



THE MYSTICISM OF THE ROYAL ARCH

by the late

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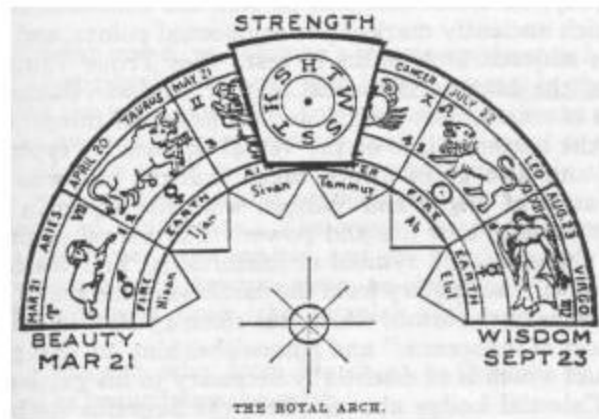
PREFACE

The title of this paper does not imply that mysticism is confined in Masonry to the Royal Arch alone, and that there is none in the Craft degrees. On the contrary, as the First Principal informs the newly exalted Royal Arch candidate, the degree he has just taken is but a completion of the Third degree in Craft Masonry, thus inferring that the Royal Arch is an integral part of Craft Masonry and, therefore, the conclusion of the latter's mystical teaching.

As will be seen later, there is, in my opinion, a very good reason for separating the three Craft or blue degrees from the Royal Arch ceremony; for the blue degrees take us through our experiences during our life on this earth and the Royal Arch then tries to initiate us into the Grand Mystery of the Life hereafter. And just as death on earth is not the final end of Man's saga, so the Third degree in the "Blue" is not the end of our Masonic teaching. In fact, this is implied when the candidate is "raised from a figurative death" but is left wondering in the Limbo of Unknowing, when he is told that "the genuine secrets of a master mason were lost by the untimely death of our Master H.A.". To tide him over, however, the candidate is given certain "substituted secrets", a sort of Ariadne's thread or guide through the maze which mystically points out the timeless transition (through *χαίρος* and *not χρόνος*) between life on earth and life hereafter. We find this same teaching in Greek mythology - Theseus in the Cretan maze - and mysteries (Eleusinian), as well as in almost every other mystical writings (the Cloud of Un-knowing, the Dark Night of St. John of the Cross, etc.).

Now, if the Royal Arch were not an integral part of Craft Masonry, the latter would be an incomplete teaching. In fact, it would no longer be mystical but purely allegorical, because the essence of a mystical teaching is to give man a glimpse of what lies beyond death and to show him its intimate connection with

what lies this side of death: birth and life are otherwise as inexplicable as death.



BIRTH

We begin our mystical instruction in Craft Masonry with the First degree where all the symbolism points out our introduction to the $\mu\omega\iota\mu\alpha$ to which the Grand Architect of the Universe has called us. Our state at this moment, one of the two great mystical ones in our life, is clearly engraved in our minds by our preparation before the ceremony and by the impressive ritual reminder, during the ceremony, that we enter life on earth "poor and penniless, and in a state of helpless indigence".

LABOUR

The Second degree symbolically refers to the life of toil and sweat which lies before us at birth and behind us at death. It also points out the line of progress we must follow during that material phase of our existence; and as our existence is material during that interval, progress lies mainly in raising the level of Matter, hence the importance attached to Science, which is the highest level of Man's labour on the material plane. Even the Almighty is referred to in that degree as the Grand Geometrician of the Universe.

It is unfortunate that the general run of uninitiated humanity, and alas, even many masons fail to realise that scientific progress should always and only be directed towards the ultimate Pattern, or Master Design of the Grand Geometrician of the Universe.

DEATH

"...and when by means of that contemplation she has conducted you through the intricate windings of this mortal life, she finally instructs you how to die."

I wonder how many realise how closely the ritual of the Third degree symbolises the $\chi\alpha\iota\mu\omega\varsigma$ or "moment" of death? Those who have been at death's door, either in sickness, or by drowning, and then brought back to life, have all witnessed to

the fact that their whole life passed before them in review: so does the ritual recapitulate the whole of our masonic teaching before taking us through the "gates of Hades".

Then we are raised, but left in a state of wondering bewilderment: where do we go from there? From that stage of transition which, according to the Tibetan Book of the Dead, lasts forty-nine days? We are merely given a tenuous direction, and it is not until the exaltation in the Royal Arch that the final revelation completes our resurrection.

INTRODUCTION

The Royal Arch ritual tries to convey to us a picture of the life hereafter. This is a real life, and the certitude of its existence is ingrained in us from tradition, from education and upbringing, as well as from a sort of sixth sense supplementing the common sense reasoning that life on earth, with all its tribulations, would be pointless if there were no form of life or existence hereafter.

However, to picture the life beyond is very difficult indeed. No one has been beyond death, or been able to tell us what it is like: who could convey an accurate impression of the odour of a rose to anyone who had never smelt one? So we have to rely on the utterances of visionary mystics; and the proof that these utterances have some foundation of reality, even if incomprehensible to us, lies in the striking similarity of their statements: that life beyond is a very close-knit integration- or communion - with the Supreme Being, whatever he may be called: יהוה , Brahmah, Allah, Ιησοῦ, Christ. Every single mystic has borne witness to this re-integration with the Source of all creation,

ה' אלהינו , of the Kabbalah, and some of them have even been fortunate enough to see this in a vision.

