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New If Age **Interpreter**

A magazine issued quarterly devoted to studies designed to aid the modern seeker to a spiritual reorientation in the light of the Ageless Wisdom. Eight issues \$2.75—Four issues \$1.50—35c a copy. Theodore Heline, Editor

VOL. XX OCTOBER-NOVEMBER-DECEMBER, 1959 NO. 4

J O B — J. B.

THE BIBLICAL DRAMA RECAST FOR THE CONTEMPORARY STAGE

In a paraphrased form, the Book of Job, the immortal drama of ancient days and sacred literature, has just concluded a ten-months long run on the New York stage. J. B. is the simple title given to the transcription by the author, Archibald MacLeish.

Like its prototype of old, this up-to-the-minute play voices the soul-searching cry of man for more light on the mysteries of human existence. It presents anew the eternal problem of good and evil, the theological doctrine of original sin and the ever-present question as to how the uneven lots of fate drawn by men can be made to equate with a God of Law, Love and Justice.

As a play it has proven surprisingly and amazingly successful. As a soul-searching drama it has won wide attention, created great interest and provoked animated discussion in most diverse quarters. As theatre, as literature, as philosophy, as theology it has been the subject of numerous reviews and articles in the popular press and also in the more scholastic and religious journals.

The opinions expressed are widely divergent. On the unfavorable side the *Christian Century*, for example, was severely critical. It called the play "A Clear Miss." However, this same journal gave considerable space in succeeding issues to opinions expressed by readers who took a decidedly favorable view of the controversial drama.

The National Catholic Weekly, *America*, was also negative in its judgments calling the play "spotty indeed," and the title role "so pale as to be almost invisible at noon." *Commonweal* dismissed the play as exhibiting no more than "a vapid ethicism and a cheating secular mystique... such as belong to the phenomena of our time."

One reviewer found the play "neither satisfactory to intellect nor to the dramatic sense," while yet another confesses he came away frankly "disturbed and annoyed" because to him it just didn't make anything clear!

The foregoing opinions, which are fairly representative of adverse reaction to *J. B.*, have been more than counterbalanced by words of great appreciation and high praise. To cite a few, *The Saturday Review* sees *J. B.* as not only an "intrinsically great play," but as one that "sets the model from which great poetic drama may hope to follow in our time." *Theatre Arts* finds it "extremely effective theatre," and also "extremely comforting in times like these." Wm. S. White writes in *Harpers Magazine* that Mr. MacLeish has "written a profoundly understanding commentary on the orthodox doctrine of original sin, although he is wholly without orthodox training."

Naturally those associated with the production would be expected to think highly of it, but in their estimates they have spoken for many. Thus, for example, to Mr. Boras Aronson, designer of the stage sets, *J. B.* is "an epic, a heroic play that deals with timeless issues," and the stage director, Elia Kazan, calls it "a rarity, a challenge—not looking to authority, old laws or masters unseen."

More important than the professional pros and cons is the interest and favor with which the play has been received by the general public in both its printed form and stage production. Its success has been quite remarkable, and the more so when one considers that the play is not entertainment, that biblical themes have a very limited popular appeal unless they are treated in a spectacular manner, as, for instance, the currently showing film production of *The Big Fisherman*. Also that most people go to the theatre for a brief respite from daily toil and trouble, not to spend a couple of hours in its gripping embrace. However, as one writer expressed it, while the play *J. B.* is "grim and horrifying, it is somehow never depressing." This is a telling observation. *J. B.* is not depressing because the treatment given the tragedy is such that it rises from the plane of the sordid to levels whereon it becomes essentially chastening and transmutative in its effects upon the beholder. The degree to which this occurs is the measure of merit and greatness of any work of art.

That *J.B.* has rated well by this test may be judged best, not by what critics think of it, but by the hold it had on the audiences that went to see it. And they continued to go in spite of the running complaint by many that it failed to answer the questions it raised and offered no solution to the problems propounded. While this is true, there is still that in the play which grips the attention, that focusses the mind on the deeper issues of life, and that sets soul currents into motion that awaken intimations of a living relationship of man's inner undying fire with that of the universal Oversoul.

In view of the several obvious factors that might have militated against the success of the play, both author and producer must have been well prepared for its meeting with a fate no better than another of Mr. MacLeish's plays, *Panic*, which closed after only two performances. That was in 1935. But both were ready to risk failure with *J.B.* There was something imperative about it. "The question of commercial success," said Alfred de Liagre, Jr., the producer, "was a secondary consideration...but even in the theatre virtue is sometimes rewarded."

