings and experiences we encounter in the study of the esoteric tradition have their source in the astral. Feats of psychism such as clairvoyance and telekinesis are accomplished through the use of astral forces and beings. The astral plane is comprised of lower and higher levels, the former being composed of elementals, demons, and the shells of departed human beings (commonly known as ghosts), and the higher being home to angels, gods, and masters who have pledged themselves to the service of humanity in its evolutionary journey.

Over the centuries, many great prophets and philosophers such as Emanuel Swedenborg and William Blake have received their inspiration through astral travel. Elizabethan era English Magus John Dee and his assistant Edward Kelley worked extensively with angelic intelligences of the astral plane, receiving from them a series of songs or calls that have the power to unlock visions of the different layers of reality underlying the entire universe. In the North African desert in 1909, the first recorded detailed and systematic exploration of these Aethyr (as the divisions are called) was undertaken by Aleister Crowley and his magical student Victor Neuburg. Crowley's experiences with the Enochian Astral Realms yielded discoveries that would become central to the theology and doctrine of his spiritual system of Thelema. This is a prime example of successful work in the highest levels of the astral plane.

There are many systems for exploring this vast ethereal terrain, but as with all maps, the traveler must remember that experience is the ultimate guide. The methods for gaining access to the astral realms are as varied as the kinds of entities encountered there. The most common is for the seeker to enter a state of deep meditation and visualization as a bridge into the astral. Other practices include ritual drug use, sexual trance, and the repetition of special words believed to contain occult power.

## **Part two**

# **Symbolism: the Language of Mystery**

*By symbolism the simplest, the commonest objects are transformed, idealized, and acquire a new and, so to say, an illimitable value.*

—*The Migration of Symbols* by the Count Goblet d'Alviella



Symbols inform and inspire. They have served as mentor and muse to the greatest minds humanity has ever known. In sculpture, painting, and literature, symbols allow much to be said with little, facilitating direct contact with powerful spiritual energies or marking the location of a vast treasure.

Much of symbolism's allure to the transmitters of occult knowledge is that a symbol may be partially or totally misinterpreted by the uninitiated. This allows the secrets to be hidden in plain sight where they can light the way for the worthy.

In many cases, there are several doctrines existing side by side or one within another, sharing the same symbol set. For example, esoteric groups such as the Freemasons use the rich symbolism occurring in the practice of alchemy, but may not ascribe the same meaning to those images as a medieval alchemist would.

Ultimately, each individual must decide the true meaning of a symbol for him- or herself. Perhaps this personal relationship that symbolism requires of us is precisely what makes it such an effective and enduring part of the secret tradition.



## Animals and Spiritual Beings

*I can call spirits from the vasty deep.*

—*Henry IV* by William Shakespeare

Along the path to enlightenment, you are bound to meet some interesting spiritual entities that may help you into, or keep you out of, the palaces of wisdom you seek. From proud winged serpents to humble creatures of the earth, the secret tradition teaches that there is more life in the world than we can comprehend. Understanding the functions of the various inhabitants of the astral plane can help you to deal with them more effectively and to identify the clues that the masters left behind to guide you or warn you.

### Angels

Angels are the arbiters of divine will. They are messengers and protectors, appearing in many forms, but mostly depicted as winged androgynous humanoids. As a group, they traditionally represent the element of Air, but are also said to control the other elements. The word *angel* is derived from the Greek *angelos*, meaning "messenger." In Hebrew, they are at times referred to as *MLACH IHVH*, "Messengers of Yahweh," or *BNI ALVHIM*, "Sons of the Gods."



Angels have visited prophets, martyrs, and sages, helping to found religious movements across the globe. The Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary to inform her about the future birth of Jesus, and to Muhammed to deliver unto him the Quran. In 1904, Aiwass dictated the Book of the Law to Aleister Crowley, initiating the Aeon of Horus. The major angels or archangels alluded to in the art and literatures of occultism are Raphael, the angel of the east, Michael in

the south, Gabriel in the west, and Auriel in the north.

## **Ants**

The ant is sacred to Mars and therefore represents military discipline and fighting spirit. Working together, ants can bring down animals many hundreds, and even thousands, of times their own size. They are individually capable of carrying many times their own weight. Some Native American legends portray ants as the first animal, and in the Amazonian shamanic traditions, ant bites are used in initiations.

## **Ape and Monkey**

The ape symbolizes intelligence, fidelity, and defense. The dog-headed ape that distorts and misinterprets the word of the god Thoth is similar to the Hindu god Hanuman. Both of these have a duty to hide or defend the holy truth from profanation and misuse. In the Hindu classic text, the *Ramayana*, Hanuman is the leader of the armies of heaven and is venerated for his sincerity and religious devotion.



## **Basilisk**

The Basilisk is known as the King of Serpents. Its name comes from *Basileus*, meaning "a king" in Greek, and it is traditionally depicted with a crest on the crown of its head. It is a solar creature, having the head and legs of a rooster and the body of a serpent, with wings containing elements of both animals. The Basilisk's Eye destroys whatever falls into its gaze, and it may therefore be associated with the Eye of Shiva that destroys the universe when opened.

## **Bear**

The bear has symbolized great strength, protection, patience, and healing for many cultures. In hibernation, it resembles the mystics who live in the wilderness or travel inward to find illumination. Stories of great masters who retire to caves and receive divine revelations are found in nearly every culture. In the Bible, we find Elisha the prophet cursing a group of forty-two children mocking his baldness. Upon cursing them, two female bears come out of the woods and tear them to pieces. Elisha is connected with the earth and the body—his baldness showing that there was no barrier or vanity between himself and his lord. The children here may represent the forty-two-letter name of God, said by Rabbi Isaac Luria to raise the devoted's soul from the material world into that of the astral. The two bears can also be interpreted as a

reference to the constellations of Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, both of which were symbols of protection in the ancient world.

## **Beetle**

The beetle is, above all, an animal sacred to Keph-Ra, the lord of midnight, who rolls the black sun beneath the earth. It is the symbol of gestation and growth amid the darkness. The agent of rebirth, the beetle collects the waste of life and incubates its young within it. It corresponds with the north and with the Tarot card of the Moon. The Hebrew letter *Qoph*, meaning "the back of the head," is traditionally attributed to it, as well as the sign of Pisces.



## **Camel**

The path across the desert, the vast abyss separating idea from actualization, is a difficult one, for there is no water and therefore no life. Yet, a person can cross the wasteland with the help of the camel, who is symbolic of success against all odds. The camel feeds off its own fat deposits in order to survive in a harsh environment, and this ability is understood by spiritual seekers to be a lesson in the nature of the Great Work; the source of spiritual sustenance is within.

## **Chnoubis**

The Chnoubis is a composite creature with the head of a lion and the body of a serpent. The Egyptian Gnostics used its image in an amulet for protection from disease, poison, and as a solar image. It has been associated with Abraxas and other solar creation gods. The serpent is connected with the lion qabalistically by the Hebrew letter *TETH*, which means "serpent" and is attributed to Leo and the Tarot card Strength.

## **Cock or Rooster**

The cock is a solar symbol, and it crows at the rising sun. As a participant in the ritual of the dawn, it represents rebirth and deliverance from darkness.

## **Cow and Bull**

The cow is sacred to practically every culture. As a symbol of work, maternity, and balance, it is common to see very important deities, particularly female ones such as the Egyptian Isis, to be either depicted as cows or with the head of a cow. Its horns are reminiscent of the crescent moon, further connecting it with the sacred feminine.



The bull is a slightly different symbol. It represents masculine force, dedication, and wealth. The bull is the Cherub of Earth and shares in all the qualities attributed to the element and its astrological sign Taurus.

## **Dog**

The dog is a symbol of death, yet also of guidance, so it serves different functions depending on the individual who encounters it. Dogs have the capacity to read a person's heart and respond accordingly. One of the most infamous canines is the three-headed dog Cerberus, who guards the entrance to the underworld. The appearance of the dog can also be seen as a reminder that things are not always what they seem, and that the gods are watching.

## **Donkey**

One of the most sacred animals to the occult tradition is the donkey. The infamous idol of the Templars was allegedly a man with the head of a donkey. In the Judeo-Christian religion, the Messiah rides a donkey, a symbol of both royalty and humility. One of the most famous tales of the Sufi master Mulla Nasrudin depicts him asking his disciples, "Have you seen my donkey?" while seated on the beast he is supposedly looking for, using comedy to draw attention to the inherent paradox of the spiritual path; we are searching for a thing that is everywhere, even right beneath or inside of us, and yet we are having trouble finding it.

## **Dove**

The dove represents the Holy Spirit as well as the sexual power of IHVH. It is a symbol of peace, charity, and love. In magic, the dove is frequently used as a sacrifice, usually being stuffed with incense and burned on the altar. It is also revered as a messenger, further linking it with the *Logos*, or divine word.

## **Dragon**

The dragon represents destructive power, greed, and agility. In Asian culture, the dragon is a symbol of royalty and temporal power. In some depictions, it breathes fire and carries the sun across the sky. In respect to the latter, the dragon is connected with the celestial boat of the ancient Egyptians—and even with Noah's Ark—as the guardian of ancient treasure and wisdom. It is featured in the heraldry of many noble families—a reference to a legendary ancestor who slew such a beast. The dragon partakes of each of the four sacred elements: hard scales for Earth, breath of Fire, wings for Airy flight, and Watery undulating body. Dragons are said to have lived deep within the earth, sometimes under a mountain. Their food of choice in fables is

sheep, further identifying the dragon as the enemy of Christianity. In the form of Hydra, it is the first deacon of the sign of Leo and may be an important reason for the relationship between the serpent and the lion in ancient mythology. It also represents the nodes of the moon, where it and the sun's orbits intersect. These nodes are known as the head (*Caput Draconis*) and the tail (*Cauda Draconis*) of the dragon.



## **Eagle**

The eagle has long been a central motif in magical, alchemical, and Masonic symbolism. It is the Cherub of Water and is therefore connected with the sign of Scorpio and death. It represents the soaring of the spirit. In alchemy the White Eagle (primitive feminine state) matures into the Red Eagle (the feminine that has received and balanced the masculine force), illustrating the natural process of evolution from partiality to wholeness.

In the form of the Double-Headed Eagle, it represents mastery of east and west, life and death. Further, it is a symbol of the return of the soul beyond causality and the abyss of knowledge—represented by the sword in its talons—into the world of direct experience and understanding, symbolized by the crown and the triangle above it.

## **Elephant**

One of the most intelligent animals—and the largest land animal—the elephant is a remarkable symbol of devotion, knowledge, and compassion. In India, the elephant is worshipped as sacred to Ganesha, the son of Shiva and Parvati.

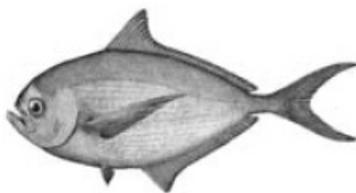
## **Elves**

Elves are divine beings, very similar to fairies. In German folklore, they were divided into Light Elves and Dark Elves, much like the division between divine angels and fallen angels, or demons. They live in locations undisturbed by human progress and use their powers to teach people about their own weakness, and to help the humble seekers of light.

## **Fish**

The fish not only appears in its natural form but also as the Vesica Piscis, an almond shape created by intersecting circles, symbolic of the divine feminine. Pisces is opposite Virgo, the virgin of the zodiac; therefore were the saviors of the previous age (the Age of Pisces) said to be of virgin birth. It is connected with regeneration, plentitude, and transcendence—as it breathes underwater (a symbol of the subconscious realm as well as of Binah, the great sea and supernal mother of the Qabalah). It is also sacred to Mercury, the messenger and transmitter of spiritual

wisdom. The giant fish that swallowed Jonah was sent by God to ensure that he did not fail in his divine mission. The Greek word for fish is *IXThUS* and is used by Christians as an acrostic for Jesus Christ Son of God. It equals 1219 by isopsephy—the Greek equivalent of gematria—the same as Poseidon, the god of the seas.



## **Frog**

In ancient Egypt, the frog represented fertility and rebirth, as people could observe frogs emerging from the life-giving Nile River, transforming from egg to tadpole to adult. The frog is thought to be a symbol of good luck in many Eastern cultures, usually depicted with coins in its mouth. Magicians of various traditions use frogs as familiar spirits for this very reason. In the fairy tales of the Western world, the frog can be the guardian of a hidden treasure, or it can be a cursed prince, hiding great beauty within an ill-formed appearance.



## **Gnomes**

Gnomes are the elemental spirits of Earth, and the north is said to be their kingdom. They are industrious and hard working, yet are notoriously greedy. Guarding hidden treasure and precious gems that lie deep in the earth, the magician enlists them in procuring wealth and learning the occult virtues of stones, metals, plants, and even a particular location.

## **Goat**

The goat is symbolic of hard work and accomplishment. It is connected with the zodiac sign of Capricorn and therefore the winter solstice, the shortest day of the year. The goat is sacred to the god Pan—the All Begetter, All Devourer—and Bacchus-Dionysus, and is thus the sacrifice slain as the universal commencement. The tearing apart and consuming of Bacchus, later celebrated by Christians as the Eucharist, is not to be confused with dispersion. The former is the reintegration of the many in the one, the latter simply being the degeneration of the relationship between reason and faith into madness. The goat symbolizes the secret power of God, called the devil in the previous age, but now recognized as the center of all that lives.

## Honey Bee and Beehive

The bee represents hard work, coordinated team effort, and knowledge of hidden treasures. Its yellow and black stripes connect it with the sun and with death, as shown in the Bible: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"(I Corinthians 15:55). The bee dies after it stings and is therefore connected with fertility as well as with the triumph of the spirit over death.

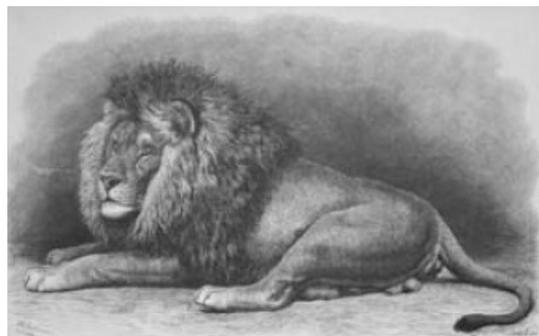
## Ibis

The ibis is sacred to Thoth, the Egyptian god of writing (possibly due to its lengthy, thin beak, which looks very similar to a stylus). It hunts for worms and insects by digging with its beak and therefore also symbolizes the search for deeper meaning and wisdom. Practitioners of yoga, who meditate while standing on one leg, often imitate the ibis. The great 1st century Jewish master Rabbi Hillel was the embodiment of the wisdom of the ibis when he explained the entire Torah while standing on one leg, with, "What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow: this is the whole Law; the rest is the explanation; go and learn."



## Lion

A complete description of the lion and his occult meaning would require not only another book, but multiple volumes. The lion is first and foremost a solar figure; he is Leo of the zodiac, the persisting flame. The lion is featured in the eighth card of the Major Arcana of the Tarot, traditionally known as Strength and more recently as Lust, as a woman (see *Star* and *Woman*) is shown subduing the beast with little effort, giving us some insight into the formula of initiation in the age of Aquarius, the direct opposite of Leo. The lion's mane is both the corona and rays of the sun. He is the active going force of nature. As the eagle was the Cherub of Water, so is the lion that of Fire, the Red Lion being the primitive, purely masculine force of alchemy. Through its marriage to the eagle, the Red Lion becomes the White Lion, the balanced male. The lion is the symbol of the Israelite tribe of Judah, from which arose the legendary King David.



## **Moon**

The moon is considered to be the mother of the philosopher's stone, and therefore of life itself, due to her influence on tides and menstrual cycles. She rules the subconscious realm and enhances psychic abilities. The moon is placed in the Sephira of Yesod (the Foundation) on the Tree of Life, and is personified as Hecate, Artemis, and all goddesses. Yet the moon has also been identified with male deities such as Khonsu, the Egyptian whose name translates as "the wandering one."

## **Ouroboros**

The *Ouroboros*, Greek for "tail-devourer," is a serpent or dragon that forms a circle by devouring its own tail. The origins of this symbol extend as far back as 4700 BC, found on human remains from that period. The philosopher Plato described it as the first living creature. The image of an Ouroboros brings to mind the perfect method and completion of the Great Work in economy and silence, known to the students of Cagliostro as the circle of necessity.



## **Pelican**

The pelican is usually depicted feeding its young with blood from its breast. Thus the pelican represents self-sacrifice and the continuation of life through generations. On the other hand, the pelican is also said to use its blood to resurrect its children after having slain them. Thus it is connected to both the solar and saturnine myths. In ancient Egypt, the pelican was a symbol of the four duties of a father toward his children—generation, education, raising, and informing children of the righteous life through his example. The pelican is associated with the Rose-Croix section of the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry.