Without disclosing any secrets of the Royal Arch, I can say that, in my opinion, this is what this degree illustrates by its symbolism.

Its ritual attempts to re-integrate us with the True and Living God Most High, in the same way as the Craft rituals try to integrate us with spiritual Birth, Life and Death respectively. This re-integration with the Supreme Source and Essence can only be achieved by a mystical union.



DEFINITION

Before proceeding any further, I feel that the word "Mysticism" ought to be defined so as to clarify the meaning attached to it

when related to the Royal Arch, or any other esoteric ritual. Chamber's English dictionary defines "Mysticism" as the "habit and tendency of religious thought and feeling of those who seek direct communion with God or the Divine": in other words what the buddhists call "Nirvana" and the christians "Communion of Saints".

I must also caution the reader that this paper is not an authoritative pronouncement. As with all mystical writings, whether by the Saints, the Kabbalists or the Dervishes, or by those who merely aspire to mysticism, it is a purely personal communication, so personal that, with some of you with different upbringing or outlook, it may not strike the right chord to lead you through to a similar understanding. For some of you, however, it may touch the right spot and awaken in you that Divine spark we all have in us and enable you to hear once more - or perhaps for the very first time - that "still small voice" (1 Kings, xix, 12) which for most of us unfortunately is so very silent, so very frequently silent.

Therefore, this paper is not a pronouncement *ex cathedra Arcani Regalii*, i.e. authoritatively from the chair of the Royal Arch, in one chapter of which I am in at present, but *de profundis spiriti mei*, in other words, out of the depths of my own feelings and emotions. As such, and only as such, you must take it or leave it.

RITUAL

For those readers who are but Master Masons, a brief explanation of the Royal Arch ritual, without improper disclosure, is called for, if they are to understand more clearly the import of the subsequent paragraphs of this paper. However, it must be pointed out straightaway that a full understanding will not be attained until the reader has not only been exalted in the Royal Arch, but also passed through the three Principals' Chairs: even the candidate is ritualistically informed that the full secrets of the Royal Arch are not communicated and a full understanding of the degree is not attained until he has passed those Chairs.

As in the Craft degrees, there is a preparation before the ceremony, although it is more verbal than vestimentary. The Craft degrees' pattern is then closely followed with the entrusting and calling for a password leading to the degree, after which the ceremony proper culminates in the exaltation of the candidate, in which the actual degree is conferred with the communication of the Ineffable Word which was lost at the traditional time in which the Third degree was originally enacted, and subsequently rediscovered, again according to masonic tradition, at the time when the Royal Arch ceremony first took place. Then follow three lectures given to the candidate, one by each of the three Principals, and corresponding roughly to the Charge after Initiation, the Second Tracing Board and the Traditional History, which are given respectively in the First, Second and Third degree of the Craft.

The first lecture is the Historical Lecture, which retraces the history of early masonry and of the first masons, some of whom are mentioned in Craft masonry, e.g. King Solomon. The second lecture is the Symbolical Lecture and,

in a way, can be compared to the giving of the working tools in the three Craft degrees, all rolled into one - except that the tools and ornaments described are different. The Symbolical Lecture is in fact a transposition in the life hereafter of the lectures on the working tools of this life as given in the Craft degrees. It therefore has a symbolism all of its own and aims, in my opinion, to raise the candidate's feelings to his Higher Feeling, his emotions to his Higher Emotion (cfr. Fig. 2).

The third lecture is actually called the Mystical Lecture and it is the apotheosis of the degree. It was the point at which the First Principal hoped to raise the whole of the assembly of companions, the Sanhedrim, into a mystical vision and union with the True and Living God Most High. Thereby lies the supreme importance of the Mystical Lecture; and it is very unfortunate that, nowadays, too many First Principals give this lecture merely as a perfunctory recitation and only worry about getting it word perfect, even though they might render the sense of those words meaningless by mispunctuation and lack of emphasis at the crucial lines.

The same applies, even if to a lesser extent, to the other two lectures which are virtually the sole performance of the other two Principals during the ceremony proper. Notwithstanding the small verbal part given to the Second and Third Principals, the Royal Arch chapter is a true triumvirate, in the same way as the Craft lodges are autocracies: the Worshipful Master rules alone in a lodge, in the sense that he has full say and is not required to consult his wardens; the three Principals rule together in consultation, three in one, as a trinity. This is again symbolical of the triune essence of the Deity, as expounded in the mystical writings of all religions, including the very strictly monotheistic Hebrew and Muslim faiths (*vide* the Zohar, a Kabbalistic work, and various Sufi writings).

In fact, it was not so long ago that the whole ritual of the Royal Arch was entirely done in "threes": at the beginning of this century, only the three Principals and as many past First Principals as could form whole groups of three could attend the opening of the chapter; no exaltation could take place unless there were three candidates. Nowadays, the "guide" of the candidate and his assistant (equivalent to the deacons in Craft Masonry) act as the other two candidates, the former having the second most important role in the performance of the ritual. If there are two candidates at the same time, the "assistant guide" stands down, thereby preserving the threesome. The importance attached to the symbolism of the triune essence shows that the Royal Arch deals with our relation to God, in the same way as Craft Masonry deals with our relation to Man - -this is actually stated in the ritual - and we hope that the symbolism of the Word, which is at last found in this degree, will succeed in bringing us as close to the Ultimate TRUTH - God is Truth - as we can hope to achieve while yet in this earthly life.