So it has been with *J.B.* The efforts expended upon it are paying off handsomely. It is fulfilling its intended purpose. That purpose is not to hand out easy ready-made answers to an unthinking public to the profound questions it raises, even if that were possible, which it is not. The mysteries of life are not simple, the half hundred questions the Lord hurled at Job, none of which he could answer, seemed to make that clear; and clear it is to Mr. MacLeish, for he has expressly stated that he is offering no solution, that he does not have the answers, that he is wrestling, as best he knows how, with the problems posed, and presenting them in a form that he hopes will stimulate others to further creative thinking and spiritual probing toward the greater light that all are seeking on the deathless and measureless truths of human existence. So it appears that the same longing and spiritual hunger for greater wisdom and understanding that must have been the basic motive in authoring and staging the play that involved risking both financial loss and public rejection, is what was at the heart of the people who went to see it. They went to this puzzling, questioning play in the hope that it might perchance throw some added light on the mysteries of human experience.

For everyman is Job. That is why Mr. MacLeish chose the Book of Job as the framework for his drama. Says he, "When you're dealing with a problem that is way beyond you, you reach for something to build within. The Book of Job is the only great ancient myth that contains the problems of today, the voice of a man crying out for reason and justice in the universe." He gives it as his hope that

the play will help people "to live through the most profound, disturbing problem any generation can face, and this one more than all." Mr. MacLeish observes further that the worst fear from which men suffer is that the universe is meaningless. To him it is not. His play is clearly designed to counteract such fear. It concludes by voicing a faith in man, in his powers to survive. It points to purpose, significance and meaning. While the meaning envisioned is not that vouchsafed by Divine Revelation it is humanistically positive and reassuring.

Mr. MacLeish's problem play is done in free verse. It flows along easily, freely, colloqually. It has beauty and imagination. It has been pronounced "great poetry," and one commentator ventured the opinion that no greater poetry has been done in our language since Shakespeare. The verse is keyed to the tempo and rhythm of our time. In feeling and form it springs naturally and unlabored from what lives in the world this day. At no point does it suggest in style, manner or atmosphere anything borrowed from the past except the timeless mysteries with which it deals. While its theme is ageless, its treatment is of the living, throbbing, troubled present.

Mr. MacLeish, it may be added at this point, knows well the maelstrom in which the masses of men are immersed at this time of tension, strife and struggle. While one of America's most distinguished men of letters, and thrice winner of the Pulitzer Prize for poetry, he has made intimate acquaintance with what is moving in the depths of the masses of men. He has served as head of the Library of Congress, as Assistant Director of the Office of War Information and as Assistant Secretary of State. What he creates, therefore, in his literary art forms spring not from mystical meditations in solitary retreats but from out of the hard actualities of everyday life as it is lived in the world of action today. Such is the personal backdrop to Mr. MacLeish's dramatic paraphrase of the Book of Job.

The Story of J.B.

Let us now look to the play itself—its realism, symbolism, speculations, theological implications, affirmations and cosmic overtones.

The entire action takes place inside a circus tent, a setting which incorporates mysteries of its own. It suggests the shelter and security under which J.B. and family dwell comfortably until misfortune overtakes them. Then when the tent collapses, the tragic figure of J.B. is seen alone in utter desolation, with empty space around him and the vast, unanswering heavens above.

In a corner of the stage is a platform set up to accommodate a side show. On the stage lie some discarded religious vestments. The

curtain rises on an empty tent. The audience is gone. A few feeble lights dangle from scrappy wires. It is late night.

Thus does the setting strike the keynote of the play. It is the world's stage on which the human drama is being enacted in the dim light of these latter days under the "big-top" of the blue-domed heavens. Creedal beliefs have been left behind and empty seats bespeak the spiritual emptiness from which the modern world is suffering.

As in the Book of Job, there is a Prologue. Two characters appear, Mr. Zuss and Nickles (he is no mister), names suggesting the roles they are to play as God and Satan respectively. They are broken-down old actors that have been reduced to mere circus vendors, circumstances aptly suggesting the relegation by modern man of a theology that once occupied the center of the religious scene but which can no longer be accorded its former prominence. Mr. Zuss sells balloons, Nickles, popcorn—inflated products both. Like words void of course, they have more breath than substance.