## **Phantoms and Ghosts**

What is commonly called a ghost is, according to the secret tradition, an astral remnant or shell that has no life of its own but is instead fed by the auras of the living. Ghosts are known to the Qabalists as Qliphoth, or shells, and to the Japanese Shinto priests as hungry ghosts. The eternal and divine spirit of the deceased does not stay in the astral plane, where ghosts and phantoms are encountered, but moves on to other incarnations or realms of existence. What we perceive is the formless astral fluid of the lower Spiritual World, taking the shape of the departed. This shape and its energy manifest from our own minds.

## **Phoenix**

The phoenix is a mythical firebird that represents rebirth. Its plumage and tail are of gold, scarlet, purple, and green. Every thousand years, it builds a nest for itself out of dry twigs and ignites it, burning itself to ashes. From those ashes arises a new phoenix, reborn from the fire. The origin of this sacred bird is said to be ancient Heliopolis, the city of the Sun. (see *INRI*)



## **Ram**

The ram represents new beginnings and the rushing force of Fire. Aries, the sign of the ram, is the first sign of the zodiac. The ram is also the lamb, sent forth into the world and caught in the thicket, replacing Isaac on the sacrificial altar. John the Baptist hailed Jesus as the Lamb of God, signaling to his followers that a new age was at hand by connecting him with the spring equinox, which occurs in Aries. Just as the golden fleece of the winged ram Chrysomallos was hung on an oak—a tree sacred to Ares, the Greek god of war—so was John's "lamb" hung on the cross, the four points of which may represent IHVH, the four-letter name of the God of the Hebrews. The spirit, represented by the Hebrew letter *Shin*, also corresponds to fire or the revitalizing agent. The ram represents new life. For when the ram or lamb is hung on the sacred pole (the phallic symbol of the paternal, warring deity), we have the union of the transcendental with the mundane.

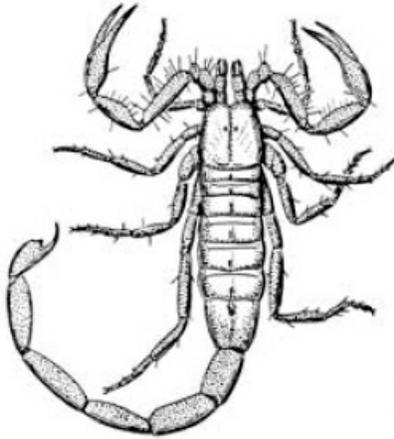
## **Salamanders**

The salamander is the spiritual creature of Fire, swimming, breathing, and directing its ferocious energy. Salamanders reign in the south, and produce the warmth by which all things live and grow. Only the best-prepared magicians have gained their complete obedience, as salamanders are by nature difficult to predict or control. If they are ready, philosophers may find instruction from the salamander regarding the fortification and strengthening of the will.

## **Scorpion**

The scorpion is a symbol of death and of poisons in general. The zodiac sign Scorpio is ruled by Mars, a fiery planet. Scorpio is also the fixed sign of the element of Water. Its method of war is therefore passive-aggressive and lacking passion, devoid of honor or desire for glory. The scorpion is said to sting itself when captured, further identifying it with death and putrefaction. The scorpion is a sexual symbol, giving its victim what is called the little death, which is much

sought after especially by initiates of the magic of light. Its sting has also been attributed to the penetration of spirit into matter.



### **Secret Chiefs**

These mysterious masters who oversee the progress of humankind rarely manifest directly, choosing instead to deliver teachings through a prophet or messenger. The founders of religions often claim to have been visited by preternatural beings—consider Moses visited by Yehova, and Muhammad by the Archangel Gabriel. In modern times, we have the visits of the Mahatmas to H. P. Blavatsky, and Aiwass to Aleister Crowley. One of the main endeavors of any esoteric system is to prepare its initiates for an interaction with these divine ministers, should they choose to make contact. Other names for the Secret Chiefs include Ascended Masters, Archangels, and Bodhisattvas.

### **Serpent**

The serpent is the most infamous creature in Western mythology. As a tempter, teacher, and savior, it helps us to understand by instructing through experience, and therefore initiation. The serpent corresponds to knowledge and rebirth by the shedding of its skin, and to the eternal tides of time with its undulations. Aaron's rod transformed into a serpent during his war with the Pharaoh's magicians, perhaps alluding to the awakening of the secret energy known as the *Kundalini*, or coiled one. The path up the Tree of Life from Malkuth to Kether is known as the path of the serpent, for treading it endows the seeker with knowledge, understanding, and truth.

### **Sphinx**

The sphinx is the guardian of the mysteries and the model upon which seekers of light must base the construction of their character. It is a creature with the front paws of a lion, the head of a man, the backside of a bull, and the wings of an eagle. These are the four Cherubim of the Elements and fixed signs of the zodiac: leo for Fire, Aquarius for Air, Taurus for Earth, and Scorpio for Water. The four powers of the sphinx, which correspond to the elements, are to Will, to Know, to Dare, and to Keep Silent. It is a dangerous and vicious creature toward the enemies of truth, but to the aspirant, its presence indicates an entry to the sanctuary of light.

### **Spider**

A great builder, the spider is sometimes seen as the Creator of the world. It is a weaver and is therefore connected with the mind, which may be compared to a net that catches our sense perceptions. A common practice is to place an artistic representation of a spider's web—known as a dream catcher—above one's bed to prevent bad dreams.

## **Star**

The star is the guiding light of the wise as they follow it to meet the savior of the universe. It is represented qabalistically by the Hebrew letter *Hé* (the meaning of which is "a window"). Hé stands for the feminine elements of Water and Earth in IHVH, the four-letter name of God. The star is depicted in the Tarot as a woman emptying two vessels of water into a river and on its bank. It is the symbol of Aquarius and therefore interacts directly with Leo as its complement. The star symbol signifies destiny and divine providence.

## **Sun**

The sun is the visible and sensible representative of our highest spiritual ideal. It provides light, heat, and therefore life to all orbiting about it. The sun shines equally on the righteous and the unrighteous, being a fair regent. It is therefore personified as Christ, Apollo, Buddha, Horus, and in its feminine form as Ishtar or Amaterasu. Indeed, practically every true deity that man has worshipped is a representation of the sun. It is father of life, the son of infinite space, the true center of ourselves, and the devourer of worlds. Corresponding to the qabalistic emanation of *Tiphareth*, or Beauty, and alchemical gold, the sun's symbol is both the hexagram and the circle with a point in its center.

## **Swan**

The swan is a symbol of transformation and beauty as well as of the life-giving powers of the sun. It is the vehicle of Adepts as they wander aimlessly throughout the universe in spiritual ecstasy. It is a symbol of faithful love, associated with the planet Venus, and is used to represent the union of worshippers with their god.

## **Sylphs**

Sylphs are the spirits of the Air and therefore correspond to the east. They are connected with fairies and other air spirits and, when properly acquainted with the magician, are great teachers of concentration and quick thinking.

## **Tortoise and Turtle**

Serving in a similar role as the Greek Atlas, the tortoise holds up the world. It is a symbol of timeless wisdom, patience, and renunciation. In the Tantric poems of ancient Bengal, the mystic path of meditation is referred to as milking the turtle.

## **Undines**

Water spirits, or Undines, are pure beings, either bringing joy and pleasure or debauchery. They rule the west and can serve worthy seekers in the development of their intuition and empathy.

## **Unicorn**

The unicorn, a mythical horse with a single horn protruding from its head, is one of the most

elusive creatures of the spiritual realm. It is said to willingly appear only to virgins, attracted to purity and innocence. Unicorns are attributed to the god Jupiter and to Chesed, the emanation of mercy on the qabalistic Tree of Life, its horn being an antidote for any poison.

## **The Woman**

The woman is the gate of life, the joy of existence, and the soul in her purest state. Woman is the symbol of the world soul, of the conscience of kings, and of providence. She is the mother of God, in whom all seek comfort, sustenance, and light. Yet being charged with so immense a duty, she has no god herself but that inner light—with whom she must part in pain, feed from her breast, and carry in her arms, while giving all of herself unconditionally. Venus, Isis, Mary, Babalon, and Sophia are all reflections of her mystery, names that many a High Priest has uttered in fervent prayer. As the temptress of the faithful, she provides the ultimate test of loyalty to the regent of the universe, her lightest touch humbling the strong and proud. She is wisdom, beauty, and understanding, the great mother, the whore, and the virgin, so that the world might have true divinities of flesh and blood to carry the banner of liberty and breathe life into the yet unmanifested dreams of the prophets.



## Objects

*Always the symbolic must follow the actual, if it is to have reference and meaning, and the real is ever the basis of the ideal.*

—*The Builders* by Joseph Fort Newton

Occultists are builders, craftsmen, and fashioners of great realms beyond the scope of the average mortal. Their tools are not only the means by which they may do their will; they are instructors that impart invaluable knowledge about how to discover the secrets of nature.

### Altar

The altar is the place of sacrifice and the earthly position of our object of worship, usually being an elevated table or stone. It represents the world as a plane upon which we live, work, love, and die—the foundation of our existence. Altars may vary in size and arrangement depending on the particular tradition of the ritualist or the forces being invoked.

### Anointing Oil

The practice of anointing with oil was already ancient in the time of Jesus. The magician uses it to consecrate a talisman or ritual object. To consecrate something is to set it apart for the purpose for which it is meant. The oil is attributed to the element of Fire and is a liquid representation of the astral fluid.

### Apron

The apron worn by Freemasons is made of lambskin and represents the spiritual purity required to undertake the Great Work. In the Hebrew creation story, it is written, "And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons" (Genesis 3:7). The dawning of the apron therefore is a gesture symbolizing our eyes being opened, acknowledging our faults and being ready to work on them. The Egyptian pharaoh wore a version of an apron called a *shemset* that, along with other official regalia, communicated to his subjects both the divine and temporal power wielded by his office.

### Ark

The two most famous arks in the West and Near East are that of Noah and that of Moses. Noah's ark saved the physical life—the *Nephesh*, or animal soul, of qabalistic occult anatomy. Moses' Ark of the Covenant served to preserve the law, man's *Ruach*, the intellect, and the means by which the lower nature may be brought into conscious servitude of the higher. One important aspect of both these stories is that though the directive to build the containers came from God, men built them. It is through the effort of humanity that its wisdom is preserved; we are ultimately responsible for our evolution. The goal of the mystic is to write the divine commandments upon his heart.



## **Bell**

The bell, when rung, represents the sound of the entire universe, much like the word *AUM*. The occult tradition teaches that the sense of hearing corresponds with the spiritual sense, and in the moment the bell sounds, the mind of the Adepti comes to a complete halt. This practice is also part of Zen, which emphasizes living in the present moment and stilling the mind.

## **Bow and Arrow**

The bow and arrow are symbols of Sagittarius, the Centaur/ Archer, and of masculine and feminine forces in the act of creation. It is the weapon of the heavenly hunter, who chases the sun in the form of the sacred deer. An arrow shot by a hunter, who mistook him for a deer, mortally wounded Krishna, the Hindu savior deity. The bow and arrow are a manifestation of the Holy Grail and Sacred Lance. In the mystical language, death is symbolic of union; thus the bow and arrow unite strength and skill to bring forth ecstasy.

## **Caduceus**

The winged wand depicting twin serpents entwined is known as the Caduceus, or *kerykeion* in Greek. It is the principle tool of Hermes—also called Mercury—the messenger of the gods. Among his other duties are the protection of gamblers, thieves, and merchants, and the guiding of the dead. The staff of Hermes symbolizes the path of the kundalini energy up the three main channels along and within the spinal column. The central channel known as the Shushumna is depicted as the rod, while the two snakes are the left and right channels of positive and negative polarity called the Ida and Pingala. The open wings at the top of the staff represent the liberation of the soul that accompanies the attainment of wisdom, and they also form the shape of the cross. Hermes' position as Logos, or divine word, connects him with the other saviors of the ancient world who were guides in the afterlife and were represented by the cross or other phallic objects.



## **Candle and Lamp**

The candle's role in the secret tradition is to serve as a symbol of spiritual light. Just as the saints

and Adepts of the past manifested the light, perhaps through the candle we can again receive their guidance and strength. The candle, like a human being, consumes air in order to survive, and in fulfilling its purpose, consumes itself. Extinguishing a candle using the universal force, or astral fluid, is a method of learning to control its currents and is still widely practiced by students of the occult arts.

The lamp, though very similar to the candle in its capacity to give light, is different in two fundamental ways: it hangs above the altar, removed from the everyday accidents of life, yet life needs its illumination to see and work by; and it does not extinguish itself through use. It may be refilled or even built to burn perpetually. Therefore, the lamp is the fount of spiritual inspiration, while the candle is a single flame that is among us, temporary and beautiful.

## **Circle**

The circle is the entire universe to mystics, as it is at once limited in size, infinite in length, and perfectly balanced. It is the physical body, or *Asana* (yogic posture), where they have chosen to work and focus all energies. Representing the horizon line as well as the disks of the sun and the earth, the circle was used by ancient philosophers to demonstrate the cyclical nature of existence. In medieval Christian art, God uses a compass (see *Square and Compasses*) to draw a circle that depicts the creation of the world. Thus magicians invoke the highest ideals within their own circles, gaining a vision of the Lord.

## **Cross**

The cross, commonly understood to be a predominantly Christian symbol, has been used by nearly every religion and civilization to represent the intersection of divinity and humanity. It is a symbol of regeneration and the persistence of life in the face of overwhelming odds, as well as the intersection of the four elements, representing the fifth element or Spirit. A paradox that must be resolved by each aspirant is that the cross is used to slay the savior of the world and yet represents eternal life. Also appearing at times as a stake, a tree, or—in the case of Odysseus—the mast of a ship, every savior has been nailed, tied, or otherwise restricted to the cross. The savior deities are solar, their lives and deeds representing the path of the sun.

The sun's daily westward journey corresponds to the horizontal line of the cross, the natural course of a person's life. Its north to south seasonal movement, represented by the cross's vertical line, instructs initiates in the spiritual life of humanity moving through each sign of the zodiac. The cross is also seen as the balance of justice: thus, the crucified savior is also a symbol of Aries and Libra, where the spring and vernal equinoxes occurred in the previous age.

## **Cup or Chalice**

The cup represents aspirants' understanding as well as their emotional intelligence. In Christian mythology, the Holy Grail is sometimes a cup that was used to catch the blood of Jesus when he was pierced by the lance of a Roman soldier while hanging from the cross. This container of holy blood, or the life essence, has also been connected with the womb—the divine feminine—and with the element of Water. To drink from the same cup is a symbol of being united in purpose and in destiny, sharing both the riches and the misfortune that may arise from a certain act.



## **Dagger**

The dagger is a weapon of destruction and symbolizes the mind of aspirants, actively aimed at disciplining themselves. The dagger is attributed to the element of Air and to alchemical Mercury. It cuts into the pantacle in order to engrave the karma of the Adepti and is also used to cut into the magician himself, opening him to the rays of the sun and releasing his blood into the universal stream.

## **Eye in the Triangle**

The eye in the triangle, or the All-Seeing Eye, represents the omniscience of divinity. The triangle is the formation of the plane in Euclidean geometry and represents the ideal from which the actual flows forth. The eye is the Hebrew letter *Ayin*, sacred to Capricorn and in the Tarot Atu XV, the Devil. Thus, it is the vision of all, the highest and the lowest. Seekers of hidden wisdom develop this in themselves, taking care not to neglect truth lest they become unbalanced in their climb to the summit. The three points of the triangle represent the three alchemical powers of Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury, and the three pillars of the Tree of Life. The eye is neither the right eye nor the left, but the Third Eye located in the center of the forehead, which grants aspirants the ability to see beyond the obvious.



## **Hexagram**

The hexagram is a six-pointed star formed by two equilateral triangles. It symbolizes both the harmonization of masculine and feminine forces and the energies of the six planets that the ancients believed surrounded the sun. In many Hindu sects, this image is called the *Sadkona Yantra*, which, if meditated upon, leads to the unification and balance of Man and God. It is

referred to in Freemasonry as the interlocking Deltas, the Greek letter *Delta* corresponding with love and union. In the qabalistic Tree of Life, the hexagram is placed in the sixth emanation of God, known as Tiphareth, or Beauty.

## **Holy Mountain**

Mystics have compared initiation as a path up a perilous mountain. The *Mons Philosophorum* (the philosopher's mountain) is beset with dangers that can either temper or disintegrate the character of aspirants. There are traditionally two mysteries associated with the Holy Mountain. There is the mystery at its summit and the averse within its deep cave. To scale the mountain is to be at the height of one's powers, well above the mundane world, touching the heavenly realms. To travel in toward its center is to carry out the alchemical formula of VITRIOL, an acronym for *Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem*, meaning "visit the interior of the earth and by rectifying, find the hidden stone." The mountain stirs the heart of pilgrims; a seemingly infinite climb lies before them, yet their Holy Guardian Angel beckons them to take the next step.