I apologise to Royal Arch masons for what may seem to them a dreary preamble to my paper proper, as read in open chapter, but they might have found in these explanations a clarification of what, to them, should be common knowledge but is to him, who is but a Master Mason, a yet unfolded mystery, and link up more closely in their minds the ritual of the Supreme Degree of the life hereafter to the three degrees of the life herein.

HISTORY

Most Royal Arch masons are familiar with the ritual wording of the Mystical Lecture in the Supreme Degree of the Royal Arch Chapter of Jerusalem, but I wonder how many have paused to consider the implication behind the title given to this lecture by the originators of the Royal Arch ritual? The first lecture delivered by J., the Historical Lecture, is self explanatory: it narrates the history, albeit allegorical, of the development of the three major phases of Traditional Masonry. I said "Allegorical"; in fact, whether intended or not by the authors of the ritual, it sums up the three major dis-coveries of Monotheism in Man's search for a true Religion – or Religious Truth:

1. GOD, the awe inspiring Spirit, the Creator,
OMNIPOTENT

ד י ה ל א

the ELOHIM of the First Commandment proclaimed unto Moses amid lightning and thunder, fire and flame, which inspired our First Grand Master to exclaim: "Thou shalt FEAR the Lord thy God!" (Deuteronomy vi, 13). This is the God of the "Magnificat".

2. GOD, the Almighty, the Ruler, the Judge,
OMNISCIENT

י ד ש ל א

EL SHADAI which are actually the Hebrew words for THE ALMIGHTY.

This is the God of Wrath, the God Who punishes but likewise, the God of Wisdom Who inspired our Second Grand Master, King Solomon, in his judgements, and again, the FEAR of Whom is counselled in Solomon's Proverbs, but this time with a difference which indicates a marked theological or Spiritual progress: it is no longer a *blind* fear, but a *wise* fear.

3. GOD, the Personal, the Merciful, the Eternal, Ever Caring,
OMNIPRESENT

ה ו ה י

the Great "I AM" and yet, the God of Love - God the Father, the Forgiver of Sins, who brought our Third Grand Master, Zerubbabel, out of cap-tivity to put him back on the throne of his fore-fathers, and Who said to His beloved people, through the mouth of His prophet Haggai: "I AM with you". (Haggai i, 13).

SYMBOLISM

The second lecture, delivered by H., - the Symbolical Lecture is again self

evident. It goes through all the ornaments of the Chapter, movable and immovable, and proceeds to expound on their symbolism. Once again, it is interesting to note that "Mysticism", as defined by the dictionary, underlies the main theme of this lecture as well, since a major proportion of it dwells on the symbolism of the Divinity. In the greater part of the text, this subject is only glossed over: this lecture merely makes reference to "The Sacred Word", yet it is the forerunner of the Mystical Lecture, not only in that it is a preface to it, but also in that it can be interpreted as pointing to at least seven Schools of mystical revelations, spread over four different sections of the lecture: -

1. The prehistoric cave mysticism (Cromagnon and others), and the Eleusinian mysticism of Germination (i.e. the mysteries of Nature), as hinted by the Vault and its sacred contents.
2. Kabbalistic mysticism, as evident in the arrangements of the Lights, and the Seal of Solomon in the Jewel worn by the companions.
3. Pythagorean and Neo-Platonic mysticism, both in the brief reference to the five Platonic Bodies and in the more detailed explanation of the triangulations of the Lights and the geometry of the Triple Tau and the Jewel.
4. The two famous mysticisms which in fact probably belong to one and the same School, because they are so strikingly similar that they have the appearance of being identical, i.e. the Hebraic mysticism of the Merkabah vision of Ezekiel (Ezekiel, chapter 1); and the Christian mysticism of the Apocalyptic vision of St. John (Revelation, chapter 4). Both have the same mystical vision of the Shekinah Glory or Divine Immanence riding in an incandescent chariot of flames, drawn by the same four Angelic Beasts: the Man, the Lion, the Ox and the Eagle (Ezekiel i, 10 and Revelation iv, 7), the emblems of the Patriarchal Blessing, which were later borne on the standards of the four leading tribes who ruled respectively over the South, East, West and North columns in marching, camping or fighting order, during the Exodus (Numbers, chapter 2). - Cfr. Fig. 1.

TRADITION

It might be appropriate to point out, at this juncture, that the whole of the Royal Arch ceremony is the Mystical Phase, glimpsed in most religions and seen in all the mysteries enacted throughout the ages, of the Craft ceremonies; and, as in most religions and all mystery plays, it refers to the Resurrection, or Rebirth or Regeneration on a higher spiritual plane after death in our present material plane, depicted in the Third Degree of the Craft, which followed the working life of man, represented in the Second Degree, the whole preceded by birth on this same material plane, illustrated most forcefully by our Initiation ceremony. The same sequence is found in the esoteric Book

of Enoch, the Tibetan and the Egyptian Books of the Dead, the Mysteries of



Fig. - 1 The Encampment of the Tribes During Exodus

Eleusis, the

Tales of the many lives of Gautama the Buddha, both the Kabbalistic and Hasidic versions of Jewish Mysticism, Platonism and Neo-Platonism, the Christian liturgy (e.g. the Mass), and Sufi Mysticism of Islam (as exemplified by the ritual dance of the Mevlevhi or Whirling Dervishes). All this only goes to show the fantastic unity of aim and common purpose in the main religions and esoteric mysteries in the World, throughout the ages.