Nick has the best of it. His offering tastes good. Everybody likes it. It always moves well, and fast. Not so with Mr. Zuss. The best he can do is to sell an occasional balloon—to a child.

At intervals these two actors, with extravagant rhetorical flourishes, play their assigned parts, their lines taken directly from the Book of Job. When playing their parts as God and Satan, they don masks. That of Mr. Zuss is white, expressionless, and with closed eyes; Nick's is dark, open-eyed, with a mischievous twinkle, and with mouth drawn in disgust.

The actors, when not playing their assigned roles supply a running commentary on the ways of gods and men. They serve the same purpose as did the Chorus in ancient Greek drama.

J.B. with his wife and five children are gathered around the table for their Thanksgiving Day dinner. As they recount their blessings J.B. confesses that he is well aware that God is on his side—always has been!

But apparently He does not remain so much longer. Soon after, one tragedy after another overtakes the family. The oldest son is killed in battle; two die in a traffic accident, one daughter is raped and murdered and the other dies under a crumbled wall. J.B.'s bank goes up in smoke, all his wealth wiped out. Next he succumbs to a pustulent skin disease, and finally his wife, Sarah, who can no longer believe that God is "on their side," leaves him. She takes her husband to task for not fighting back, for not repudiating a faith that has proven empty, for not defying fate and cursing the God they had trusted.

Stripped of everything and left alone in his physical misery and soul agony, J.B. still holds fast to his integrity and to his faith.

Three friends, Bildad, Eliphaz and Zophar come to bring him solace. One may be classed as a materialist, another as a psychologist and the third as a religionist. Their "wisdom" brings no light on J.B.'s problems. His basic queries remain unanswered. He cannot accept Zophar's doctrine that his sufferings are due to sins for which he must repent. J.B. knows naught for which he can repent, and yet he concludes that somehow there must be guilt. "Guilt matters," he is now convinced. "Unless guilt matters the whole world is meaningless."

J.B. prays again and again to God for an answer to the riddle of life. At length there comes to him at least the assurance that God *is*, as he testifies later. This conviction comes to him with the rushing of a wind.



At this point of crisis in J.B.'s life, the "comforters" have slipped away, and utter loneliness envelops him. Then events take a turn that sets him on the road to recovery. Sarah returns. Her role at this point in the drama is a counterpart of the arrival of Elihu in the Book of Job, but whereas the latter brought Job a Divine Illumination, Sarah was not able to bring to J.B. more than a comparatively feeble human light. Sarah came carrying in her hand a budding forsythia that she had plucked from out of an ash heap. It spoke to her of life's universal urge to perpetuate itself, even under the barest and most forbidding conditions and circumstances.

Therein lay the baffling problem with which J.B. and Sarah were struggling. How can there be a continuing urge to live on when

life is so tragically laden with want and pain, sorrow and suffering? From where comes the hope of good from out of the midst of evil? Is there an explanation to this riddle of life? What is behind this apparently inexplicable miracle of life's longing to go on when to human reasoning nothing could be more desirable than to bring it to an end by dying?

J.B. had no answers. His wife, with the keener feminine intuition, makes a tentative approach to where there is an indication an answer might be found. She speaks of love—not of God but of that which God is. Love, she divines, is the power that enables man to go on living in spite of the opposing forces of death.

J.B. cannot see that God is love, but he does affirm His existence. Sarah is not satisfied with J.B.'s position, but granting for argument's sake that God is not love, she insists that "we humans love, and that is the wonder." She senses that in this love for one another is something that transcends reason, that gives meaning to life, and that somehow has eternity in it. In other words she is convinced that love is the glorious and liberating power that corresponds to what she thinks of as God, even though she finds herself unable to give it precise definition and makes no attempt to relate it to theological doctrine or religious beliefs. It is a case of an intuitive grasp of Reality trying to find expression through the unseeing, doubting mind and to make contact with the seeing and knowing soul.

And so Sarah returned to the man she had forsaken. She had gone away, she explains, because she loved him and could no longer endure seeing him calling for justice when there was none—only love. So, "blow on the coal of my heart, my darling," says she, tenderly and compassionately, "Blow on the coal of the heart and we'll know."

On this affirmation, shadows flee, and from the open door streams the pure white light of day.

So ends the play. J.B. survives. He comes through the worst to which this life can subject a man, yet retaining his integrity and maintaining his ways before God. He confidently affirms God's uncreated existence. He had come to the conclusion that "What is human—and because it is human, goes on to suffer—and can still love and live, and will live life over and over again."