## **Incense**

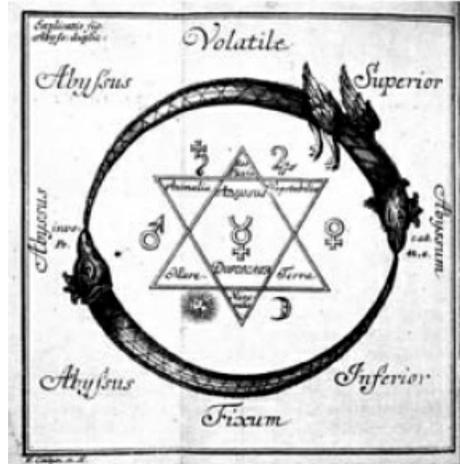
Incense is used as a sacrifice to the gods, but it is also a way for spirits to manifest on our plane of reality. Different entities require their own recipe of incense to be used during rituals sacred to them. These recipes are usually constructed using the laws of occult correspondence, but they are also sometimes delivered to a prophet directly, such as the incense spoken of in the Book of the Law, dictated to Aleister Crowley in 1904. "For perfume mix meal and honey and thick leavings of red wine: then oil of Abramelin and olive oil, and afterward soften and smooth down with rich fresh blood" (*Liber AL vel Legis* 3:23).

Incense is prayer itself, carried to the heavens by the holy flame. The censer where the incense burns is similar in shape to the chalice. Yet just as the chalice is a vehicle of baptism with Water, so is the censer the vessel of baptism by Fire.

## **Lamen and Sigil**

Sacred signatures are an important component of mystical and magical culture. They represent the essence of the energies worked with because, according to the occult tradition, the world was created with words. The act of writing was, to our ancient ancestors, considered to be magic in and of itself. Not only could the priest of the primitive religion convert sounds into shapes, but he could also reverse the process, communicating with people over great distances of time and space, as well as receive cryptic messages from the spiritual realms. This ability to leave information outside of ourselves, to record events and ideas, is and has always been a truly magical skill.

The *lamen* is a plate worn over the heart bearing aspirants' unique symbols, which communicate their understanding of the Great Work. They represent faith in the unknown through knowledge of the known. The most famous example of a lamen depicts the Seal of King Solomon, used in medieval magic. As the great master of the previous age, now known to us by the name Jesus, said to his disciples, "Know what is in front of your face, and what is hidden from you will be disclosed to you."



The *sigil* is the signature of a particular spirit, used to conjure and control it. It is on this principle that the stories of having to sign an infernal document when you sell your soul to the devil are based. Sigils are featured extensively in medieval Jewish lore, many times being the representation of an angel or demonic spirit. To know something's name is to have control over it. This is why, when asked his name by Moses, God said "*Eheieh asher Eheieh*," meaning "I am that I am." The meaning here is that there is no name or distinction in pure being, and therefore no way to control it. The sigil of a spirit, on the other hand, is its true name, and with the proper focus, magicians can learn to compel it to serve them in their quest for spiritual enlightenment.

## Lance

The lance that pierced the side of Christ as he hung on the cross is known as the Holy Lance or the Spear of Destiny. It is a phallic symbol and is therefore very similar to the cross itself in mystical correspondence. The cross, however, is static, as it is rooted in the earth, while the lance is mobile, carried in the hands of warrior priests. Upon the cross is hung the savior of the world, the Grand Hierophant of an age when the mystical death was the climax of spirituality and the second death in the fires of hell was the consequence of failure in its attainment. The savior of the new age does not hang in one place, but is truly in each and every individual—dynamic and virile. He has caught the lance that injured the old king and, through its virtue, has healed the lands and transmuted all sorrow into joy.



## Masonic G

The Masonic G is normally displayed within a square and compasses, and it is said to stand for Geometry, God, and the Great Architect. Its shape suggests the swirling growth of life, spiraling outward from a central point. Many have taken this feature of the G to be symbolic of the Fibonacci sequence, a mathematical procession of numbers marking growth and development along logical, predictable lines. Paul Foster Case attributed it to the Hebrew letter *Gimel*, which, according to qabalistic tradition, represents the camel, a creature that can carry us across the desert abyss that separates the ideal from the actual. Gimel's numerical equivalence in gematria

is the number 3, identifying the Great Architect with the holy trinity of Father, Mother, and Child. (See also *Squares and Compasses*.)



### **Obelisk**

The obelisk is a four-sided, pointed pillar, which represents a captured solar ray. These pillars support the heavens, humankind's highest aspiration. Each tapering to a point, they symbolize the journey of the spirit from the gross to the subtle (see *Pyramid*). The obelisk's shape connects it with other symbols, such as the pillar, the wand, and the arrow. They were placed in pairs at the entrance of ancient temples and are used today to memorialize and commemorate.

### **Pantacle**

The pantacle is a circular disc made of pure beeswax or gold and represents the body of initiates, the element of Earth, and the bread of the Eucharist. "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, 'Take, eat; this is my body'" (Matthew 26:26). The pantacle is also the body of knowledge of initiates, symbolizing all that they have and the matter from which all things are built. When properly prepared, the pantacle represents their Karmic momentum, ensuring the success of their magical operation because it has been made inevitable by their previous actions. The pantacle is the game piece in the game of cause and effect.



### **Pyramid**

The pyramid has five sides: the four elements supported by the foundation of spirit. This is in contrast to the orthodox view that the spirit floats above the material world. The apex of the pyramid represents the transition of ever-subtler energies into nothingness. Cradled between nothingness and spirit, the Egyptian concept of the universe seems more akin to the writings of

atomic scientists than to the superstitious beliefs attributed to them by some modern Egyptologists. The pyramid is said to be a tomb by some and a place of initiation by others. The secret tradition holds that it is the former because it is the latter, and vice versa. In the religion of the ancient land of Khem, candidates for initiation had to die in order to find eternal life. These teachings were passed down through the ages and would eventually become the cornerstone of the Greek mystery schools and Christianity.

## **Pentagram**

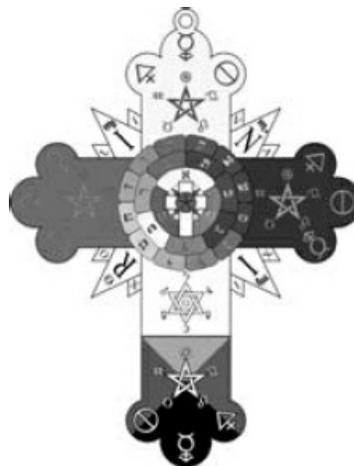
The pentagram is a five-pointed star symbolic of humanity and the microcosm, literally meaning "the small order or world." Made by drawing five straight lines, it contains the mathematical expression known as the Golden Ratio. It represents the entire spectrum and evolution of nature's hidden workings from dense matter to subtle force, the five points standing for the Neo-Pythagorean elements of Fire, Water, Air, Earth, and Spirit. The pentagram is also called a pentalpha, the five points (*pent*) connecting the phases and densities of the alchemical first matter (*alpha*). It has been used a symbol for the five wounds of Jesus Christ, and therefore the stigmata. Used for protection against evil spirits by gaining command over them as well as invoking angelic powers, the pentagram is a recurring element in mystical-magical culture.

## **Robe**

Magicians' robes represent their skin, the outer manifestation of their innermost purpose. The color of each magician's robe depends on the type of forces invoked; these colors are traditionally derived from their correspondence in qabalistic doctrine. Robes are the barrier between magicians and the forces they seek to master, as well as an announcement to these forces of their intent to accomplish the Great Work.

## **Rosy-Cross**

The Rosy-Cross—or Rose and Cross, or Cross of Gold and Ruby Rose—is a beautiful symbol of the union of male and female. It has many forms ranging from the complex lamen of the Adeptus Minor of the Order of the Golden Dawn to a line drawing of a cross atop a circle. One of the earliest forms of the Rosy-Cross is the *Ankh* of the ancient Egyptians, their symbol for the concept of life. The Golden Cross is symbolic of the sun and of the purified body, while the Ruby Rose is the blood, bringing new life.



For most people, the concepts of life and death are understood as opposites, with a continual struggle wherever they meet. The Rosy-Cross teaches initiates that life and death are events on a continuum extending infinitely in both directions, the rose of ecstasy blooming on the cross of experience and work. The cross is fixed, like our inherited destiny, and the rose blossoming thereon is the dynamic growth stemming from the choices we make with what we receive.

Sometimes the Rosy-Cross is simply a red cross, symbolizing the mark of blood that keeps out the Angel of Death. It is connected with the mark of Cain and therefore with all initiation, knowledge, and protection. The Knights Templar, believed by some to have brought back to Europe the secrets of the Holy Grail and King Solomon's Temple, wore this style of the cross.

## **Scroll**

The scroll is not only a symbol of learning, but also of the method in which knowledge is imparted and preserved. It is the Promethean tube, which acts as a medium through which the holy fire, or *YOD*—the sacred seed letter of the Hebrew alphabet and the first letter in the name of God—can pass. Initiates learn to study the sacred scrolls, that they might siphon divine law into the world.

## **Square**

The shape of the square represents matter—and limitation. The squaring of the circle is symbolic of the union of matter and spirit. Its four corners are the cardinal directions and the classical elements. In Japanese mysticism, the square forms the foundation of the elemental pagoda and corresponds directly with the element of Earth.

## **Square and Compasses**

The square and compasses is probably the most commonly known image used by Freemasons. They form a shape very similar both in meaning and appearance to the hexagram. The square points downward, representing principles, virtues, and the physical world. The pair of compasses point upward, symbolizing the Spiritual World as well as the mind's ability to set goals, accept restrictions, and create a balanced environment in which to accomplish the Great Work.

When the compasses are covered by the square, the mind of the apprentice is still in training and restricted by matter. Later as apprentices grow into a Fellow Craft, the tools are interlaced, representing the balanced state they have attained. The Master Mason's emblem places the compasses atop the square, a sign of the freedom masters have learned to accept and embody. This union of opposite ends of the spectrum of being produces a complete view of reality. (See also *Masonic G.*)

## **Stalk of Wheat**

According to reports of historians, at the climax of the Eleusinian mysteries in ancient Greece, the High Priest would raise into the air a single stalk of wheat. In its tip is the seed of new life, which when buried seems to die but sprouts in due season and represents the continuous and cyclical nature of existence. Wheat corresponds to the sun, due to its color, phallic shape, and apparent resurrection. The seed, like the sun, however, does not die or perish in the earth, nor does it lay dormant, but continues to grow and change away from the sight of the worshippers. The darkness of night is the shadow of the earth as half of it turns away from the sun, so too,

perhaps, is the darkness we perceive in death.



## **Sword**

The sword is a symbol of military authority, discipline, and the enforcement of law. The iron ore that is refined into a steel blade is sacred to Mars and is attributed to the elements of Fire and Air. The sword is used to battle the demonic hosts encountered by magicians on their inward journey. The Hebrew letter *Zayin* means "sword," yet is attributed to the Lovers of the Tarot, for unless the sword is wielded in the name of love, its power becomes the death-dealing tyranny of fanaticism. The Lovers are also Cain and Abel of the book of Genesis, and in certain legends, Cain is thought to have been a blacksmith, further connecting this composite symbol with the sword. The sword is the dagger turned outward, just as the dagger is the sword used on oneself. The path of creation and emanation leading down the Tree of Life is known as the path of the flaming sword, which guards the Tree from the profane.

## **Sword and Balances**

The sword and balances are usually depicted in the hands of angels. The sword of vengeance must only be used alongside the balance of justice. To do otherwise would be to establish tyranny. Likewise, the judgment of reason must be enforced by action, or the tyranny of the weak and their perpetual victim hood will infect and drain the world of its strength. The sword is sacred to Mars and the scales to Venus, ruler of Libra, illustrating the theme of balanced action inherent in the symbol.

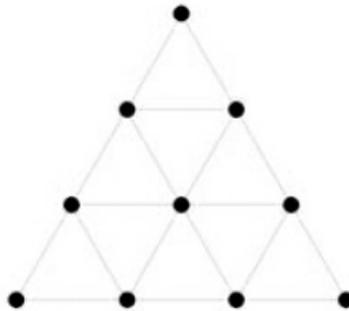


## Temple

The true temple of the spirit is the universe itself, also understood by initiates to be the body of Man. Any other temple must be built according to the plans laid forth in the book of nature if God is to dwell within it. The Temple of Solomon is perhaps the most famous of the ancient temples and has inspired religious movements and philosophical speculations for over two thousand years, most notably among the Freemasons and Knights Templar. As a reflection of the builders' understanding of divine order, temples signify the belief that uncommonness or holiness exists and surpasses the mundane, and that there is that which is not moved or swayed despite the turmoil of terrestrial existence.

## Tetractys

The Tetractys is an upward triangular figure consisting of ten dots arranged in four rows. The uppermost row has one dot, the second has two, and so on. This symbol was of supreme importance to the mystical system of Pythagoras. The sum of the four rows being ten, these numbers were interpreted by the Pythagoreans as reestablishing unity in the decimal, after the initial dispersion of the Monad, thus creating the material world. The Tetractys is the perfect hieroglyph of the tetrad as a process of manifestation and is therefore related to divine order and authority. Each row also represents a divine world or plane of existence symbolized by the four elements as well as the Four Worlds of the Qabalah.



## Wand

The wand is the will of magicians. It is phallic, the source of all creation. The wand's construction and size varies greatly depending on the nature of practitioners and their system. The staff of Aaron is a type of wand, as is the caduceus of Hermes. Both can manifest the will of the owner, and both are connected with serpents. The qabalistic teaching that the path up the Tree of Life is known as the path of the serpent, is a clear instruction in the nature and purpose of the will in occultism.

## Wheel

The wheel is a symbol of change, reincarnation, and good fortune. In Buddhism, it is known as the *dharmachakra*, or the "wheel of the law," and refers to the cyclical nature of sorrow and existence.



## The Word: Formula of the Spirit

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

—John 1:1

According to the secret tradition, the power of words far surpasses the wildest imaginings of the uninitiated. To the Adepti, a word can reveal a magical, alchemical, or philosophical formula, can conceal a seemingly unrelated teaching through the use of a cipher, or can cause apparent miraculous occurrences by simply uttering it. There are some words that are considered so powerful and holy that they may not be uttered at all, but passed to students in clever riddles and cryptic sayings.

### AUM

*AUM* is the most sacred word of the Indian religions; it is said to be the sound of the entire universe. It is a one-syllable word containing three components that represent birth, life, and death—therefore representing the unity of the Hindu Trinity of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the sustainer, and Shiva the destroyer. To pronounce this word fully is to go into silence. The formula of *AUM* differs from that of *IAO* in that the former is a pure representation of the mystic path to total emancipation from cyclical existence, the latter being the cyclical and regenerative process itself.

### ARARITA

*ARARITA* is the notariqon of the Hebrew phrase *Achad Rosh Achdotho Rosh Ichudo Temu rahzo Achad*, "One is his beginning; one is his individuality; his permutation is one." It corresponds to the hexagram and asserts the unity of God that can be found in the apparent opposites found in creation. (See also *VITRIOL*.)

### AZOTH

The Stone of the Wise, the Medicine of Metals, and the Universal Solvent are said to be different descriptions of that one substance known to Paracelsus as *AZOTH*. It is the very spirit of life that pervades the universe. The letters are the first and last of the great alphabets of antiquity that have most influenced Western civilization—Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. It represents the dissolution of difference through the completion and the maturation of the spiritual impulse. Each letter corresponds with a Tarot card and path on the Tree of Life; when taken together, they describe the way in which the One becomes the Many.



A: Aleph, The Fool, Air

The limitless light, or *Ain Soph Aur*, becomes the stage upon which the play of creation takes place.

Z: Zayin, The Lovers, Gemini

The formless is divided in polarity, retaining its infinitude and airy nature.

O: Ayin, The Devil, Capricorn

The synthesis and direction of these energies with intelligence seems to be the development of evil.

Th: Tau, The World, Earth/Saturn

The volatile is now fixed, the apparent restriction being due to the specialization of the original force in every possible direction.

It is important to note that the first and last letter correspond with elements, and the middle two with zodiac signs. Also of importance is the fact that the two pairs correspond with each other, Gemini being a mutable sign of Air, and Capricorn the cardinal sign of Earth, ruled by Saturn. The fourfold nature of the word connects it with *IHVH*, *TARO*, and other four-letter formulas.