Although it is common knowledge that the main religions in the World count their adepts in millions, and even in hundreds of millions, it is seldom realised, in the sceptical western hemisphere, that esoteric rituals and mysteries number thousands of initiates in the East, from true Fakirs and Yogis to Tibetan Buddhist monks. In the Near East, Islam has its Sufis and Dervishes, the latter despite almost constant attempts by every government to wipe them out. In the West, there are the little known "inner circles" of certain major Catholic and Greek and Russian Orthodox Monastic Orders; but contrary to the East which is still prolific in them, the only Mystery which still flourishes in the Western Civilisation is Freemasonry, the mysticism of which has alas been supplanted by more worldly and materialistic virtues, instead of enhancing the latter, and the ritual of which means less and less to more and more of its most ardent and word perfect exponents.

If the major religions of the World display a striking similarity of aim and purpose, when you come to the more illuminated mystics, such as St. Theresa of Avila, Abraham Abulafia or Ibn Arabi, to name but three well-known representative visionaries in the three basic Monotheistic religions with a common source; or when you read works like the Upanishads, the I Ching, the Bagavad Gita and the Zohar, belonging to the cultures of such different types of human beings, you are at once struck by the similarity in the Ideas about the Deity, and even the resemblance in the imagery used to translate what can be but a supra natural emotion into a natural sensorial representation.

That alone should be sufficient proof of the Oneness of God. Alas, the enormous difficulty of materialising what can only be a spiritual revelation of the Shekinah

Glory or Divine Immanence, has usually rendered both the mystics and their sayings quite unintelligible to their fellow men, and many suffered martyrdom because they were so misunderstood that they were actually taken to be heretics of their own faith, the very faith in which they were trying so hard to instil a new and more vigorous life. The kindest treatment which was dispensed to these mystics was to deride their sayings as the ravings of the insane: It is a tenuous line of demarcation which separates the mystic and genius from the lunatic and simpleton.

MYSTICISM

When we come to the Mystical Lecture proper, delivered by the M.E.Z., we reach the second apotheosis of the Degree; the first one being the restoration of Light to the candidate, which symbolically gives him a full realisation of his resurrection by the material inter-mediary of the P.S.'s hands. The mysticism of the First Lecture was elemental, superficial: a simple tuning-in (to use a scientific term in electronics) of the candidate's inner mind to the right wavelength. It corresponds to that part of the body of man which is already normally attuned to the Higher Level, the Will of God, for the very reason that man has virtually no control over it - -I am speaking of the "Moving Instinct", the auto-nomous bodily functions such as digestion, metabolism, blood circulation, etc.

The mysticism of the Second Lecture is deeper, the wavelength, now tuned, is amplified - to stick to the previous electronic terminology. Here, the mystical dis-sertation on the Almighty is broached more deeply with an analogy to the Merkabah and Apocalyptic visions. The aim of the symbolical lecture is to transfer the candidate from his common emotional centre to his Higher Emotional Centre - room No. 5 in the "House of Man" - by guiding him through what Aldous Huxley called "The Doors of Perception" (He used Mescaline and Lysergic acid for that purpose).

Finally, the ceremony reaches its crescendo in the Mystical Lecture proper and, if our bodies were really tuned-in to the right wavelength, sufficiently amplified, we would reach the Point of Resonance. For this, the three parts of us, which we can more or less control, must be synchronised in perfect ATTENTION: i.e. our body, our emotions and our mind. This, the Mystical Lecture tries to achieve again for us, and it starts with the body - as we all know, the first third of this lecture deals with the mysticism of the R.A. signs and penalties, which are both physical allegories illustrated by bodily actions on the part of Master and Pupil (M.E.Z. and Candidate).

PENITENCE

The first sign tells us to sever our head, i.e. our intellect from the process. Normal or logical intellect - room No. 3 - which is the only function Western

Civilisation can control properly, is grossly misused - -overused. It is put to tasks which do not belong to it. This first injunction would be quite unnecessary in the East. This was indeed the punishment of Adam: the forbidden fruit he ate came from the Tree of Knowledge. Why did he not choose the fruit of the Tree of Life? - He was already endowed with its elemental properties - contrary to Western popular and psychological belief, the newly born infant of man is fully conscious, AWARE, AWAKE, but without knowledge, it cannot reap the benefit of its consciousness. The shame of it all is that we, in the West, when we try to instil know-ledge in our infants, albeit automatically at first, hence unconsciously and when we are spiritually sound asleep, we send him also to sleep and make him unconscious like ourselves: this is the visiting of the iniquities men-tioned in the first commandment (Exodus xx, 5). It does not take a child many years to reach our state of Being, of which the V.S.L. says: "For they have eyes and do not see, and they have ears and do not hear". This is mentioned eight times in the Old Testament (six times in Isaiah) and four times in the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Paul, Acts).

Thus the first sign forcefully councils us to sever our intellect; and the second sign tells us that, shutting away our intellect with our left hand, we must listen to our heart (or emotions) in the manner of the early Christian Fathers, the mystics of the "Philokalia". This will allow our Being to pass into room No. 4, and the first glimpse we would get of the Shekinah, if we could really do this, would indeed blind us, hence the necessity of copying our Grand Master Moses' action of shielding his eyes. This sign also implies that we should look inwards instead of outwards as we usually do: the "Still Small Voice" is inside us, not outside.