The implications are significant. Life and love are linked. Love is the power that guarantees perpetuity to life. It is "The Hound of Heaven" of Francis Thompson's mystical vision, that will not let us go. It is the cohesive power that holds worlds and atoms and souls all in their respective orbits, within the loving, protective hand of God.

Thus we find rationalism in its dedicated search for truth skirting the very edges of Sacred Scriptures. The play is far from lining up with materialistic philosophy. It does not end with an easy skeptic's brush-off or a nihilist's negations. It concludes on a note of hope and promise—the hope that springs from a love that cannot die and the promise of a light that can never be extinguished. And so we see that in the battle for the soul of J.B., the Great Denier lost.

While this is clear, it is also equally manifest that the Great Affirmer had not won full recognition. The most that could be said by J.B. and his wife Sarah, is to the effect that if they held fast to love they would “see bye and bye.” The conclusion is, therefore, less than Christian. While life was admittedly embedded in love, the revelation had not yet come through that God is Love. In other words, it concluded on the highest note possible to humanism, but not on the high key sounded at the level of divine revelation.

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This comparative study of J.B. and Job will be continued in the next issue. It will deal further with internal correspondences and differences in the two dramas, and will also set forth briefly the esoteric structure of the Book of Job.

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The play *J. B.* by Archibald MacLeish reads as well as it acts. It can be had from either the New Age Press or by ordering direct from the publisher, Houghton Mifflin Co., 2 Park St., Boston 7, Mass. \$3.50.

Our thanks to the publisher for permission to include certain direct quotes from the play both in the foregoing article and in the one that is to follow.



The Book of Job and the Song of Solomon are the highlights of the Old Testament. They are above race, creed or cult. Their message is for all mankind.

The Christ also belongs to all the world. He is at the center of all world religions as shown in the enclosed picture.

It is in this same spirit of universality that we greet our reader friends with all the love and blessing that the holy Christmas season inspires.

Corinne and Theodore Heline

MYSTIC MASONRY

By Corinne Heline

PART III

ASCENDING JACOB'S LADDER

CHAPTER IV

The Song of Solomon—Consummation of the Masonic Quest

Note: *Polarity marks the supreme and final consummation of the Thirty-second Degree. This attainment is termed the Royal Secret. The Initiate of this degree becomes the "Sublime Prince of the Royal Secret." Polarity is also the keyword of the exalted Song of Songs which could have been written only by one familiar with the Royal Secret, namely, the highest of all Masonic Masters, King Solomon of Jerusalem.*

The Song of Solomon is one of the world's most exquisite bits of literature. General readers and critics have long considered it a sensuous love song; but for the discerning the wise King Solomon is drawing aside the veil from the Holy of Holies.

The coming of the beautiful Queen of Sheba marks the crowning triumph in the life of Solomon. The wisdom of which he sings as "being above the price of rubies" is at last in his possession. Before its full acquisition he never could have penned his matchless Song of Songs, the Song of the Mystic Marriage. It has been called "a love song set to lilies." It proclaims the final blending of the lower nature with the higher, the transmutation of matter into spirit, and the completion of that divine alchemy which must take place within the consciousness and body of a disciple before he is lifted into communion with celestial realms wherein the glory of the Song is his own personal experience.

The Song of Solomon contains two principal characters, one masculine and the other feminine. The former bears the name of Shelomah (peaceable); the other, Shulamith (perfect). It is significant that each name is a variation of the same root word, its termination indicating the gender. Shulamith is the feminine form of Solomon. In English translations the two characters are not differentiated as they are in the Hebrew language.

The fair Shulamith is the Divine Sophia of the Ancient Wisdom, the Philosopher's Stone of medieval alchemists, the Beloved Lady of St. John's Epistle.

In Masonic symbology we have noted the importance of number seven as referring to the lifting of personality and uniting it with

spirit. This sublimation constitutes the chief work in all schools of higher philosophy, a category which includes Masonry. It is eminently fitting, therefore, that fundamental work in all such schools consists primarily of seven degrees. Hence, this ruling applies to Masonry, other and higher degrees being essentially an elaboration of the fundamental seven.