## IHVH

יהוה

These four letters, *Yod Hé Vav Hé*, are the Tetragrammaton, or the great four-letter word. It is one of the many names for God found in the sacred scriptures of the Hebrews and has been pronounced as *Yehova* or *Yaweh* by various teachers. Each Hebrew letter has an elemental attribution; taken together in this word, they describe the way in which energy is fixed into solidity. The shape of the letter *Yod* suggests a single flame, and so it is said to be the primal and secret Fire, personified as a king, a virile and potent man in his prime. The first *Hé* represents the element of Water and the queen-mother of the universe. *Vav* is the prince, son, and the element of Air. The final *Hé* is the daughter, representing Earth and matter. If this word is properly pronounced, it unites aspirants with God and dispels all illusion.

## INRI

This is not a word, but an acronym from the Latin translation of the plaque placed on the cross of Jesus by Pilate, as told in the Gospel of John. INRI stands for *Jesus Nazarene Rex Judaeorum*, or "Jesus the Nazarene, King of the Jews." The medieval alchemists attributed to INRI the sentence *Igne Natura Renovatur Integra*, meaning "Through Fire is Nature Renewed," indicating the proper method of transmuting metals and achieving self-realization. Later, magicians used the Qabalah to transform INRI into the name of the secret god of the Gnostics, IAO. First, the letters are replaced by their Hebrew equivalents, *Yod Nun Resh Yod*. Then their astrological correspondences are placed in the order they appear Virgo, Scorpio, Sol, Virgo. Finally, the Egyptian god names representing these correspondences are noted, being Isis for Virgo, Apophis-Typhon for Scorpio, and Osiris as Sol. Isis is nature in its original state. She is consumed and destroyed by Apophis-Typhon, only to be renewed by Osiris, the sun. Isis, Apophis-Typhon, and Osiris together form the word *IAO*, encompassing the entire process of birth, decay, and rebirth.



## **ShMA**

*ShMA* translates as "listen" from Hebrew, and is the first word in the Jewish prayer *Shema Israel YHVH Eloheinu YHWH Achad*, meaning "Listen, O Israel: the Lord is our God, the Lord is One" taken from portions of Deuteronomy and Numbers. *ShMA* can also be translated as "accept"; in both cases connecting the word with the opening of the mind in order to receive divine inspiration. The three letters *Shin*, *Mem*, and *Aleph* are the mother letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and traditionally correspond with the elements of Fire, Water, and Air, representing Thesis, Antithesis, and Synthesis. In some arrangements of the paths on the Tree of Life, they form the middle pillar leading from Malkuth to Kether.

## **Taro**

This word appears on the Wheel of Fortune card in A. E. Waite's interpretation of the Tarot put forth in his book *The Pictorial Key to the Tarot*. TARO is reformulated into four other words: *ROTA*, "the wheel"; *TORA*, "the law"; *ORAT*, "speech"; and *ATOR*, relating to Hathor the Egyptian goddess of love and the sun at midday. With these words, Waite constructs the sentence "The Wheel of Taro speaks the Law of Ator."

## **VITRIOL**

*Visita Interiora Terrae Rectificando Invenies Occultum Lapidem* translates as "visit the interior of the earth and by rectifying, find the hidden stone." This alchemical acronym expresses the fundamental methodology of the secret tradition. Where shall we look for the light? "Neither

shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21). To look in the interior of the earth is to see past superficialities and to seek answers through experience. The seven letters in *VITRIOL* also represent different stages of personal development or phases of the spiritual alchemical work symbolized by the seven sacred planets.

V

(Mars): The spiritual impulse first manifests in seekers as the need to conquer suffering.

I

(Saturn): Aspirants then separate themselves from the world, undertaking a hermitage. It is their individual time in the wilderness.

T

(Jupiter): Ideas of mundane and spiritual are combined. Seekers now achieve a synthesis of the opposing drives to escape the cycle of rebirth and to aid others along the path.

R

(Sol): Adepts return from seclusion and represent the spiritual light in a tangible vehicle; they lead by example.

I

(Mercury): They begin to channel the new force into the world as miracles. Adepts become pointers of the way, guides.

O

(Luna): The conscious mind is unable to produce the effects it once could as seekers are drawn closer to the Holy Guardian Angel. They must become totally passive and renounce all previous spiritual attainment.

L

(Venus): Complete union with the divine occurs in silence—perfected and balanced. Each master has become the way.

## Part three

# Secret Societies and Holy Orders

## Gatekeepers of the Hidden Wisdom

*The very essence of Gnosis is the rejection of intercessors between Man and God. Gnosis is thus at odds with all power structures.*

*—The Templars and the Assassins*

by James Wasserman



The world of secret societies is wrought with intrigue and illumination, lofty ideals, and at times sinister plots. In this world are ancient mysteries, royal bloodlines, and magical rituals too powerful to be shown to anyone improperly prepared. The occult brotherhoods maintain that there is indeed strength in numbers, but their greatest advantage has always been secrecy.

There are many kinds of secret societies. From the criminal and political to the spiritual to the social, they all share commonalities such as secret words, symbols, and member anonymity. At times it is difficult to say which type of society is which, for as with any group, members can act independently based on their own beliefs or self-interests. However, the majority of mystical secret societies concern themselves with the spiritual and moral welfare of humanity, helping people to gain greater liberty along the way.

In this section, some of the most influential spiritual societies have been organized by the modality in which they transmitted the light of Gnosis. Freemasons built the foundations of modern democratic republics. Mystics, magicians, and alchemists transmuted the base, the misunderstood, and the discarded into spiritual and material wealth. Holy Warriors, however, found the discipline of steel to be a sure path to victory over enemies of the faith, and God.

Behind the well-guarded doors of these secret fraternities, candidates for initiation may be subjected to a host of challenges. These trials are meant to instruct and to elevate their consciousness by leading them from belief through knowledge and into experience. To educate, not indoctrinate, has always been the goal of true initiation. Gradually, candidates learn to let go of fear and to embrace courage, to harmonize opposites, and to guide others on the path of light.



## Freemasons

*FREEMASONRY is a moral institution, established by virtuous men, with the praiseworthy design of recalling to our remembrance the most sublime TRUTHS in the midst of innocent and social pleasures,—founded on LIBERALITY, BROTHERLY LOVE, and CHARITY.*

—*General Ahiman Rezon and Freemason's Guide* by Daniel Sickels

In 1717 the first Masonic Grand Lodge was created in England; this is the earliest record of the formal existence of what we know today as Freemasonry, but its origins run much deeper into history. They were the builders of ancient temples and medieval cathedrals and have also been the architects of revolutions and the downfall of tyrants. Part of their power came from their ability to travel throughout all of Europe, a luxury few non-nobles could claim. This freedom of movement meant that for most masons, the guild was the only constant authority, and being a democratic meritocracy, its members enjoyed an existence almost entirely independent of the feudal or ecclesiastical order. This helped to instill a sense of self-sufficiency and, perhaps more importantly, self-governance in the Masters of the Craft.

For centuries, Freemasons have guarded the secrets of initiation, the mysteries, and the institution. Freemasonry, like all great schools of initiation, uses allegory to instruct worthy candidates in the proper use of their time on earth. Freemasonry defines *proper* as that which contributes toward the betterment of society and the deepening of fraternal bonds.

There are many rites considered to be Masonic. Here is an overview of the most popular and infamous of these rites.

### Blue Lodge

The Blue Lodge is where the first three degrees of Freemasonry are bestowed, representing youth, adulthood, and old age. These degrees are also known by the names of Ancient Craft, or Symbolic Masonry, and are dedicated to Saint John the Apostle and Saint John the Divine. The Blue Lodge rituals tell the story of the legendary architect Hiram Abiff and the initial work of erecting of King Solomon's Temple.

Within the lodge are the three greater lights—the Square, the Compass, and the Volume of the Sacred Law—and the three lesser lights—taper candles that represent the sun, the moon, and the worshipful Master. The seat of the Worshipful Master is in the east, representing the rising sun.

### The First Degree or Entered Apprentice

The first degree is known as the Entered Apprentice, in which candidates are initiated, or entered, into the lodge. They are led in blindfolded, symbolic of their ignorance of the workings of the lodge. They affirm that they are free and that of their own free will they seek admission into freemasonry. They take their first step in the journey from the west to east, a path symbolic of the medieval European pilgrims who traveled to Jerusalem in search of spiritual illumination. It is only after taking oaths to keep secret what they learn that the candidates are allowed to see the lodge, symbolic of the ground floor of Solomon's Temple. In this degree, they are instructed to strip away the inessential aspects of their life and are guided in the importance of balancing

work, refreshment, prayer, and sleep.

### **The Second Degree or Fellow Craft**

In the Fellow Craft degree, Masons are passed through the middle stage of life—manhood. They are again brought in blindfolded and once again state their desire to progress in the craft. In this degree, they are passed, moving farther toward the east. The Craftsmen, as the initiates are referred to, are shown the way to the second chamber of King Solomon's Temple—with special significance given to the three stages of life, the five senses, and the seven liberal arts, each considered to be an important step along the path to the chamber. Within the middle chamber, Craftsmen become entitled to receive their wages, symbolizing the fruits of the craft itself, and are taught the value of hearing, speaking, and guarding truth.

### **The Third Degree or Master Mason**

In the third degree, the Craftsmen are raised, becoming Master Masons. They are received in a similar way as before, but now their chests are bare, representing an open and honest heart. They are shown the Sanctum Sanctorum, or the Holy of Holies in King Solomon's Temple. This degree pertains to old age, dying, and to brotherly love. Whereas the Entered Apprentices were occupied with learning and the Craftsmen with working, Master Masons aim to reflect on, and continue, the mysteries of Freemasonry.

During their initiation, candidates play the part of the murdered master architect, Hiram Abiff. Hiram was the only man who knew the Master's Word, which held the highest secrets of the Masonry. With his death, this Word was lost. The Word of the Master Mason was changed to be the first words uttered when the body of Hiram Abiff was found. Candidates are raised with the new word and the grip of the lion's paw, symbolic of the sun, and the bond of brotherly love. The new Word was to be used until the Lost Word could be recovered by subsequent generations of Masons. Among other things, Freemasonry is the search for the Lost Word of the Master Hiram Abiff.



## Magicians, Mystics, and Alchemists

*If men were not allowed to use sympathetic words, nor the name of the MOST HIGH, it certainly would not have been revealed to them; and what is more, the Lord would not help where they are made use of. God can in no manner be forced to intercede where it is not his divine pleasure.*

—*Pow-Wows, or Long Lost Friend* by John George Hoffman

The secret of the universe, the transmutation of metals, and the elevation of humanity to the divine are all common goals of these Adepts. Although the various groups and cultures listed here might use different symbols or language to describe the path of the wise, they are all concerned with the same end result: the accomplishment of the Great Work.

### Ordo Templi Orientis

Ordo Templi Orientis—the Order of the Oriental or Eastern Temple—was founded in the late 19th century by an Austrian paper chemist Carl Kellner after returning from his travels in Asia. He and Theodor Reuss, the head of the revival of the Bavarian Illuminati, organized OTO in order to transmit what they called the Key to all Masonic rituals and occult sciences. This, they taught, was the initiated understanding of sexuality, symbolism, and the spiritual path. OTO's structure was modeled on various Masonic rites such as the Rites of Memphis and Mizraim, Scottish Rite, and the Swedenborgian Rite.

Reuss initiated Aleister Crowley into the preliminary degrees of OTO in 1910 and appointed him National Grand Master of Great Britain and Ireland in 1912. It was not long before Crowley's teachings on Thelema, the philosophy and spiritual method whose aim is summarized in the phrase "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," became an integral part of the new order. After Reuss's death in 1923, Crowley became the Head of OTO, continuing to align the order with Thelema and its principle document, *Liber AL vel Legis, sub figura CCXX* or *The Book of the Law*.



The modern OTO is an international Thelemic organization comprised of men and women dedicated to the study of its mysteries in preparation for the discovery and use of its Central Secret. In a similar fashion to freemasonic and other fraternities, OTO instructs its members through dramatic ritual in the form of initiations and the celebration of the Gnostic Mass, which Crowley described as the "central ceremony of its (OTO) public and private celebration."

The first three degrees of OTO as well as their prologue (0°) and pendants (IV° and P.I.), represent the six stages of incarnation and existence known as man's Path in Eternity. This section of the Order is known as Man of Earth Triad and in some ways corresponds with the Ancient and Accepted Scottish rite of Freemasonry. The scheme of this Triad is as follows:

- 0°  
Minerval: The ego or soul is expressed as a single point with no relation, or as the circumference of a circle, being a prologue to I°.
- I°  
Man and Brother or Woman and Sister: Birth is experienced as the reception of light.
- II°  
Magician: Life is studied as a chain of cause and effect.
- III°  
Master Magician: Death is voluntarily chosen as an extension of what is known as life and the unveiling of one's true self.
- IV°  
Perfect Magician: Truth is seen as a perfect relationship—balanced, complete, and exalted.
- P.I.  
Perfect Initiate: Truth is experienced as the annihilation of difference, all of which is drawn to a point and extinguished.

According to Crowley, "All subsequent Degrees of the OTO are accordingly elaborations of the II°, since in a single ceremony it is hardly possible to sketch, even in the briefest outline, the

Teaching of Initiates with regard to Life." The other two triads, known as the Lovers and the Hermit, are concerned with the government of the order, service to the lower degrees, and the development of the Magic of Light.

### **The A.∴A.∴**

The A.∴A.∴ is an initiatory order of Scientific Illuminism, introduced to the world by Aleister Crowley, George Cecil Jones, and J. F. C. Fuller. It was first announced in its official publication, *The Equinox*, in 1909. The motto of The Equinox is "The Method of Science, The Aim of Religion." The A.∴A.∴ was the vehicle through which *The Book of the Law* was initially delivered to humankind. It also provides quality instruction in the particulars of magick and mysticism. The entire system is geared toward aiding initiates in attaining "Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel." Today, the order is active in countries all over the world and continues to issue *The Equinox*, which since 1913 has also been the "Official Organ of the O.T.O."

### **The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn**

Founded in the late 19th century, the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn is a magical secret society that initiates and instructs its members in various methods of the mystic arts. Its extended membership included people who would later go on to found their own occult movements and organizations, such as Dion Fortune, A. E. Waite, Israel Regardie, Paul Foster Case, and Aleister Crowley.

The ceremonies of the Order are based on the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, qabalistic and alchemical writings, the Rosicrucian mythos, and Christian mysticism. The system of grading within the order is based on the Sephira of the qabalistic Tree of Life, dividing itself into three degrees—the outer, inner or second, and the third order.

The original organization fell to schism in the early twentieth century when members of the second order began to question the authenticity of the teachings presented by its then head, cofounder S. L. MacGregor Mathers. He had claimed that he was in contact with the Secret Chiefs of the order and attributed his new material directly to these preternatural beings. There was very little evidence to support these claims, and Mathers lost members' goodwill with his increasing tendency to exert his authority. His initiation of Crowley into the second order, a man whom the London chapter wanted nothing to do with, was the proverbial straw that broke the camel's back. After the revolt of the Adepts, Mathers continued his occult work and is still considered by many to be one of the most influential magicians of the 20th century.

Today there are many offshoots of the Golden Dawn, primarily due to the publication of their rituals by Crowley, Regardie, and others. Among the subjects taught by the Order are astrology, divination, the Hermetic Qabalah, ceremonial magic, and geomancy.

### **Martinist Order**

Louis Claude De Saint-Martin, often called the Unknown Philosopher, was one of the most illuminated men of 18th century Europe. He was a devout Christian mystic who studied the Rosicrucian documents and was a personal student of the Portuguese theurgist Martinez de Pasqually. After being initiated into and educated by a number of occult circles, Saint-Martin discarded what he called the external way. He founded a school of philosophy and mysticism based on meditation, knowledge of the Qabalah, and a less ritualized form of magic than that

which was originally practiced by de Pasqually. Saint-Martin called this new school the way of the heart. This school was to be known as the Friends of Saint-Martin, or the Martinists, and their Magister or Master is Jesus Christ.



The teachings of Saint-Martin are transmitted through his writings as well as a degree system loosely based on Freemasonry. At the time of its reconstitution by Gérard "Papus" Encausse in 1884, the Martinist Order consisted of four degrees:

- I° Associate: Candidates are introduced to the first principles of the Order.
- II° Mystic: The teachings of Saint-Martin are further explained through symbols and allegory. Candidates are prepared for initiation.
- III° Unknown Superior: Candidates are initiated, the main goal of the ceremony being to connect aspirants with an unbroken line of consciousness leading back to Saint-Martin himself.
- IV° Unknown Superior Initiator: In this degree, the Unknown Superior is given mastership of the Lodge or Heptad group.

Later the V° of Free Initiator was added that would have the power to initiate without a lodge or Heptad and could authorize the founding of such a group. This could have been due to the scarcity of operative lodges during World War II.