The third sign implies that we have reached the point of "no return", where the agony of our new illumina-tion is unbearable, and we beg the Almighty to help us through "the Doors of Perception". Adam received his knowledge, after eating the fruit, in such rapid and indigestible a manner that he had to beg the Almighty to remove the pain. This could only be done by removing the

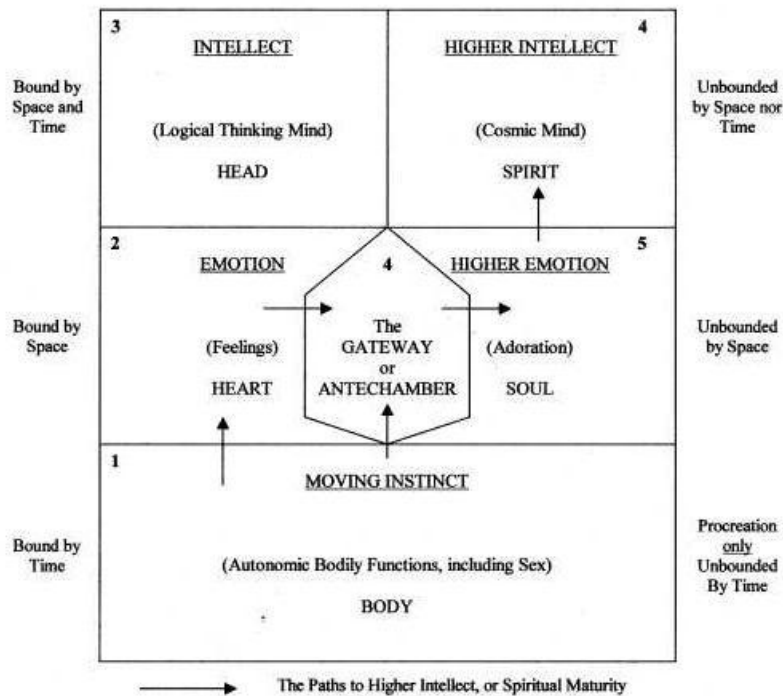


Fig. 2. The Six Roomed House of Man.

source of the indigestion, hence our present state of ignorance which we have to work so hard to overcome; and this we appear to be able to achieve only on a material plane - science and techno-logy. The same fate which befell Adam has driven to insanity many men who, emulating their first ancestor, tried to "steal" the Light of God - the Greeks called it His Thunder or His Fire - by taking shortcuts to a higher spiritual level than that for which they were prepared by their past exertions and understanding: in the East there is many a tale about the pupil who came to a sticky end by using teachings stolen from his Guru, before the latter judged him physically and mentally fit to learn about them. And throughout the five in-habited continents, there is a sad tale of ruin and misery brought about by the ill-advised administration of many different drugs; alas today, even the reason for taking drugs is no longer as lofty as that which prompted the First Man.

AWAKENING

The Monitorial sign is well explained in the ritual lecture and needs no further comment, except that it shows very clearly our state of Being in room No. 4: we cannot do anything and we must let ourselves be carried through this stage by Divine Grace. At this stage of our spiritual progress, our previous exertions or experiences have left us too weak to rise to room No. 5 without Divine Help. If we try to do anything of our own accord, we will only achieve a Negative result which will throw us back into the Negative Emotions of room No. 2; and if we fall

from there, the crash will be much greater - this was the lot of the Fallen Angels - than when we falter daily in our present low state of spiritual development. Hence the number of failed mystics who have become religious bigots and dangerous cranks, plaguing mankind with their negativeness, mis-understanding, distortions and sometimes criminal inter-pretations of Mystical Truth; the V.S.L. is usually the main target and tool of their misrepresentation.

Naturally, as in all apotheoses, the section of the Mystical Lecture which deals with the signs, ends with the Vision of visions and hence the Fiducial sign of Man who has entered room No. 5 of his Higher Emotion and sees the Shekinah in the fullness of Its Material Glory - material only, because we are still on the level of the body: the first third, if you remember, of the Mystical Lecture was designed to raise the body through the rooms of the "House of Man". This is the first step of the entry into the Kingdom of Heaven, or at least, the nearest we can ever get to it on this earth. A glorious luminescence shines all around us, and though we prost-rate ourselves before our Maker, our body is so light and ethereal that we do not actually fall to the ground on our face, but stay in this position and bask in the beatific warmth of the Divine Incandescence. This is the first step in the earthly counterpart of the Com-munion of Saints, the partial integration here on earth of Man, the Microcosm, with his God, the Macrocosm. The progress of Creation, launched in Evolution by the Will of God, has reached its outer boundary of perfec-tion and its ultimate purpose, and the trend is reversed, through Involution by an act of the Free Will accorded by the Creator to His human creature who now begins the steep and arduous return journey back into the Fount of Life and Knowledge, from whence he sprang originally.

CONTEMPLATION

The second and third sections of the Mystical Lecture are closely related to one another, and the former is a sort of introduction to the latter. In fact, the whole composition of the Mystical Lecture is rather like a sonata, and in particular, the C sharp Minor of Beet-hoven, commonly known as the Moonlight Sonata. The first part seems to be an independent theme; the second, a brief interlude at a quicker pace, setting the listener in the right frame of mind to receive the thunderous chromatics of the third and final movement.