The profound masonic wisdom of the Grand Master, King Solomon, reaches its consummation and synthesis in his victorious soul chant, the Song of Songs. It likewise follows the great cosmic numerological pattern, being divided into seven important steps or degrees. And we find that these seven correlate to the seven basic Masonic Degrees. They all have to do with the upliftment of the human personality to a point where it attains union with its higher spirit-self.

In the ancient Babylonian School the seven Degrees were described as follows:

First—The Quest; Second—Awakening of Love (the mystic); Third—Attainment of Knowledge (the occult); Fourth—Detachment; Fifth—Unification (the blending); Sixth—Annihilation; Seventh—Consummation.

These Degrees were related cosmically to the seven planetary spheres. Terminology differs, but in the work to be accomplished and in the goal to be attained all schools follow a similar pattern and procedure.

In the Babylonian system the First Degree came under the jurisdiction of the Moon, ruler of sense life. The Second Degree came under Mercury, ruler of man's mind and planet of wisdom and discrimination. At this stage reason is called upon to govern emotion, to purge passion of its vices, and to root out selfishness, lust and those desires which are the besetting sins of man.

The Third Degree was governed by Venus, Goddess of Love. Its work was directed toward awakening consciousness to where it glimpsed something of the inner light of the soul. "Live the life and ye shall know the doctrine" has been the admonition of Wise Ones to all aspirants down through the ages.

The Fourth Degree comes under the dominant influence of the Sun, source of illumination and sustainer of life. Emphasis at this stage is on the regenerative and transmutative processes within the body of man. It is where, as St. Paul phrased it, man puts off the terrestrial and puts on the celestial.

The Fifth Degree takes up work under the dynamic drive of Mars. Herein begins true inner-plane work for building a bridge to connect

outer planes with inner realms so communication between the two may be carried on at will.

The Sixth Degree comes under the rulership of Jupiter, planet of universality — for by this time the candidate has learned to walk safely and securely under the direction of the light within himself.

The Seventh Degree is assigned to Saturn, guardian of the final step, Consummation. Now the aspirant has completed his Quest, having become one with the Light. The work of both the Sixth and Seventh has to do primarily with inner realms.

In each of these seven Degrees a candidate is given a "magic word" that reveals to him the hidden meaning of the specific Degree to which it relates. These are the same keys given by the Master to Peter, wherewith to unlock secrets of heaven and earth — the aim and purpose of all initiatory work.

Many pass beyond the first veil; some succeed in qualifying for the Second and Third Degrees. At the fourth step "Many are called but few are chosen." Rarely, indeed, is an aspirant advanced enough to qualify for this Degree of Detachment (according to the Babylonian system) and to pass on to higher Degrees. Still rarer is the exalted soul who is found worthy to enter the higher work for attainment of Consummation, the Seventh and last Degree.

The Song of Solomon recounts these steps leading to cosmic consciousness and spiritual seership. They are sometimes termed "veils" and are variously defined, but all are designed to lead a candidate to one and the same goal. The fundamental truths embodied in them are essentially the same.

In the Song of Solomon the first step, correlated to the masonic Degree of Apprenticeship, is that of *dedication*. As previously noted, the ceremonial of the Apprentice Degree calls for complete dedication of spirit, soul and body to the Quest of Light. No real or lasting progress can be made upon the Path until such dedication has been made.

The coming of Solomon represents the beginning of the Quest, while the arrival of the Queen of Sheba marks entrance into the Second Degree, passage through the veil of love. This blending of the two poles of spirit constitutes the Mystic Marriage — with which St. John opens his Gospel — and its music accompanies every verse of Solomon's beautiful marriage song. Veiled for those not yet ready for the Quest under the likeness of a vividly beautiful love song, the Song of Solomon is a revelation from the Holy of Holies, wherein an Initiate stands face to face with Light Eternal, no longer seeing "as through a glass darkly" but with transcendent clearness.

Polarity is the answer to the question, What is Truth? that has

echoed down through the ages. Many and varied have been the answers given by sages and philosophers, but the illumined Albert Pike gives it simply as *Equilibrium*, a harmonizing of contraries.

Polarity is the basis of all creation. Fire (masculine) moves upon the face of the waters (feminine) to create. "Male and female created he them." Polarity is the foundation of all the activities of nature. Spring and summer are masculine; autumn and winter are feminine in potency. Day is masculine; night, feminine. The full moon is masculine; the new moon, feminine. An incoming tide is masculine; an outgoing tide, feminine.