Like most esoteric schools, the Martinist Order has gone through many transformations and has sprouted branches that differ slightly in their interpretation of doctrine. However, it has survived to the present due to the efforts of many talented and devoted men and women. Papus led the Martinist revival in the early 20th century, and Robert Ambelain was another influential Martinist who would later write some of the most important works on the subject.

### **The Rosicrucian Brotherhood**

Allegedly founded in the early 15th century, the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross has always been concerned with spiritual advancement through scientific inquiry and with the healing of the sick. Various manifestos circulated during the 1600s, but of these three considered most

authentic are the *Fama Fraternitatis*, the *Confessio Fraternitatis*, and the *Chemical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz*. The latter depicts the founder of the Rosicrucian Order, Christian Rosenkreutz's allegorical adventure into the perilous land of personal development. Written by the German theologian Johan Valentinus Andreae, this work is a mystical-alechemical book of the dead that has served aspirants to the Great Work since its publication in 1616.

The Rosicrucian movement has influenced the entire Western mystical tradition, from magicians to freemasons, to the 20th-century New Thought commercial success of books like *The Secret*.

## **The Egyptian Rite**

Although the Egyptian Rite of Alessandro Cagliostro was intended to be a rite of Freemasonry, it is pure Theurgy, or God Working. Cagliostro had been involved in Freemasonry, Martinism, and the Illuminati, but his order was one of the first organizations to take a structured, step-by-step approach to teaching its disciples the art of Angelic Magic and other forms of practical occultism. In many ways, it was the precursor of groups such as the Golden Dawn and the OTO. It was founded in the year 1785 and consists of ninety-five degrees divided into six parts. The first set of degrees introduces students into Egyptian Masonry, which is operative, rather than the speculative Ancient and Accepted Rite of Freemasonry. The system is one of inner alchemical work that is to be constantly tested and applied. Each successive set of degrees activates the psychic centers of candidates, taking them through the various stages of alchemical transformation. The last stage corresponds with the Red Powder of Projection, said to be able to transmute base metals into gold.

## **Sufism**

The Sufis are the mystics of Islam, and perhaps the fathers of what we now recognize as Western Tantra. From Christian Rosenkreutz to Paschal Beverly Randolph, the great masters of every philosophical movement since the Crusades are said to have learned a great deal from this mystic Muslim brotherhood. The rich traditions of symbolism, poetry, dance, and fervent prayer inspired many of its followers such as Rumi and Hafiz (both are celebrated Persian poets) to create masterpieces of spiritual and erotic literature comparable to the Song of Solomon.

The connection with the Illuminist movements of the West is rooted in the insistence of masters such as Idries Shah that Sufism is not a religion but rather a science whose method offers a way to one's own religion. This scientific outlook and nonsectarian spirit has always been very attractive to true artists and intellectuals seeking the light of lights within themselves. The works of Idries Shah and other modern masters have gone a long way toward introducing the heart of Sufism to Westerners looking for the spiritual center of Islam amid violent attacks from its militant fundamentalists. The Sufis have traditionally been a voice championing a deep, personal relationship with the divine; this personal approach is so incompatible with radicalism or collectivism of any kind that, intentionally or not, they have been and will continue to be the West's best hope for a peaceful future alongside Islam.

The most recognizable group of Sufis is the Turkish Mevlevi Order, founded by Rumi. These Dervishes (literally meaning "Openers of the Doorway") practice a ceremonial whirling dance known as the *Sema*, meant to induce spiritual ecstasy among its participants. From the point of view of the Dervish, it is the world that is moving about them as they spin along like a spiral galaxy thrown out into the abyss of space. Conventional wisdom says that it is they who are

spinning. However, Dervishes understand that all of their interactions with the universe are opportunities for union with the beloved.



### **The Santeria, Palo, and Espiritismo**

When the African slaves were brought from the Congo to the New World, their masters tried everything they could to strip them of any cultural or religious identity. They partially succeeded in doing this, but they could not remove the rich magical and spiritual heritage of the Yoruba and Lukumi peoples. The cunning and resourceful slaves kept their old pantheon; they just replaced the old names and images with those of the Catholic religion of their masters. So was born Santeria, literally meaning "Saint Working," a powerful Afro-Caribbean magical practice that combines dance, music, chanting, ancestor worship, and ritualistic animal sacrifices. In pure Santeria, the forces invoked are what would be called gods by most other religions. Practitioners are called Santero, and priests, known as a Babalaos, speak directly with the spirit world and give advice to their followers. Only they are able to offer animal sacrifices to the spirits.

Alongside Santeria has flourished the two other traditions of Espiritismo, meaning "Spiritism," and Palo, which means "stick." Because of the fact that the same group of people normally practices all three, these traditions overlap in many areas.

Palo is so called because of its use of various sticks in its ceremonies, based on followers' belief that spirits reside in the branches of sacred trees. It is a separate religion from Santeria and has its own pantheon. Practitioners are known as Paleros and deal with spirits of light and darkness, keeping them in a special spirit house. Using a cauldron containing sticks, herbs, consecrated soil, and human remains to work their magic, they have the power to heal, to open the doors to worldly fame and power, and to kill. In Palo, the price for help from the gods is usually paid in the form of a sacrifice.

Palo's use of human remains in its rituals, particularly the skull, has given it a reputation for being purely an evil form of magic. However, it must be noted that the relics of Catholic churches are a kindred religious use of human remains.

In Espiritismo, there is no blood sacrifice, and practitioners usually work in groups. They hold *Misa*, which is the Spanish word for "Mass" but more closely resembles a séance. They use flowers and holy water during their ceremonies, as well as prayer and trance states to obtain information from the spirits. These all serve to connect the congregation with the Spiritual

World that they believe can directly influence material events. The object of Espiritistas, as members of this religion are known, is usually to bring about an external material end, like procuring love or healing the sick.

Today, organizations of all three systems can be found all over the world. This is due in large part to the social and political upheaval in South America and the Caribbean that has exiled large groups of its residents searching for a peaceful, prosperous life.

## **The Toltecs**

*Toltec* means "master craftsman" in Nahuatl. The ancient Central American civilization known to modern scholars as the Toltecs collapsed circa 1150 AD, having thrived as an economic and cultural force that some believe influenced regions as remote as the American Midwest. Today there are a number of Toltec masters who continue to transmit their spiritual teachings. Authors like Don Miguel Ruiz and Carlos Castaneda have written a great deal about the Toltec view of reality.



The basis of the Toltec Path is intent or will. The proper way of living in accordance with nature's laws can be studied in the life and movements of the central Toltec deity called Quetzalcoatl, the solar, feathered serpent. As in most mystery schools, the main object of worship is the sun in its spiritual sense as the center of each individual. Also of great importance is the symbolism of the different animal spirits such as the eagle, jaguar, coyote, and spider.

The Toltecs divide the population of the uninitiated into three categories: Victims, Heroes, and Villains. To the master, all of these are illusory states because they are based in a self-centered view of existence, propagating a false image. What aspirants must do in order to be worthy of receiving the secret teachings is to renounce themselves in the severest way possible. They must lose all self-importance, abandon their conventional way of life, assume personal responsibility for their actions, and finally erase their own history or reinvent themselves. In accomplishing these four tasks, the seeker becomes an Apprentice, being the first degree of the Toltec path. This stage of personal development is marked by the acquisition of what is called "Inflexible Intent."

The second degree is the Warrior. As its name implies, students are engaged in a struggle of life and death. It is their task to embody the attributes of the Warrior, such as courage, and also to learn how to bring about that true peace which is the harmonious reconciliation of opposing

forces. Toltec Warriors fight for love and are ready at any moment to give their life in its service.

The third degree is that of the Sorcerer. They learn of the power of what men call death and take an active role in manipulating reality. It is here that initiates become intimately acquainted with the spirit world and other dimensions. The various inhabitants of these other worlds of power take Sorcerers on journeys and instruct them in the use of the word to create and channel their will. Sorcerers do not see the world in an exclusive manner; they are travelers in consciousness and always seem dangerous to the uninitiated because of their dual citizenship in this world and the other.

The fourth degree is the Man of Knowledge. Here, they see how the entire universe operates and become masters of their own perceptions. For the Men of Knowledge, there is no more magic, no more spirits. There is only the divine presence that permeates and envelopes all things. These people have learned the rules that govern freedom and have submitted to them—thereby gaining true liberty.

The fifth and final degree has many names and forms, but the best of these is Silence. Initiates are at last ready to renounce the greatest illusion of life, their spiritual attainment. This stage of the Toltec path has been compared to jumping into a vast abyss, with nothing of one's self escaping. The total annihilation of illusion can only be seen by those still under its sway as insanity, destruction, or heresy; these being nothing but playthings of the innermost truth that suffers not the accidents of life, death, and thought, for these three are but outer manifestations of being.

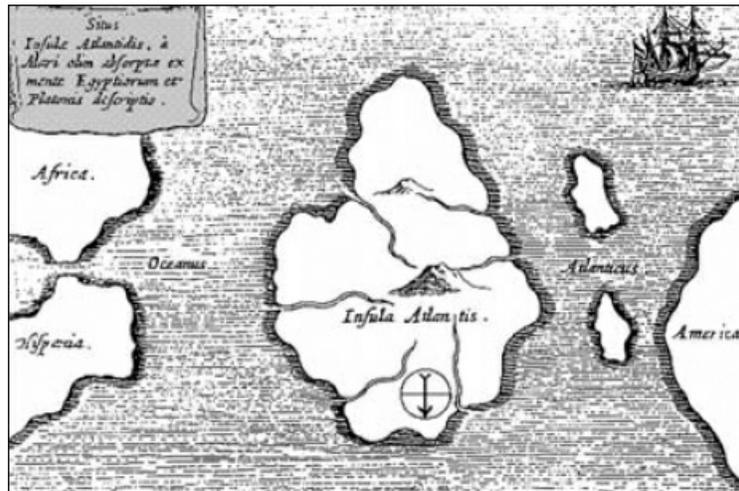
## **The Atlanteans**

The ancient continent and nation of Atlantis was first described by Plato in his dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias* as a naval superpower that ruled much of the known world, including Egypt and parts of Western Europe, a little over nine thousand years prior. Plato's account of Atlantis was as a military power that enslaved its conquered subjects and was eventually defeated by Athens, and its allies were a far cry from the Utopian kingdom written about by scholars and teachers like Francis Bacon and H. P. Blavatsky. Yet it is these accounts of an advanced civilization with magic and technology that rivaled, and in some cases exceeded our own that continues to hold the imagination of modern researchers.

Atlantis was, according to legend, destroyed in the course of one day by a catastrophic event. The exact event is unknown, but theories include the eruption of a large volcano, a meteor impact, and war. The god Poseidon, who ruled the sea and the continent of Atlantis—which he named after his eldest son, Atlas—was also responsible for earthquakes. This connection with geological phenomenon could be a clue as to exactly what the Greek priests understood about the demise of Atlantis. Other continents that have, according to legend, disappeared into the depths of the sea include Mu, Lemuria, and Kumari Kandam.

Among the various achievements attributed to Atlantean society included flight, mastery of atomic energy and electricity, effective medicine, and the widespread use of psychic powers like telekinesis and clairvoyance. These ideas have prompted explorers to search for Atlantis as an actual location, studying ancient maps and thoroughly combing the bottom of the sea. Rather than focusing on the ruins that may or may not exist, or speculating about what magnificent devices the Atlanteans may have developed, it will probably profit modern seekers greatly to meditate upon Plato's account as a warning about the use of military power as well as the role

and size of government.



Like the dim memories of early childhood that are difficult to recall with accuracy yet hold so much meaning, the stories of ancient peoples who vanished without a trace shine a light toward the present from deep within the forgotten past. Many of the descriptions of these lost worlds come from spiritual communication with the inhabitants or oral traditions passed along for centuries before they were committed to writing. As archetypes, they symbolize the common experience of the loss of innocence, the transition from the ideal to the actual, and the expulsion from the womb.

Many esoteric teachers believe that the first manifestation of a thing is the greatest, be it a man or a civilization. Therefore, the motif of the greatness of a culture long since destroyed—in comparison with the corruption and idleness of the world in which we live—is one that has seemingly been with humankind since we became capable of judgment and remembrance.

## The Cathars

The Cathars were the great heretics of 12th- and 13th-century France, and their name collectively refers to various sects of Christians who fused Manichaean Dualism and Asceticism to form their own brand of Gnosis. They were much like other Dualistic Gnostics in their belief that the material world was created by an evil deity in order to imprison and control the spirit. This deity was known as Rex Mundi, the king of the world who poses as the supreme God.

Some Cathars were transcendentalists who taught that humanity's spiritual destiny was to break through the bonds of matter and dethrone the Demiurge, while others taught that humankind was to redeem the fallen material world by infusing it with the divine presence within. The God whom they worshipped was the Lord of pure spirit and love, which manifested within the worshippers who had purified themselves of the wickedness they believed dwelled in materiality and the physical body. According to this belief, Jesus Christ could not have incarnated as a human being and still have been the son of the true God; his appearance on earth was in a spiritual or astral form, so powerful that his followers confused it for a physical body.

These ideas put the Cathars at odds with the Roman Catholic Church. In the 13th century, the Church launched the Albigensian Crusade against the Cathars. This atrocity spread across the Languedoc and other regions of France. Whoever did not repent and convert to Catholicism was put to death or imprisoned. The estimation is that seven thousand Cathars, including women and

children, were tortured and murdered during the siege of Béziers.



The final blow to the Cathars came in 1244 when their fortress of Montségur was besieged by troops of the Archbishop of Narbonne. Hundreds of Cathar priests known as *Perfecti* (The Perfected) or *Parfaits* were burned at the stake. According to legend, a handful of Perfecti escaped the massacre and went into hiding, stealing away with the Cathar treasure, which some believe was in fact the secret of the Gnosis—the Holy Grail.

Living as outlaws, these Perfecti continued to pass on their secret knowledge. These teachings were eventually absorbed into other secret societies, which continued to tend the flame of the Gnosis in medieval and renaissance Europe.

There is some speculation as to the full extent of the relationship between the Cathars and the Knights Templar. The extent of Templar participation in the suppression and extermination of the Cathars is ironic. Not long after the Catholic victory at Montségur, the French monarchy began to plan a similar destruction of the Christian warrior knights, using many of the same accusations of heresy that were leveled at the Cathars. Among the accusations that the Church made against the Cathar Gnostics of southern France were that they participated in ritual satanic worship that included group sexual orgies, infanticide, homosexuality, and the kissing of the anus of a cat. It is even possible that the name Cathar, rather than coming from the Greek word *Katharos*, meaning "pure ones," is actually derived from the word *cat*, probably stemming from the evil connotations felines had in the Middle Ages.

In the late 19th century, there was a French revival in Gnostic/Cathar history and religious practices. Jules Doinel founded the Gnostic Church in 1890 after having various astral communications with spirits claiming to be Cathars. He also claimed to having been spiritually consecrated the Bishop of Montségur and Primate of the Albigenses by an entity known as the Eon Jesus. Among his followers was the head of the Martinist Order, Gérard "Papus" Encausse.

Since the time of Doinel, the Gnostic Church, representing the last remnants of Catharism, has undergone the usual array of schisms and political intrigues that have plagued nearly every occult movement of the 20th century. Among the modern successors of this lineage are the Universal Gnostic Church, which has remained a Christian organization, and the Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica, the ecclesiastical wing of the OTO whose primary duty is the promulgation of Thelema and the performance of Aleister Crowley's masterpiece *Liber XV*, the Gnostic Mass.



## Warriors

*In war, the will is directed at an animate object that reacts.*

—*On War* by Karl von Clausewitz

The holy war is a motif found in every religion. It is at times an inner struggle against personal shortcomings, a social movement, or an actual armed conflict against the enemies of a way of life. The great warriors of old fought the heathen, the beasts, and sometimes the gods themselves in order to open humankind's future beyond slavery, oppression, and a meaningless death. These brothers-in-arms combated the forces of tyranny and superstition and backed their assertions with espionage, steel, and gunpowder.

The mystique of the holy warrior has attracted both the best and the worst of humanity. The promise of paradise in the afterlife continues to lure the faithful and the desperate, who disregard the other divine commandments of love and tolerance in order to inflict death on their enemies and thereby be granted the remission of sins and entry into heaven. But these motivations are a far cry from the moral standard that the true Knight-Monk applies to himself. For him, the reward of combat is in the freedom to fight for the preservation of humankind's fitness as an image of the Creator. Having the right to live and die a master of his own destiny—yet also being the humble servant of the Lord—are, in the mind of the warrior, one and the same. Vigilance, courage, and decisiveness are the price that must be paid for liberty; and for the sincere members of the host of heaven, such a price is most willingly paid.