After having prepared our body by the first section of the Mystical Lecture, which I shall call the Penitential or Ascetic section, we can turn inwards and look at our soul, the seat of our emotions. The inward looking motion is translated by a descent into the vaulted cham-ber, and this section begins straight away with a descrip-tion of the altar, its centrepiece. In this second section, which I shall call the Contemplative section, the Mysti-cal Lecture is brief: after all, perfect silence, both outward and inward, would be the best method of achieving the desired result of reversing the direction of Attention, i.e. following the inward pointing head of the double headed arrow of Perfect Attention, as so brilliantly

conceived by Gurdjieff and explained by Ouspensky, J. G. Bennett and other disciples who taught his philosophy. However, in a ritual which conveys its symbolism through language, a pause of about two and a half minutes - the time it takes to enounce this portion properly - would be as incongruous as a completely silent second movement of the same duration in a three part piece of music like the above-mentioned sonata. It would also defeat its intended purpose, particularly with Western man for whom complete silence of any duration is more distracting than conducive to contemplation - judging from our educational, and even social habits such as "sending a man to Coventry", silence is considered in the West and even used as an effective means of punishment. Therefore, what should have been a pause to reflect on oneself and listen for the "still small Voice" has been filled with an unobtrusive patter which gradually builds up to the first crescendo of the Apocalyptic third section.

APOCALYPSE

The second section assumes that our mind has been quietened in the first one (first or penal sign) and that our body is already in room No. 5. It therefore merely takes our emotions from room No. 2 to room No. 4, leading us gently to the threshold of the door to room No. 5 and, when the soul rejoins the body in this latter room, then comes the apotheosis, the Revelation in the third section which I have called the Apocalyptic section of the Mystical Lecture, and in truth, of the whole ceremony and Degree.

When body and soul are both in room No. 5, then the Spirit descends upon us from room No. 6 and transports us there to reveal to us the Divine Immanence within us. All mystical writings of all religions and mysteries culminate in the same revelation of the Divine Name. The only variance is in the Name Itself, which naturally is the one which phonetically fits the language of, and inspires the greatest emotional uplift to the particular race of men to whom that religion or mystery is the guide of their life and the ordinances of their Creator. For the Western Christian, it is the Christ of the Apocalypse of St. John.



Fig. 3. The Double Headed Arrow of Perfect or Concious Attention

For the Eastern or Orthodox Church, it is the 'Ἰησοῦς of the Philokalia. For the Muslim, it is Allah. For the Tibetan Buddhist, it is the names of the Seven Devas. For the early Indo- Europeans of the Sanskrit civilisation, it was Om. For the Zoroastrian, it is Baal (which has become Bul and Bal in our ritual). And for the Hebrew, it is Jah, and more fully, the Mystical Name spelt in the four Hebrew Letters of the Tetragrammaton: י ה ו ה

All these Names have also been called Mantrams and, with the exception of the last One mentioned, are pronounced over and over again, sometimes in a litanical voice, sometimes in a voice increasing in volume to the point of howling the Sacred Name, as is the practice of the Bektashi Dervishes, or Howling

Dervishes, from whose ranks the select Janissaries or shock troops of the Ottoman empire were always recruited (there were seven millions of them in 1820, before steps were taken to suppress the Order to the greatest relief of the Christian world, although it was the Sultan himself who ill advisedly gave the order for their eradication).

Now, this was one commonly used method of attain-ing a state of Divine communion for the mystics of all religions, except the Hebrew Kabbalists and Hasidim. In fact, we are well acquainted with the Western Christian litany: -

Lord, have mercy upon us,

Christ, have mercy upon us,

Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Eastern Church took the "Prayer of the Heart" of the early Fathers of the Philokalia:

Ἰησοῦς, Ἰός Θεοῦ, χύριε ἐλεῖσον

(Jesus, Son of God, have mercy upon me)

The Sufi Dervish howls:

"Allah Akhbah." (God is One)

KABBALISM

The Kabbalist or Hasid was faced with a problem: like all Hebrews - and as mentioned in the second tracing board lecture in Craft Masonry - he was for-bidden to pronounce that Great, Awful, Tremendous and Incomprehensible Name of the Almighty, except perhaps once a year during Kipur, on the day of Atone-ment. Therefore, he fell back on the attributes of the Most High, on the theological premise that God *is* His Attributes; and each School of Kabbalism had its own preferences or pet attribute or attributes. For instance, Abraham Abulafia and many other kabbalists meditated on the famous three verses of the 14th chapter of Exodus, verses 19, 20 and 21 which, in Hebrew, have 72 letters each. The kabbalist read these three verses in Hebrew, forward, backward, then alternating first verse forward, second verse backward and third forward again. Furthermore, the 72 letters of each verse were combined into 72 groups of three letters, i.e. the first three, the second three, etc. and these groups formed 72 Words which became the 72 Names of the Grand Sanhedrim Above, the Sanhedric Archangels Who always accompanied the Shekinah Glory on Its

visi-tations in the material world of His creation.