In the fine arts we find this same working of polarity. Music is based upon major and minor chords. The major is masculine; the minor, feminine. In painting there are light and shade. Light is masculine; shade, feminine. Vibrant red tones are masculine under Aries; delicate blue tones are feminine under Taurus. In architecture the verticle lines are masculine; the horizontal lines, feminine. This interchanging, interblending, diverging and harmonizing point always to ultimate divine union. They make of the fine arts one of the most fascinating and, at the same time, most challenging quests for spirit.

In his lecture to Thirty-second Degree Masons, Albert Pike states: "The Royal Secret, of which you are a prince, if you are a true Adept if knowledge seems to you advisable, and philosophy is, for you, radiant with a divine beauty, is that which the Sohar terms *The Mystery of the Balance*. It is the Secret of the UNIVERSAL EQUILIBRIUM:...

"...Of that Equilibrium in the Diety, between the Infinite Wisdom and the Infinite Divine Power, from which results the Stability of the Universe, the unchangeableness of the Divine Law, and the Principles of Truth, Justice, and Right which are a part of it; and the Supreme Obligation of the Divine Law upon all men, as superior to all other law, and forming a part of all the laws of men and of nations.

"...Of that Equilibrium also, between the Infinite Divine Justice and the Infinite Divine Mercy, the result of which is the Infinite Divine Equity, and the Moral Harmony or Beauty of the Universe. By it the endurance of created and imperfect natures in the presence of a Perfect Deity is made possible; and for Him, also, as for us, to love is better than to hate, and Forgiveness is wiser than Revenge or Punishment."

In his exquisite Song, Solomon refers in many ways and through many symbols to this blending of the two poles of spirit in order to achieve an interior balance. Again, this is the theme of the *Zohar*, prize repository of rabbinical esotericism.

At the time of the separation of the sexes, the masculine aura partook of the golden glory of the Sun while the feminine partook of the silvery beauty of the Moon. King Solomon unites them again in the body of an Initiate, which he calls the raiment of his beloved:

My beloved is mine and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies.

—Song of Solomon 2:16

In this lovely verse Solomon is sounding the keynote of purity, achieved only through chastity, conservation and transmutation. Through such regeneration are the greater and lesser selves united in the Mystic Marriage, at which union man's whole being exalts with Solomon in the ecstatic song "My beloved is mine, and I am his; he feedeth among the lilies."

If life is attuned to God, every action is set to music. Music and color form the setting for this triumphant chant, which breathes the fragrance of rose gardens and the deep loneliness of midnight skies, lighted by blue-white stars.

This verse is the chorus, the sacred mantram of Solomon's Song. It sounds the keynote of the Fifth Degree, *Unification*. Translated literally, this means that when one learns to seek God as the first and supreme reality in his life, he finds that God is seeking him with the same eager intensity. The blending of human consciousness with God-consciousness is productive of the exultant declaration of the soul's true awakening: "My beloved is mine, and I am his."

There are seven plexuses of primary importance. They are quickened into functioning by the ascending spinal spirit fire, and they correspond to the seven steps of the Illumined Way previously enumerated. These awakened plexuses, spiritually discerned, are revolving centers of light. As the spinal fire ascends toward the head they increase in volume; their power permeate the entire body, flooding every atom with a rare luminosity. When the serpent fire reaches the head and finds its center of expression therein—instead of in the lower part of the body—mind is unified with spirit and man becomes superman, all his organs spiritual rather than physical or material. Such an one has builded a fire-mist body possessing a radiance surpassing that of a diamond or ruby. This attainment places him in the vanguard of human evolution. He is a pioneer of the new race and, as such, is "chiefest among ten thousand" in having passed the Fifth Degree of Unification.

The Song of Songs reveals the Shekinah descended. The object of this glorious canticle is to reveal the history of the feminine in man, the mystery of the lover and the beloved throughout the ages of election. It contains "all that hath been, is, and ever shall be"

for it is the story of that Isis who is Shekinah from the first verses concerning the kisses of her mouth to the last rapture on "the mountain of spices."

Following is the tribute of the Zohar, the Book of Light, to this matchless Song of Solomon: Verily, "All the days of the world added together are not as meritorious as the day on which the Song of Songs was written" because it means the awakening of the masculine soul in woman and of the feminine soul in man, the supreme goal of earthly evolution and the final glorious consummation of the sevenfold perfected way.