### Knights Templar

Volumes have been written about the Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, or as they were more popularly known, the Knights Templar. To fully understand their relevance to the Western mystical tradition may be impossible. One problem is the secrecy required of the few survivors after their persecution. The other is the sheer depth of the teachings that have been ascribed to these martyrs and accused heretics—who were for almost two centuries the most elite fighting force in Christendom.

The Order of the Temple was founded in 1119, by two French knights, Hugues de Payens and Godfrey de Saint-Omer, both of whom had fought in the Crusades. They were a monastic group of skilled warriors whose purpose was to defend European pilgrims on their dangerous journey to Jerusalem, and their symbol was the red cross on a white mantle. King Baldwin II of Jerusalem allowed them to have their headquarters at the Al Aqsa Mosque located on the Temple Mount, site of the Temple of King Solomon.

At first, the Knights numbered only nine and survived on the donations of a few supporters, hence their seal depicting two knights riding upon a single horse, a symbol of their poverty. In time, funding would cease to be an obstacle for the fledgling order after their official endorsement by the Roman Catholic Church at the Council of Troyes in 1129. This was in large part precipitated by the writings of Saint Bernard of Clairvaux. Soon after, nobles began lining up to donate their land and join the ranks.

Innocent II's papal bull, the *Omne Datum Optimum*, exempted the Templars from paying taxes and held them solely responsible to the Pope himself. Now that the Knights had no regent

besides the Holy See, they could move about all of Europe, ignoring borders and local laws. This newfound prestige, wealth, and power would be used by the Knights to better serve the pilgrims. The order established the first banks and lines of credit to minimize the danger of robbery on the road to the east. As they won numerous victories against the formidable Islamic forces of their enemy, they gained honor as a courageous Christian army.

Just as the Templars' rise to power was never before seen, so was their total destruction and utter ruin unprecedented in the history of Catholic monastic orders. As the crusading armies began to lose their dominance in the Holy Land, the militaristic mission of the Templars became less important. Support for the Knight-Monks began to dwindle, and Pope Clement V discussed merging the Templar and Hospitaller orders in 1305. In 1307 Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master of the order, arrived in France at the behest of the Pope to discuss the arrangement, though he and the Grand Master of the Hospitallers had made it clear that neither of them favored the plan put forth by Clement. There were charges of heresy made against the Templars by Philip IV of France, and while de Molay flatly denied them, Clement was under a great deal of pressure to investigate. The charges included spitting on the cross and homosexual intercourse during rituals as well as the worship of a bearded head (possibly that of John the Baptist), a cat, and an ass- or goat-headed idol known as Abufamet, or Baphomet.

Philip IV of France, or Philip the Fair as he was also known, was in a large amount of debt to the Knights Templar for their assistance in his war with England. Upon hearing of the charges against them, he and his ministers began a campaign to convince the Pope into taking action against the Order, hoping to destroy it and thereby rid himself of his debt. On Friday, October 13th, 1307, the French king ordered the arrest of the Knights in France and seized their property. About a month later, Clement V issued a papal bull decreeing that the kings of Europe arrest all members of the Order.

In 1310, some of the French Templars confessed to these charges while under torture, and later retracted the same, stating that the confessions were made under duress. Philip made sure that the retractions had no effect, burning many of them at the stake in Paris. By 1312, after continued bullying by Philip, Clement issued two papal bulls—one dissolving the Order, and the other transferring what remained of their assets to the Hospitallers.

On March 18th, 1314, Jacques de Molay, the Grand Master of the Knights Templar was burned at the stake in Paris. He had retracted his confession made under torture but was deemed a relapsed heretic. He asked to be faced toward the Notre Dame Cathedral, with his hands tied in front of him in the attitude of prayer. From the flames, he cried out that both Clement and Philip would meet him before God within the year. Clement died a month later, and Philip was dead before year's end.



Some Knights escaped the stake and the dungeon by fleeing to parts of Europe where the Church had no power, such as Scotland and Switzerland, or where the orders to arrest them were largely ignored, such as Spain and Portugal.

It is here that conventional history goes silent on the Poor Fellow Soldiers of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, and the initiated tradition begins to shed more light on the fate of these holy warriors. In the 12th century, shortly after the Order was founded and officially recognized at the Council of Troyes, Chrétien de Troyes wrote *Perceval, the Story of the Grail*, the first-ever written account of the quest for the Holy Grail. In the story, there is a strange procession that includes a bloody spear and a maiden bearing the Grail, which has been connected with the divine feminine, and the crescent moon, the symbol of Islam. The spear and the grail are both symbols of sacred sexuality and have legendary significance in Christian as well as Pagan beliefs. The idea that the Templars were guardians of some secret spiritual knowledge does in many ways stem from the perceived connection between their mission in the Holy Land and the Grail Romance. The fact that the Templars were involved in the suppression of the Cathars, who were themselves accused of very similar heretical practices, has also been a source of speculation for researchers. Some try to form a link between the Secret of the Heretics of Southern France, and the Lost Treasure of the Knights of the Temple—which could very well have been the same: the Holy Grail.

Legend states that the founder of the semi-mythical Rosicrucian Brotherhood, Christian Rosenkreutz (Christian of the Rosy-Cross) was born in 1378, sixty-four years after the martyrdom of Jacques de Molay. The life of Rosenkreutz was similar to what could have been that of a Templar Knight, in that he was celibate, had traveled to the East, studying various spiritual traditions such as Sufism and Zoroastrianism under a vast array of enlightened masters. Upon returning to Europe in 1407, exactly one century after the arrest of de Molay, he founded the Rosicrucian Order for the purpose of spreading the information he had gathered while in the Middle East. The Rosy-Cross is also the Red Cross of the Knights Templar, symbolizing living Gnosis fueled by one's work. The Rosicrucians allegedly knew the secrets of nature and studied the occult sciences of the Qabalah and Alchemy. The Knights Templar would have been able to bring back from the East a great deal of knowledge on these subjects, as Jerusalem was a

veritable melting pot of philosophies and religions, helping give rise to the Renaissance, and later to the Enlightenment. As ideas like the scientific investigation of nature and the right of people to study and understand sacred scripture for themselves became more widely accepted in European society, the descendants of the Templars began to resurface by issuing various manifestos under the name of Protestant spiritual fraternities like the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, particularly in the 16th century.

By the 18th century, groups like the Freemasons had already begun to form around the philosophical and political foundations laid by the Templars more than seven hundred years earlier. Today, many esoteric groups claim descent from these warrior monks. Solid evidence in support of these claims is difficult to come by for reasons previously stated. It is important to remember that one group may influence another not only through direct contact, but also by a chain of events that can sway a culture toward the creation of new ideals and morals previously unknown.

## **Assassins**

The Hashashin, or Assassins as they are commonly known, were the Nizari sect of the Ismaili Shia Muslims, led by Hassani-Sabbah, the infamous "Old Man of the Mountain." The name Hashashin is most likely derived from the word *Asasiyun*, meaning "people who are faithful to Islam's foundations." The group used targeted political killings to defend their interests, thus forever linking the term *assassin* with a ruthless killer.

The legends surrounding this organization have their origin largely in the writing of the Italian explorer Marco Polo. In his account of the Hashashin, which is believed by modern historians to be fictional due to its dating (the fortress described was destroyed years before Polo claims to have visited it), new recruits were drugged so they would fall into a deep sleep. Upon awaking, the young men would find that they had been transported to the most beautiful garden paradise imaginable, with women expert in the arts of love, music, and poetry, as well as containing every manner of delicious food and drink. They would then be drugged a second time, this time awakening back in their quarters. The new members would then be given a golden dagger and the name of their victim. Given that the majority of these killings were perpetrated in public in order to enhance their dramatic effect, the odds of surviving a mission were practically nonexistent. Members were told that Hassan had transported their spirit to paradise during the night and that if they gave their life in the service of their master, they would be rewarded with eternity in the garden.

The Hashashin had a graded system of initiation consisting of nine degrees that educated the elect on the finer points of philosophy, mysticism, and practical psychology. The *Dais*, or covert missionaries, were sent out into the greater Islamic population with the dangerous mission of converting more orthodox Muslims to the radically divergent message of the Nizari Ismaili Shia. Hasan-i-Sabbah was himself a Dai until he became the leader of the Nizari. His motto was, according to legend, "Nothing is true, everything is permissible." These men, considered to be extremely learned, specifically schooled in the doctrines of the people they intended to recruit, could successfully infiltrate and place agents inside the courts of even the most well-guarded monarchs.

**Part four**  
**Luminaries**  
**and Seers**  
**Torchbearers of Secret Knowledge**

*Woe to the child who believes himself wiser than his parents, to the man who acknowledges no masters, to that dreamer who thinks and prays by himself. Life is an universal communion and in such communion do we find immortality.*

—*The History of Magic* by Éliphas Lévi



Since we began keeping records, humans have chronicled the existence of exceptional individuals. These great people accomplish seemingly impossible feats through cunning, strength, and perseverance. But rarely have they acted alone. The secret tradition tells of an invisible brotherhood of initiates who have knowledge and power far above what we can attribute to any human being. Many a great prophet or leader has claimed to be in contact with these forces that transcend our apparent mortal restrictions. Here we will journey from the shadows of prehistory to the present time, meeting some of the greatest spiritual minds and hearts ever to reveal themselves to us.

These heroes of progress and freedom continually return in the form of courageous teachers, soldiers, statesmen, and friends. Helping them in their quest to heal a nation or enlighten an age are usually masters of the secret arts and fellow warriors who have pledged their undying loyalty to a cause. Among the great lights of the world have been people of all ages and classes, from every nation and creed. The following



## Legends and Gods

*The appearance of God to mortals seems always to have been in brightness and great glory, whether He was angry and in displeasure, or benign and kind.*

—*The Rosicrucians, Their Rites and Mysteries* by Hargrave Jennings

The existence of some people is sometimes less important than the actions and words attributed to them. There are individuals who, although not having totally escaped the net of recorded history, cannot be said to have ever really walked among us as told in their fables and songs. Yet, as long as the wisdom they represent is alive in each of us, these legendary people can take their pleasure on the earth, continuing to guide and enlighten.

### Apollonius of Tyana

Apollonius of Tyana was a 1st-century neo-Pythagorean philosopher, magician, alchemist, and doctor, who was later worshipped as a deity equal to Jesus Christ by Greek and Roman pagans. He was admired in the medieval Christian and Muslim world as a man of learning and spiritual purity.

### Hermes Trismegistus

Hermes Trismegistus or Thrice Greatest Hermes was worshipped as the Greco-Egyptian deity and patron of magic, astrology, alchemy, and spiritual advancement. He was called thrice great because he had attained mastery over the realms of heaven, earth, and humankind, making him the epitome of priests, philosophers, and kings. It is from him that the doctrines of Hermeticism proceed, being chiefly concerned with the realization of divinity within the individual and the betterment of society through scientific advancement. Many scholars understand him to be the synthesis of the Greek Hermes with the Egyptian Thoth, thus establishing him as both messenger of God and creator of language.

According to legend, Hermes Trismegistus is at times described as the contemporary of various biblical patriarchs, most notably Abraham and Noah. There are thousands of writings attributed to him, each revealing the secrets of existence and the path to uniting the soul with the eternal One. The most famous of these writings is the *Emerald Tablet of Hermes Trismegistus*, a document that has been translated by a multitude of occult scholars including Sir Isaac Newton and Giorgio Beato.

Here is the Latin translation of the *Emerald Tablet* from Chrysogonus Polydorus, Nuremberg, 1541, along with a new English translation by the author.



*Verum, sine mendacio, certum et verissimum:*

Being true, without lying, certain, and of the highest order of truth:

*Quod est inferius est sicut quod est superius, et quod est superius est sicut quod est inferius, ad perpetranda miracula rei unius.*

The inferior is alike to the superior, and the superior is alike to the inferior, in reaching the performance of the one miraculous matter.

*Et sicut res omnes fuerunt ab uno, meditatione unius, sic omnes res natae ab hac una re, adaptatione.*

And as all things come from the One, meditating on the One, so also are all things born from the One thing, through change.

*Pater eius est Sol. Mater eius est Luna.*

His Father is the Sun. His Mother is the Moon.

*Portavit illud Ventus in ventre suo. Nutrix eius terra est.*

Carried by the Wind in its belly, He is nursed by the Earth.

*Pater omnis telesmi totius mundi est hic.*

In this is the Father of all the rites and magical workings of the world.

*Virtus eius integra est si versa fuerit in terram.*

His Power is integrated if it enters the earth.

*Separabis terram ab igne, subtile ab spisso, suaviter, magno cum ingenio.*

Dividing the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, with gentleness, greatness, and genius.

*Ascendit a terra in coelum, iterumque descendit in terram, et recipit vim superiorum et inferiorum.*

He Climbs the earth to heaven, then descends back to the earth, and receives the superior and inferior powers.

*Sic habebis Gloriam totius mundi. Ideo fugiet a te omnis obscuritas.*

Therefore you have the glory of the entire world. Thus you may expel all obscurities.

*Haec est totius fortitudinis fortitudo fortis, quia vincet omnem rem subtilem, omnemque solidam penetrabit.*

She is the source of strength within the strength of force, being victorious over all subtleties, completely penetrating the hard.

*Sic mundus creatus est.*

For this reason was the world created.

*Hinc erunt adaptationes mirabiles, quarum modus est hic.*

Hence there have been miraculous changes, which have been effected through this method.

*Itaque vocatus sum Hermes Trismegistus, habens tres partes philosophiae totius mundi.*

Thus am I called Hermes Thrice Greatest, holding the three parts of the philosophies of the whole World.

*Completum est quod dixi de operatione Solis.*

Complete are my words concerning the Solar operation.

The *Emerald Tablet* is a foundational work of the Western mystery tradition, revealing the detailed operations of the Great Work. Hermes Trismegistus, a spring of wisdom, has continued to guide aspirants both in spirit and thought within Hermetic literature.

## **Hiram Abiff**

Hiram Abiff was the Master Architect of the First Temple of Jerusalem, sent by the King of Tyre to aid King Solomon. He was a man of great learning and wisdom, skilled in metallurgy, masonry, and carpentry. Although the story of his life and death are only documented in the legends of Freemasonry, the influence of his tale has extended beyond the confines of the lodge.

The Grand Master Hiram Abiff organized the workers of the temple and ensured that they received compensation for their work according to level of skill. He devised signs, grips, and passwords that could properly identify the workers to one another and so they would prove themselves worthy of the pay to which they were entitled by their grade, be it Fellow Craft or Master Mason. The work continued on the temple in peace and at a good pace, and everyone admired Hiram Abiff's qualities. Well, not exactly everyone.

A small group of workers, headed by three Fellow Crafts, desired the word of the master. Possession of this word and its secrets would entitle the ruffians to the Master's pay, and although Hiram had promised to give it to them upon the completion of the Temple, these men had no intention of waiting. At high noon, they confronted Hiram on his way out of the unfinished Holy of Holies, where he was offering his daily prayers to God, and they demanded he divulge the secrets of a Master Mason. When he refused, they each struck him with their tools, ending his life with a final blow of a setting maul—a wooden hammer used to set a stone in its proper place in mortar. Realizing what they had done, the murderers hid the Master's body by burying him under an acacia tree, and being unable to flee the country, they decided to hide out in the wilderness.

When King Solomon learned of Hiram's murder from the Fellow Crafts that had abandoned the plot, he ordered the workmen to find the three murderers. Failure to apprehend the ruffians would be met with death. It was not long before the assassins were found and executed. The discovery of the body of the Grand Master Hiram Abiff was proof of the crime against him, yet it was also a reminder that the word of the Master had indeed been lost.

Due to its state of purification, the body of Hiram could only be raised by holding his lifeless arm with a special grip known as the lion's paw, sacred to the tribe of Judah, of which King Solomon was the ruler. In honor of his pious life, the Grand Master Hiram Abiff would be buried as close to the Holy of Holies as Jewish law permitted.

## **Horus**

Horus, the hawk-headed lord of magic and war, was arguably the most important god in the Egyptian pantheon. He is closely identified with the sun and is the avenger of his father Osiris's murder by his brother Set. Horus is the central deity worshipped in the rite of modern magicians, as the sun who does not die, and the falcon whose eyes are the sun and moon.

## **Isis**

The goddess Isis was the most widely worshipped feminine deity in the ancient world. She had devotees in Egypt, the country of her origin, as well as in Greece, Rome, and many other locations throughout the Mediterranean. Motherhood, magic, fertility, and nature were all parts of life that Isis ruled and through which she aided humanity. She was the wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus.



## Jesus of Nazareth

Perhaps the most influential figure in history, Jesus of Nazareth is considered by over two billion people to be the only begotten Son of God and therefore the savior of the world. There are no historical records beyond the religious texts attributed to his direct followers supporting his existence, and no writings claiming his authorship have apparently survived to the present, but the power of Christianity is such that most scholars refuse to question the historicity of Jesus. The doctrine that he represents is nonetheless so revolutionary that to this day, it is more often misunderstood than skillfully applied, and the bulk of its adherents never bother to become intimately acquainted with its inner meaning. According to the initiated tradition, it is unimportant whether there was such a man or not—his existence as an archetype and deity has so thoroughly permeated modern consciousness as to render his literal existence inconsequential.