דְּלִמָּה הִרְחֹא עֲסִיעַ דּוּמָה הִנְעַלְמָה הִנְפּוֹדְמֵי מִ
וְעִסִּימָרְאֵל הֵמִי הֵלֵא הֵךְ לֵהֵלֵינְפֵל הֵנְחֵי לֵאֲרֵשׁוּ
וְיִהְיֶה הִנְעוֹךְ שַׁחַה וְרֵאִי אֵת הֵהֵלֵלִי לֹאֵלְקֵבְרָזָה אֵלְזָה כֵּל הֵ
וְאֵבִיבֵימָה הֵנְחֵמִירְצוֹן יִבְמָה הֵנְחֵי לֵאֲרֵשׁ
תֵּאֵהֱמִיבְחֹרֵק מִירְזָעָה כֵּל הֵהֵלֵלִי לֹמְשֵׁי אֵת הֵמִיל הֵבְרָחוּ וְעִקְבֵי הֵ
וְטִימָה שֵׁאֵתִי וְדַעֵל הֵמִי וְדַלִּי הֵוֵהֵי

Fig. 4. The Shemahamphorash or The Seventy-Two Names of God in His Grand Sanhedrim Above

The above Hebrew characters spell out, in the original, verses 19, 20 and 21 of the 14th chapter of the Book of EXODUS. Each verse has exactly 72 letters. No spacing has been left between the words so that the Mystical 72 Names formed by the grouping of one letter in each verse vertically and downward can be more clearly recognised. In order to make the Scriptural Text, from right to left in each line, more legible, each separate word begins with a Capital or larger letter. The only exception is in the last verse which contains the four lettered Name of God (JHVH); This has been printed all in Capitals and the next word on the left of it has been printed all in small letters (i.e. without beginning with a capital like the others) to distinguish it from the previous Name.

The English translation of these three verses in the Authorized Version of the Old Testament reads as follows: -

19. And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them

20. And it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night.

* 21. And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

* *N.B.* The last of the above three verses forms part of our ritual.

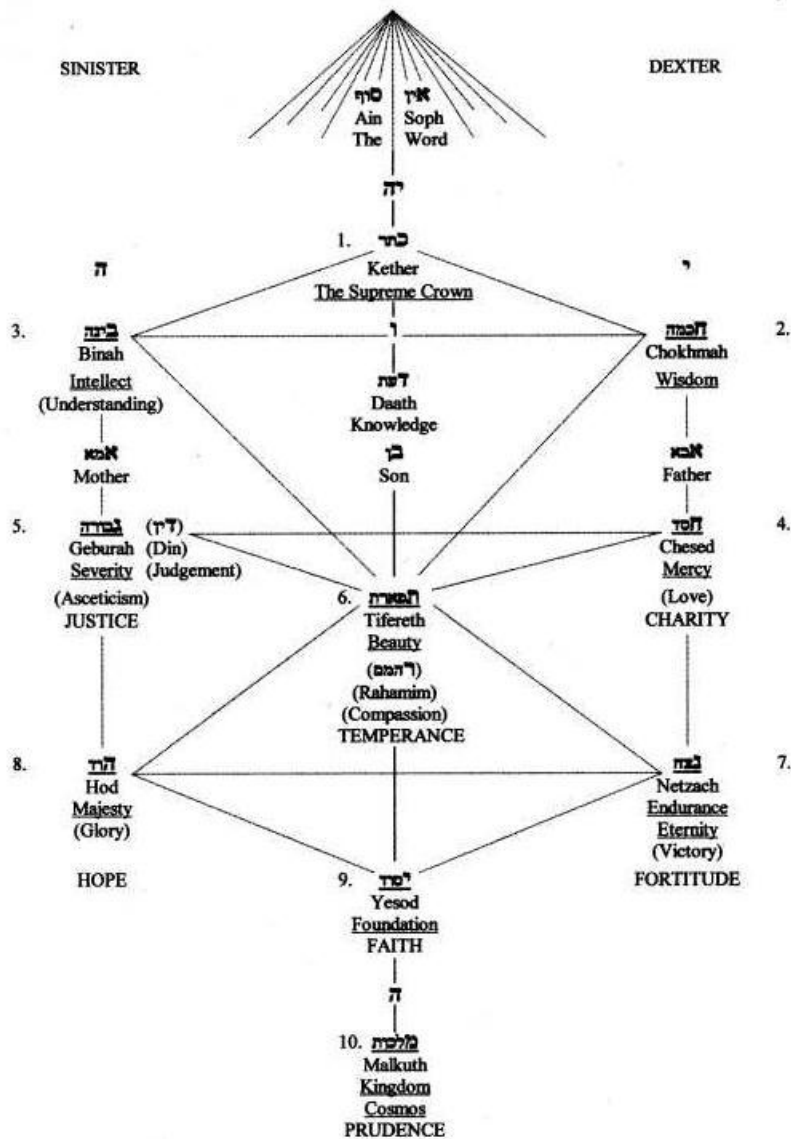


Fig. 5. The Tree of Life or Sephiroic Attributes of The Most High
 N.B. The Seven Principal VIRTUES have been equated with 5 to 10.

Finally, they had the ten Sephiroth of the Zohar, the first three of which have been called the Holy Trinity of the Kabbalah. The whole forms part of the Zoharic vision known as the "Tree of Life", and it starts actually before the first Sephira (the Supreme Crown) with the Incomprehensible Ain Soph (The Word); this is not even an Attribute because it is "That" of the Almighty which has so little connection with His material creation that it cannot even be grasped by the most sensitive electrical impulses of man's brain. Then follow the ten Sephiroth proper, in order of in-creasing connection with His material creation, until we end up with Malkuth, which is the Cosmos, or God in His Creation. I studiously avoided using

the word "materiality" in connection with the Sephiroic Attributes of the Almighty, because the meaning underlying that word, in the mind of the Kabbalists, was completely misconstrued and has led many orthodox but non-mystical rabbis, as well as Gentile scholars, to brand the Kabbalism of the Zohar as Pantheistic: the tenth Sephira, Malkuth, is not the whole of creation itself but the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost which is the Prime Mover behind the creation. Therefore, even Malkuth Itself is not really material and should be translated as Cosmos, in the ancient Greek interpretation of the word, and not Universe, in the modern scientific interpretation of that word. Malkuth is no more material than the Breath which the Almighty breathed into each of us to give us life, as He breathed into the nostrils of Adam (Genesis ii, 7) to raise him from dust to Man.

It is also worth noting the subtle way in which the Divine Attributes or Sephiroth are arranged in increasing order of spiritual relation with the material world They created together: The Supreme Crown, Wisdom, Intellect, Mercy, Severity or Justice, Beauty or Com-*passion*, Endurance or Eternity, Majesty or Glory, Foundation or the Fount, Kingdom or Cosmos.

ILLUMINATION

These are but a few examples of mystical uses of the Divine Names and, in the ritual of the Royal Arch, we have as good an example as in any esoteric School attached to - or should I say "detached from" - an earthly religion. We need no further proof that the paragraph expounding the Word on the Circle is a pure mystical utterance, other than to remind ourselves that it is a repetition and prolongation of the eighth verse in the first chapter of the Revelation of St. John the Divine, since the whole of that New Testament book is apocalyptic or mystical. This is Z. trying to "exalt" his neophyte, i.e. to impart into him a sense of the mystical vision of, or communion he had with the Shekinah at his own exaltation and, later, at his instal-*l*ation ceremony which nowadays is abbreviated beyond recognition.

The description of the Word on the Triangle takes us again through a whole collection of different esoteric Schools of mysticism and finally, the mantram built upon the three letters of the Hebrew alphabet is a very good method of attaining a physiological state of body and psychological state of mind conducive to experiencing a mystical vision - or, as the modern psychiatrist would have it, a schizophrenic hallucination in a state of catalepsy or epilepsy, depending on whether the visionary remains quiescent, or prances about like a Dervish or one of the original Quakers.

JUDGMENT

Is mysticism and its visions, the rantings and ravings of a sex starved (Freud) schizophrenic, useless and weak stripping of humanity, as the materialistic Western world and its scientific psychiatrists would have it? Or is it the first step, here on earth in this life, of our ultimate re-integration into the Creative Force whence we originated, after our resurrection in the life here-after? Is it the degradation of man below the level of an animal, or is it his momentary rising, beyond the three visible dimensions and one time dimension of the material world, to the second and third dimensions of time - eternity and hyper-*axis* - which are the fifth and sixth dimensions of the cosmos? After all, the latter view is that of a brilliant mathematician and physicist such as Raynor C. Johnson, M.A., Ph.D., D.Sc., and the materialistic world of the West thinks him sane enough to make him Master of Queen's College,

University of Melbourne. Is it the loss of one's soul to the devil and eternal damnation, as our forefathers would have it of the inmates of Bedlam? Or is it the highest form of eternal salvation in the only real and true communion with God, whilst we are still alive on this earth?

I leave it to each of you individually to reflect on this greatest of all spiritual dilemmas but, before you make up your mind, let me warn you that, unless you have ever experienced anything of a mystical nature, even a mere taste of it, whether by using the old orthodox methods, or the modern physiological short-cut of taking mescaline or lysergic acid as Aldous Huxley and the Mexican Indians do, or the more habit forming and therefore damaging opiates of the East, there is no means by which you can possibly form a correct opinion on the subject; because mysticism or the intercourse of man with his Creator is such a personal thing that none of us can ever benefit vicariously from the experience of others, unless we learn from them the way to obtain and actually succeed in achieving that experience ourselves.

This may be what the authors of our ritual tried to teach us. If Masonry, and especially the Royal Arch not only means, but is more to us than a mere way of expressing a code of ethics and morality in an unnecessarily verbose mumbo-jumbo; or a childish method of tapping our pockets, by appealing to our inherent vanity, in order to obtain material funds for causes so intrinsically worthy that no artifice should be necessary; or worse still, if Masonry is for us a mere excuse to get away from our work in the afternoon and our wives and families in the evening, to have a good spree and forget for a brief moment our cares and worries, by making merry among friends who, at the festive board of so many lodges and chapters, cannot think of anything better to say than throw verbose bouquets of flowers at each other and pat each other on the back; if Masonry and the Royal Arch in particular mean more to us than any of that, then we acknowledge, however silently or incoherently, the reality and power of mysticism, as well as the good it can achieve for us, individually and as a fraternity; and, through us, for uninitiated humanity at large by raising it one or more rungs higher on Jacob's ladder of Awareness and Awakening towards communion with the True and Living God Most High, and the eventual transcendental integration in the life hereafter of the human creature with his Divine Creator.

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N.B. Many spurious books by what I believe to be misguided authors (the blind leading the blind!) have yet been a source of inspiration to me in reminding me more forcibly of the narrowness of the Path and the abysmal and chaotic pitfalls which lie on either side, thus guiding me by their unconscious and unintentional warnings as much as the true illuminations have by their conscious directives.

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