There are four biblical accounts of Jesus Christ's ministry, three of them (Mark, Luke, and Matthew) are known as the Synoptic Gospels because the narratives all share a similar point of view, even using the same wording in some instances. The Gospel of John differs greatly from the others and is usually considered by occultists, along with the Book of Revelation, the most relevant of the books of the New Testament, due to its Gnostic message and its association of

Christ with the eternal Word.

The name Jesus is an adaptation of Iesus, a Latinized version of IShVH or Yeshua. The initiated tradition teaches that this name contains a powerful formula of magic. The fourfold name, Tetragrammaton or IHVH, becomes the name of the Christos when we insert the Hebrew letter *Shin*, symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the name of the Son comes from the union of the Father (IHVH) and the Holy Spirit, or *Shekina* (*Shin*, the spiritual flame, and the female soul of God). These five letters may be arranged along the points of the pentagram, a symbol that can be thus used to invoke the highest light.

The secret tradition holds that the central message of Jesus was that the Kingdom of Heaven is within, and that Man is God. Every other statement recorded in the Gospels must be interpreted with this as the basis, or the inner meaning of the passage will be missed. The life, death, and resurrection of Jesus represent not only the path of the spirit, but also the understanding that 1st century Christians had of the world around them.

## **Lao Tzu**

Lao Tzu, whose name means "old child" or "old master," is credited with being the founder of what would later become the Taoist religion. He is believed to have lived in China in the 6th century BC. His book, the Tao Te Ching, or the "Classic on the Virtuous Way," outlines the manner in which the enlightened should approach nature, politics, their fellow human beings, and life in general. His philosophy is antiauthoritarian and stresses noninterference as the most efficient way to help the world. According to Lao Tzu, the existence of good is just as symptomatic of the imbalance of the universe as is the existence of evil. The sage sees only cause and effect, realizing that morality is itself the cause of immorality. Taoism's emphasis on naturalness and longevity, through nonresistance to the contending forces in nature, has given rise to practices such as Qigong and Taoist Alchemy.



## **Maria the Jewess**

Probably a contemporary of the writers of the New Testament, Maria the Jewess—or Miriam the Prophetess as she is also known—was one of the most illuminated people of the ancient

world. She was an innovator in the field of alchemy, inventing or completing many instruments such as the *bainmarie* (also known as a water bath), a device used to this day to gently heat materials or keep them warm for long periods of time.

According to the sayings attributed to her, she was a master of the Qabalah and mysticism in general. "One becomes two, two becomes three, and out of the third comes the One as the fourth," is one of Maria's alchemical axioms that may be interpreted to be a description of the process of manifestation by the power of Tetragrammaton, or IHVH. Due to her level of education, she is thought to have been the daughter of a king or the sister of some chieftain, and is sometimes referred to as the sister of Moses, possibly to further demonstrate her prophetic status.

## **Osiris**

The Egyptian god Osiris was worshipped as the patron of resurrection and immortality of the spirit, as well as being the king of the underworld. He was slain by his brother, Set, who scattered his body parts throughout the world. His sister and wife, Isis, collected them all save for his phallus, which she had fashioned out of gold. Unable to raise him, she had intercourse with the golden phallus and conceived the god Horus, who would avenge the death of his father. In Egyptian magic, the magician must be like Osiris—worthy to wear the crown, crook, and flail, representing the three manifestations of power: unity, mercy, and severity.

## **Pan**

Pan was worshipped as a fertility god by the ancient Greeks and plays a central role in the mystery tradition. Christians have used Pan's image for centuries as a representation of Satan, possibly as a way to condemn the old pagan deities in the mind of the faithful. His horns and goat legs represent union with the pasture and are a mark of his divinity and correspondence with the natural world. He is a symbol of the All and of the life force. His pipes can be compared to everything that lives, the singing voice of nature deriving its beautiful sounds from the breath of Pan.



## Siddhartha

Siddhartha Gautama was the name of the man that would later be called the Shakyamuni Buddha, or the Fully Awakened One of the Shakya Clan. He lived in the 5th century BC and founded the religion of Buddhism after years of intense spiritual studies with the great masters of the Indian subcontinent. Legend states that after his apprenticeship with various teachers, he was yet unable to find an end to Samsara, the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. He retreated into the wilderness, meditated beneath a tree for nine years, until at last he attained the supreme state, which he called Nirvana. His doctrine and method for achieving Nirvana, meaning "to be extinguished," can be summarized by the two sets of principles known as the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Four Noble Truths are a set of spiritual theorems that aspirants meditate upon in order to free themselves from Samsara.

The first of these is *Dukkha*, meaning "Suffering." To the unenlightened, every possible circumstance and interaction contains an element of suffering. Even the most positive experiences hold the seed of an equally painful reaction in that they will inevitably come to an end or be limited in some other way.

The second Noble Truth is that of *Samudaya*, meaning "origin" or "cause." Desire and craving are the causes of suffering, specifically the desire for sensual pleasure, the desire for existence, and the desire for an end or annihilation. In people ignorant of the true nature of existence, these three dominate every thought, word, and deed, and they are usually unconscious of this fact.

The third Noble Truth is that of *Nirodha*, meaning "Cessation." This is a state of being that is free from these incomplete views of reality.

The fourth and final Noble Truth is called *Magga*, meaning "path." There is a path or way out of the cycle of rebirth, a way to achieve that state of freedom. This is found in the Noble

## Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path is divided into three sections. The first section is dedicated to wisdom and is composed of the first two steps:

1. Right View
2. Right Intention

The second section is dedicated to ethics and is composed of the middle three steps:

1. Right Speech
2. Right Action
3. Right Livelihood

The third and last section is dedicated to concentration, or the balancing of the mind:

1. Right Effort
2. Right Mindfulness
3. Right Concentration

Each school of Buddhism has different interpretations of how to accomplish these steps, depending on the cultural and doctrinal influences that have entered the lineage. However, interested students should compare the Eightfold Path with the Eight Limbs of yoga in order to understand how one system influences the other—gaining direct insight into the interconnectedness of all practices and beliefs, an important aspect of the secret tradition.

## **Solomon**

The wise King Solomon, the son of David, had many great skills attributed to him, including prophecy, poetry, science, magic, and the ability to converse with various animals, especially birds. In the 10th century BC, he built the first Temple in Jerusalem and composed some of the most exquisite poems of the ancient world. He prayed to God, not for the destruction of his adversaries or for wealth, but for wisdom. Though this request was indeed granted, Solomon would make many mistakes. He kept hundreds of wives and concubines, many of them princesses of foreign kingdoms, and they had him build temples to their own foreign gods in the land of Israel. According to the Bible, this not only angered his priests and people, but also his God. Solomon was a man of passion and, though a noble king, he was at times at odds with the conventions of his people. It seems that he was a perfect embodiment of the ancient Jewish people: wise, yet stubborn and sometimes fickle—always a paradox. After his death, the kingdom was divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah, evidence of how his actions tore apart the tribes.



There abound stories of King Solomon's exploits in magic, especially in the Islamic tradition and rabbinical literature. King Solomon is said to have possessed a magical ring with a powerful symbol engraved upon it, known as King Solomon's Seal. There are multiple versions of this symbol, but most include either a hexagram or a pentagram. He used the ring to command spirits, demons, and animals. Among the demons under Solomon's command were Eligos, Bael, and Asmodeus, the King of Demons.

In modern magical practice, the study of evocation through the use of a circle, triangle, and ring is many times referred to as Solomonic magic. There are a number of grimoires claiming his authorship, including *The Greater Key of Solomon* and *The Lesser Keys of Solomon*, as well as *The Testament of Solomon*. These works describe methods of summoning angelic and demonic forces in order to find hidden treasure, acquire love, or attain the power of flight.

## **Zoroaster**

Zoroaster, or Zarathustra, was a philosopher and spiritual Adept in ancient Babylon, probably in the 8th century BC. The exact meaning of his name is unknown; however, it is etymologically connected with the Avestan word for camel. He is considered to be the founder of Babylonian magic and the composer of the Gathas, which form the most sacred scriptures of his religious doctrine, known today as Zoroastrianism.

Zoroaster taught that life is a struggle between light and darkness, and that humanity has free will in order to choose light for itself and the world. Through leading an honest life and studying the laws that govern the universe, humankind participates in the triumph of truth. His teaching would form the basis for much of the religious and philosophical movements of the Western world.



## Medieval and Renaissance Masters

*Therefore our mind being pure and divine, inflamed with a religious love, adorned with hope, directed by faith, placed in the height and top of the human soul, doth attract truth, and suddenly comprehend it, and beholdeth all the stations, grounds, causes and sciences of things both natural and immortal in the divine truth itself, as it were in a certain glass of eternity.*

—*Three Books of Occult Philosophy* by Henry Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim

From the fall of the Roman Empire to the repressive reign of pope and king, these keepers of the holy flame of wisdom saw to it that humankind would emerge from darkness as a functional microcosm, not the bestial slave desired by his despotic overseers. During the horror of the Inquisition, the magician or mystic who did not properly conceal his craft had a good chance of being burned alive or sentenced to a life of imprisonment. And yet amid the dangerous climate of fear flourished some of the greatest Adepts of the sacred sciences that have ever lived. These luminaries led the way for a new hope to rush across Europe in whispers about the brotherhood and nobility of humankind and the coming revelations from a god that was within each and every person.

### Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa

1486–1535

The German Magus Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa was one of the first people to systematically study and record esoteric spiritual practices and methods in the Common Era. His *Three Books of Occult Philosophy* are considered masterpieces, and are required reading by many modern occult teachers.



### Teresa of Avila

1515–1582

Considered a saint and doctor of the Roman Catholic Church, Teresa of Avila was a Spanish mystic, writer, nun, and church reformer. She was a friend of Saint John of the Cross, who wrote the *Dark Night of the Soul*. Her mystical writings include the *Interior Castle*, which

describes the various stages that the soul must pass through on its journey toward union with God. She was allegedly capable of many seemingly miraculous feats, including flight, clairvoyance, and bilocation.

## **Giordano Bruno**

1548–1600

Giordano Bruno was an Italian philosopher, magician, mathematician, and outspoken supporter of the heliocentric model of the solar system. Among his ideas are that our solar system is only one of an infinite number of systems and that Jesus was a fully moral human being who accomplished his miracles through the use of natural magic. Bruno was persecuted by the Roman Catholic Church and burned at the stake in Rome for expressing his opinions. His most famous works include: *The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast*, *On the Infinite Universe and Worlds*, and *Theses on Magic*.

## **John Dee and Edward Kelley**

1527–1609 and 1555–1595

John Dee was a successful mathematician, astronomer, adviser to Queen Elizabeth, and master of espionage. He wrote the *Monas Heiroglyphica*, an enigmatic work on the unity of man, nature, and God. He was searching for a way to gain a deeper understanding of magic when he met Edward Kelley, an alchemist and clairvoyant, who impressed Dee with his abilities.

Together, these Elizabethan-era magicians received what is now known as the Enochian Magical System through a series of visions and angelic communications. The system has its own language, symbolism, and rituals, and is considered by modern occultists to be one of the most powerful spiritual modalities available. Its influence on the secret tradition is immeasurable, forming a vital component of the teachings of societies like the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and the A.∴A.∴.

## **Moses Maimonides**

1135–1204

Moses Maimonides was a Jewish philosopher and physician born in Cordova, Spain, but he moved to Egypt due to the rise of Islamic fanaticism in southern Spain. In Egypt, he worked as a court physician to the incomparable Muslim leader Saladin. His work, *The Guide for the Perplexed* was very influential in medieval European thought due to its attempt to consolidate traditional Judaism with Aristotelian philosophy and science. This mission, to unite science and religion, is part of the greater task of the initiated tradition, which seeks to unify the totality of humankind's being.

## **Paracelsus**

1493–1541

Theophrastus Phillippus Aureolus Bombastus von Hohenheim—or Paracelsus, as he is commonly known—was born in Switzerland. He was a noted alchemist, doctor, and spiritual writer in his own time. Paracelsus's main contribution to medicine was in identifying the use of minerals and various chemical substances in treating diseases. Until him, herbs were the only medicine considered in combating sickness. He taught that the universe is a sentient being, composed of interdependent parts that are pervaded by the universal life force or spirit.



## **Abraham von Worms**

1359–1427

Abraham von Worms was a German Jew who traveled to the Middle East in search of the secret wisdom of magic. He studied with various rabbis, learning the intricate science of the Qabalah. While in Egypt, he encountered a desert hermit by the name of Abramelin, who taught him a system of magic that was unique in its emphasis on the development of the spiritual and moral character of aspirants. In Abramelin's system, students must first invoke their Holy Guardian Angel, a being who will guide and instruct them on all points of life. Only after this connection has been made are the students then allowed to call forth the evil or unredeemed spirits, and subjugate them according to the methods described by the Angel. Abraham von Worms recorded the instructions of Abramelin in one of the most important works in Western mystical literature, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage*.



## Sages of the Enlightenment: The 18th Century

*New opinions are always suspected, and usually opposed, without any other reason but because they are not already common.*

—*An Essay concerning Human Understanding* by John Locke

All across Europe and America, the light of reason was beginning to shine openly during the eighteenth century, once more dissolving the phantoms of superstition and tyranny. The time was right for revolutions and bold questions. Fueling the fires that would burn down the prisons of the mind were incredible men and women who pierced the veil of nature with the method of science, exposing the divine light of spirit to all courageous enough to look. The war against the enemies of light was and is still beset with grave danger. Many who fought in these chaotic times were slain or captured. Some hid themselves in the costume of the charlatan so as not to draw the mob toward the gates of the holy temple, while others denied its existence entirely while openly living by its principles. Calling for the equality of humankind before the law and for the establishment of just government and free scientific inquiry, the great philosophers and magicians of the enlightenment were perhaps the most daring of all time.

### Francis Barrett

c. 1770–?

Francis Barrett was an English occultist, chemist, and philosopher who wrote the *Magus, Celestial Intelligencer*, a textbook on magic and Hermeticism that was published in 1801. This work had a large influence on writers such as Éliphas Lévi, who in turn were central characters in the occult revival of the 19th century. After 1801, there is no more information on Barrett's life or even the date of his death.

### Alessandro Cagliostro

1743–1795

The great Adept of alchemy, mysticism, magic, and Freemasonry, Count Alessandro Cagliostro was one of the most enigmatic and interesting personalities of the 18th century. He founded the Egyptian Rite of Freemasonry, and was well acquainted with the influential thinkers and monarchs of his time. Born into a noble family on the island of Malta and orphaned as a young child, he was called by the name Acharat and raised in the palace of Muphti Salahaym. He was instructed in the sacred sciences of the East by one of his servants, an enlightened man by the name of Althotas. As a young man, he and his tutor traveled in the Middle East, finally returning to Malta, where he received the name Cagliostro. Although the origin of this name is unclear, its root *caglia* descends from the Phoenician word *karel*, meaning "City of God." *Ostro* is an Italian term for the southerly wind of the Mediterranean Sea. From Malta, he went on to practice alchemy and the occult arts in Europe.



While in Paris, he continued his work until imprisoned in the Bastille for his suspected involvement in the Diamond Necklace Affair. (This scandal involved the theft of a very expensive diamond necklace by the Countess de Lamotte, through defrauding the jeweler, the Cardinal de Rohan, and Queen Marie Antoinette. After her arrest, Countess de Lamotte accused Cagliostro, a close friend of Cardinal de Rohan, of being the architect of the plot.) Although Cagliostro was acquitted after spending nine months in prison, the French forced him to leave the country. Not long after arriving in England, he was accused by the blackmailer and French spy Theveneau de Morande of being Giuseppe Balsamo, a thief and charlatan. Cagliostro wrote an *Open Letter to the English People* refuting the allegations of fraud, demanding a retraction and an apology. These were granted, but the damage to his reputation was done, and Cagliostro left for Rome.

In Rome, two of his disciples, who were actually spies for the Inquisition, betrayed him. Cagliostro was charged with being a Freemason and sentenced to death. After an audience with a mysterious and unidentified figure, the Pope changed the sentence to life imprisonment.

Cagliostro was never able to rid himself of the rumor that he was an impostor whose true identity was Giuseppe Balsamo. This theory persists to this day, marring the reputation of a man who should be honored as an advocate for religious liberty and equality of the sexes. He healed the sick using what seemed to observers as miraculous spiritual powers. He also established charities and Masonic lodges throughout Europe. It is believed by some that Cagliostro escaped from the Castle of Saint Leo, but most historians agree that he perished in the dungeons there, a martyr of Freemasonry and the occult sciences.

## **Adam Weishaupt**

1748–1830

Adam Weishaupt was a Bavarian philosopher and professor, educated by Jesuits. He founded the Order of the Illuminati in 1776 that he might help reform Europe by using a secret society. The Illuminati Order was in many ways closer in design to the Jesuit Order than to freemasonry, which he joined in 1777. Weishaupt believed in the perfectibility of human beings through the restructuring of society away from governmental and religious tyranny and toward political and intellectual liberty.

## **Benjamin Franklin**

1706–1790

While most people would agree that Benjamin Franklin was a political and scientific genius, very few are aware that he was also an incredibly accomplished Freemason and mystic. His actions surrounding the founding of the United States of America prove that he was no armchair revolutionary, or even just a philosopher content with infinite musing, but an ardent advocate of human freedom and happiness. His views on the soul and nature were pragmatic, counting on results rather than theories or dogma. His writings, though simple in the puritan style, transmit an essential wisdom. His much beloved Virtues are easier to escape readers' notice than conscience. As a printer, he understood the power of the written word, continuing the long-standing relationship between publishing and personal growth.

## **Mary Wollstonecraft**

1759–1797

Mary Wollstonecraft was an English philosopher and feminist writer. Her work, particularly *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, remains influential among modern champions of the spiritual and legal equality of the sexes.



## Magi of the Occult Revival: The 19th Century

*There is no age more remarkable to the quiet observer than our own. Everywhere there is a fermentation in the minds of men; everywhere there is a battle between light and darkness, between exploded thought and living ideas, between powerless wills and living active force; in short everywhere is there war between animal man and growing spiritual man.*

—*The Cloud Upon the Sanctuary* by Karl Von Eckhartshausen

The world had been prepared for contact with the Secret Chiefs that govern the spiritual forces of the planet. As science made its ascent and republics flourished, these masters began to send forth emissaries to establish new paths up the Holy Mountain. The Industrial Revolution, though granting the multitudes with new technologies never before dreamed of, left the soul unfulfilled. The 19th century saw the emergence of a new class of Adept, one who could compare the religious and philosophical with the scientific and mundane, thus beginning the process of unifying them under the banner of truth.

### William Blake

1757–1827

William Blake was an English poet, painter, and printer who received many religious visions during his life, revealing to him the spiritual hierarchy of nature. His works, greatly influenced by Swedenborg and Jacob Boehme, have earned him a nearly prophetic status among occultists and mystics. Blake's philosophy was decidedly Gnostic and occult, perfectly espoused in the following quote from *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*:

*The Voice of the Devil*

All Bibles or sacred codes have been the causes of the following Errors.

1. That Man has two real existing principles Viz: a Body and a Soul.
2. That Energy, call'd Evil, is alone from the Body, and that Reason, call'd Good, is alone from the Soul.
3. That God will torment Man in Eternity for following his Energies.

But the following Contraries to these are True

1. Man has no Body distinct from his Soul for that call'd Body is a portion of Soul discern'd by the five Senses, the chief inlets of Soul in this age.
2. Energy is the only life and is from the Body and Reason is the bound or outward

circumference of Energy.

3. Energy is Eternal Delight.

## **Helena Petrova Blavatsky**

1831–1891

Helena Petrova (H. P.) Blavatsky was the founder of the Theosophical Society, whose motto was "There is no religion higher than truth." She was born in modern-day Ukraine, and though she married at the age of sixteen, she soon escaped her husband. It was then that she began her world travels that would take her to such diverse regions as Egypt, North and South America, and Tibet. The various cultures and religions she encountered had a profound effect on her thinking, but she had been exposed to the occult in her childhood by family members and close friends involved in the secret tradition. She was a controversial figure in her own lifetime, regarded as a fraud by many scholars and critics of spiritualism. Blavatsky wrote a number of books on the theory and theology of the Eastern occult beliefs that she had studied—the most influential of which are *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, and *The Voice of the Silence*.



## **Edward Bulwer-Lytton**

1803–1873

Edward Bulwar-Lytton was an English writer, politician, and occultist. He was particularly interested in the Rosicrucian tradition and the idea of human evolution. These interests would be reflected in his writing, especially in *Zanoni: A Rosicrucian Tale* and *Vril: The Power of the Coming Race*. Bulwar-Lytton is considered by many occult groups to be a spiritual forerunner and has inspired other influential authors such as Charles Dickens and the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche.

## **Kersey Graves**

1813–1883

Kersey Graves was an American author, spiritualist, abolitionist, and religious researcher. He wrote *The World's Sixteen Crucified Saviors*, an inquiry into the origin of religion and its role in the life of a liberated human being.

## **Godfrey Higgins**

1772–1833

Godfrey Higgins was an English soldier, politician, and esoteric researcher. His writings include such classics of esoteric and comparative religious literature as *The Celtic Druids* and *Anacalypsis*.

## **Éliphas Lévi**

1810–1875

Éliphas Lévi was the nom de plume of the French mystic, philosopher, and magician, whose given name was Alphonse Louis Constant. His theories on the nature and practical application of magic, especially the occult correspondences of the Tarot, are still studied by many esoteric groups as the foundation of modern occultism. Lévi's most influential literary contributions include *Transcendental Magic*, *The History of Magic*, and *The Key of the Mysteries*.



## **Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers**

1854–1918

Samuel Liddell MacGregor Mathers was an English occultist and one of the founding members of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. His translation of works such as *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abramelin the Mage* and *The Kabbalah Unveiled* helped to support the growing interest in the occult in the late 19th century and have continued to inspire and educate modern magicians.

## **Albert Pike**

1809–1891

Albert Pike was an American soldier, poet, author, lawyer, and Freemason. His magnum opus, *Morals and Dogma of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry*, has been a continual source of esoteric wisdom, controversy, and Masonic lore since its publication in 1871.

## **Paschal Beverly Randolph**

1825–1875

Paschal Beverly Randolph was an American occultist, abolitionist, writer, and physician who founded the Triplicate Order. He was a pioneer in the field of magic and spiritism, introducing sexual magic to the general public through his visionary works such as *The Mysteries of Eulis* and *The Anseiratic Mystery*.

The circumstances surrounding his death have never been fully understood. The most commonly accepted theory is that Randolph committed suicide. However, the questionable methods employed by the medical examiner along with claims from R. Swinburne Clymer, one of Randolph's successors, that a close associate made a deathbed confession to murdering him in a jealous rage, have kept many researchers from accepting the suicide theory.

Enjoying the friendship of men such as Éliphas Lévi, Hargrave Jennings, Napoleon III, and Abraham Lincoln, it is clear that Randolph's contemporaries held him in high regard. His writings and work in the various occult societies to which he either founded or belonged influenced the thought and structure of organizations such as the Golden Dawn, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, and the OTO.



## Modern Adepti: The 20th Century

*We therefore who are without the chains of ignorance, look closely into the heart of the seeker and lead him by the path which is best suited to his nature unto the ultimate end of all things, the supreme realization, the Life which abideth in Light.*

—*The Holy Books of Thelema*, "Liber Porta Lucis sub figura X" by Aleister Crowley

Our universe had grown smaller, and science, the very guardian that the secret tradition had placed at the entry of the sacred temple, had begun to turn on its masters. The world would be engulfed in the fire of war, nation rising against nation. Radical Islam, Nazi Germany, Imperialism, Communist China and Russia, Global Governments, and the ecological phantom menace had all pushed humanity to yet another difficult phase in its development and survival. The Adepti of the 20th century stood for individualism in the face of a collective cry of desperation, for true compassion amid the pity driven by guilty consciences, and for the divine emanating from within each person rather than from a charismatic leader or new idol.

### Franz Bardon

1909–1958

Franz Bardon was a Czechoslovakian illusionist, occultist, and author. His three completed works, *Initiation into Hermetics*, *The Practice of Magical Evocation*, and *The Key to the True Kabbalah*, are considered to be some of the clearest and most concise practical instructions ever published. Bardon died in Czechoslovakia while in police custody, having been arrested on accusations of being a spy.

### Paul Foster Case

1884–1954

Paul Foster Case was an American author, mystic, and founder of the Builders of the Adytum, a school of Western esotericism. He was a member of the Alpha et Omega, a magical order founded by MacGregor Mathers after the schism of the Golden Dawn, taking the magical motto of Perseverantia, meaning "I will endure." Case's most important contributions to occult literature were in the field of the Tarot and its connection to the Qabalah, as well as his alleged co-authorship of *The Kybalion*.

### Carlos Castaneda

1925–1998

Carlos Castaneda was an American author and student of Mesoamerican spiritual practices. He wrote *The Teachings of Don Juan: A Yaqui way of Knowledge* while still a student of anthropology at UCLA. In this and his subsequent writings, Castaneda became the student of a Sorcerer named Juan Matus, who initiated him into the Toltec Shamanic Warrior Path of spiritual attainment and used various meditative and magical practices along with hallucinogenic plants. Castaneda's work and philosophy have always been controversial, much like that of other occultists. However, his teachings do not differ greatly from those of other more widely accepted esoteric teachers and organizations. His works brought mainstream

attention to shamanic and alternative spiritual systems and have appealed to occultists of all persuasions due to their applicable principles, humor, and intriguing cast of characters.

## **Constant Chevillon**

1880–1944

Constant Chevillon was a French philosopher, mystic, and occultist. He was the head of the Universal Gnostic Church and a member of various Rosicrucian societies. He was shot and killed by the Gestapo in Lyons during World War II.

## **Aleister Crowley**

1875–1947

Aleister Crowley was an English occultist, author, mountaineer, poet, playwright, yogi, adventurer, spy, and outspoken proponent of religious, sexual, and political liberty. He joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1898, taking the motto *Perdurabo*, meaning "I shall endure to the end." Crowley dedicated his life to the Great Work, continuing his search for the Secret Chiefs despite schisms within the Golden Dawn. Though he became disillusioned with magic, he still yearned for the spiritual liberation that he had read about in books such as Karl Von Eckhartshausen's *The Cloud upon the Sanctuary*.

In 1903, Crowley married Rose Kelly, and in 1904, while on their honeymoon in Egypt, he attempted an evocation of some elementals in order to entertain her. Instead, Rose entered a trance and began to utter instructions for reception of a new era of human evolution. Crowley, an ardent skeptic who had at this point abandoned magical work altogether, was soon convinced that Rose was receiving genuine communications from what he called the Secret Chiefs. On April 8, 9, and 10, he heard and saw an angel who identified himself as Aiwass and delivered to Crowley *Liber AL vel Legis*, or *The Book of the Law*. The book announces the arrival of the New Aeon of Horus, supplanting previous religious structures that were based on an antiquated understanding of nature and the true identity of humankind.



For some time after this revelation, Crowley ignored the injunction of the Book to teach and spread the Law of Thelema, which may be summarized in the phrases "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law," and "Love is the law, love under will." Both phrases are taken

directly from *The Book of the Law* itself. He soon realized the importance of this work and took up his studies once again. By accepting students and publishing his writings in *The Equinox* and

other publications, he made known to the public at large the existence of the A♀ ♂ ♀ A

♀ ♂ ♀. Crowley also revealed the secret rituals of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which he believed to be defunct. Crowley's body of work is voluminous and is highly regarded by modern occultists as the standard against which all other magical writers are judged.

His reputation suffered greatly for his honesty, sense of humor, and rejection of Victorian values, even being called "the wickedest man in the world" by the mainstream press. Recently, interest and respect for his work have enjoyed a renaissance. One accolade that might please him is his being regarded by modern critics as one of England's greatest poets. He served as the

Outer Head of the OTO and as a servant of the A♀ ♂ ♀ A♀ ♂ ♀ until his death in England.

## **Manly Palmer Hall**

1901–1990

Manly Palmer Hall was a Canadian-born author, Freemason, and mystic who wrote the masterpiece *The Secret Teachings of All Ages* at the age of twenty-seven. He founded the Philosophical Research Society, an organization dedicated to the study of mystical and occult subjects, including Freemasonry and the Western mystery tradition.

## **Dion Fortune**

1890–1946

Dion Fortune was the pseudonym of Violet Mary Firth. British occultist, author, and founder of the Society of Inner Light. Fortune's interest in the secret tradition started at an early age, when she realized that she had considerable psychic abilities. She joined the Alpha et Omega and later the Stella Matutina Order, where she studied the occult arts. She wrote various novels and books on occult subjects, of which *The Mystical Qabalah* is considered by modern students to be her magnum opus.

## **Gerald Gardner**

1884–1964

Gerald Gardner was an English anthropologist, author, and founder of modern Wicca or Witchcraft. He was interested in the occult and magical practices as a young man, and soon after making contact with various occult groups, he was initiated into the New Forrest Coven. Aleister Crowley initiated Gardner into the OTO and encouraged him to spread his beliefs on the Old Religion. His books, *Witchcraft Today* and *The Meaning of Witchcraft* quickly became central works on the religion of Wicca.

## **Papus**

1865–1916

Papus was the pseudonym of the French physician, mystic, author, and founder of the modern

Martinist Order, Gérard Encausse. Papus was an avid occult researcher and devout spiritual seeker, joining such organizations as the Theosophical Society, the Hermetic Brotherhood of Light, the Golden Dawn, OTO, the Rites of Memphis and Mizraim, and the Gnostic Church. His writings on various occult subjects, including the Qabalah, Tarot, and magic, are still considered to be classic works on the secret tradition.

## **Israel Regardie**

1907–1985

Israel Regardie—English occultist, therapist, alchemist, and author—was one of the most important advocates of the esoteric tradition of the 20th century. He played a critical role in preserving and publishing the writings of Aleister Crowley, for whom he worked as a personal secretary, as well as in reviving the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Dr. Regardie was a friend to all spiritual seekers, and his writings exhibit his sensible approach to the mysteries. Among the most important of his works are *The Golden Dawn*, *What You Should Know about the Golden Dawn*, *The Eye in the Triangle*, and *Healing Energy Prayer and Relaxation*.

## **Idries Shah**

1924–1996

Idries Shah, the Sufi mystic, magician, and author, was born in India and raised in England. His teachings on magic, meditation, and the spiritual path are based on the universal brotherhood of humanity and on the transcendental aspects of Sufism. His writings introduced many people to the wisdom tradition of the Middle East, most notably his translation of the exploits of Mulla Nasrudin.

## **Arthur Edward Waite**

1857–1942

Arthur Edward Waite was an American-born author and occultist. At a young age, his father died and his family moved to England, where he was raised. Waite first began his study of occultism after the death of his sister, becoming especially interested in psychical research. He studied various forms of mysticism, joining the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, Freemasonry, and Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia. After the schism of the Golden Dawn, Waite formed the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross. His writings on the history of Western esotericism as well as his translations of classical works, along with his Rider-Waite Tarot deck, have firmly placed him among the most important occult authors of the 20th century.

## Conclusion

The first and last great frontier of human discovery is consciousness. It is from this frontier that humanity has derived all its pleasures, aspirations, cures, and curses. The secret tradition offers us all a vehicle for the exploration of this vast terrain, one that may be fitted to each individual, regardless of talent or shortcoming. Following the instructions of those who have made this realm their sanctuary, students may see the clouds that hide the summit begin to part, gaining a vision of their Holy Guardian Angel.

When alchemists, mystics, or magicians leave behind their familiar surroundings, journeying out into the wilderness for the solitude that has become their soul's deepest craving, they find that in time their loneliness is shattered by a presence. This presence that intrudes upon their seclusion fills the inanimate with life, yet also seems to empty the moving shadows of self and not self of any meaning. It completely dissolves all barriers and floods existence with the consciousness that is light. Only then is the aim of their curious work finally made clear. For though they may have known it before as a symbol or letter, now the great god Pan has made them understand fully through direct contact with the source of their self.

The revelation of true self, which is indistinguishable from destiny, brings not only illumination for students, but also raises the intelligence and aptitude of the entire species. At the entry to Jung's collective unconscious are doors of perception that swing both ways. It is therefore of great importance that you, my excellent reader, endeavor to exhaust all your faculties in the identification of your own true purpose, hidden as it may be in the most profound recess of your heart. For it is through this adventure that you may enlighten, comfort, and sustain the essence of human liberty that is itself the Holy Spirit of the World.

## Further Reading

Along with the books mentioned within the text, these works are highly recommended.

### Alchemy

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## **About the Author**

Daniel Pineda is a martial arts teacher, practitioner of the Mystery Tradition, and a devotee of liberty. He holds black belts in several Eastern and Western martial disciplines, including Qigong. He lives in south Florida. This is his first book.

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**James Wasserman**

editor of *Aleister Crowley and the Practice of the Magical Diary* and author of *An Illustrated History of Solomon's Temple*

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ISBN: 978-1-57863-485-9