This the mystic Mason understands to be the inspired message of King Solomon and his Temple Builders. He was the highest Initiate of the Old Testament Dispensation. His sublime Song voiced the ecstasy of spirit possible only when the human has become one with the divine. Thus it is that his Song of Songs intones the highest spiritual keynote of the Old Testament.

The complete dedication of self upon the altar of service by both visible and invisible watchers of heaven and earth at the dedicatory (Apprentice) step is expressed in the following: "Rise up my love...and come away, For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; and the time of the singing of birds is come..."

The second step is that of Love, the attractive and cohesive principle underlying all activities of the universe. Nothing worth while on any plane of manifestation can be accomplished without it. To the wise, therefore, the development of love as the motivating force in life always accompanies supreme dedication. An Ancient Wisdom mantram declares that you may have all knowledge, yet if you do not have love you possess not a single letter of the alphabet of true wisdom.

In the outset of evolution, love was a sensation under the influence of the Moon. At present love is largely a sentiment under Venus, the average person having slight concept of love aside from reciprocating personalities. With such a limited concept the Song of Songs has no concern. Its inspired words point toward that high status of spiritual unfoldment known as the universalizing of the heart. It is pure Christed or Uranian love, which is all inclusive, all enfolding; excluding no one for any reason; a love so powerful that flood cannot drown nor fire burn. Such was the love with which King Solomon "paved" his chariot made from "the rare cedars of Lebanon" (site of one of the earliest and most renowned Temples of Zion.) In other words, the Second Degree develops attributes of the heart; hence, the Song correlates with the Second or Fellowcraft Degree in Masonry.

It is feminine or heart Degree that leads a candidate into the inner chamber of the Temple where he finds that by love only may he rend the veil which hangs before the Holy of Holies so he no longer sees "as through a glass darkly, but face to face."

The third step is *knowledge*. "Get wisdom, get understanding," admonishes Solomon; for in his wisdom he knew that in a well balanced life head and heart must be united. Occult knowledge cannot be acquired safely until after one's motivation is love.

Both material and esoteric scientists learn that the fundamental law of all creative activity is bi-polar, operative alike in building an atom or a universe. The biblical story detailing the separation of Eve from Adam relates to the separation of the two poles in humanity, one remaining active and the other latent in each individual. It is in accordance with the predominant power of the masculine or feminine pole within an Ego that its outer body is male or female.

This separation of the poles of spirit causes the inharmony and lack of equality between man and woman in the objective world. As we approach the Aquarian Age the two poles are drawing into more balanced relationship. This fact is having its repercussions in the physical world. Woman is reflecting masculine qualities and man is affecting feminine attributes. Feminine qualities are gentleness, understanding, artistry, love of the beautiful. Masculine attributes are strength, determination, courage, self-emancipation. It can be noted that the full blending of these qualities will produce the composite androgyne, the ideal of the approaching Age of Aquaria, and it is also the sublime secret of the Thirty-Second Masonic Degree. That King Solomon had learned this magic formula is revealed in his exquisite Song.

The third step correlates with the Third Degree, the Master's, in Masonry. True mastery means Polarity. Equalizing power between the masculine and feminine is the inner meaning of the double-headed eagle, symbol of the Thirty-Second Degree of Ancient Scottish Rite Masonry.

The fourth step of the Illumined Way is Detachment. Oriental students usually find this step much easier of accomplishment than do the Occidentals. Detachment, in modern parlance, means living *in* the world yet not being *of* it. That the rewards which follow its attainment far outweigh any difficulties encountered is the testimony of all who have made even slight progress toward that goal.

To gain spiritual detachment an aspirant does not need to decrease his love for those about him; on the contrary, when love is no longer centered in personalities its power is increased immeasurably. Through detachment one learns that whatever he tries to bind and

hold he will lose; but whatever he sets free he cannot lose. Regarding the step of detachment the song intones: "My beloved put his hand in the hole of the door...and my hands dropped with myrrh, my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh, upon the handles of the lock." Myrrh is a fragrant Arabian plant that emits its greatest fragrance when crushed, just as sorrow is the supreme transformer in human life. One rarely makes much progress along the Way of Detachment before passing through sorrow's refining crucible.

The fourth step correlates in general with the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Degrees of the Scottish Rite. It is the signature of a true Master. Eager and restless searching for things is the mark of an immature soul; but a life dedicated through detachment to God and in His service inevitably attracts everything essential, so no other seeking is ever necessary. The deeper joy, the larger freedom and the wider scope for service made possible by detachment is voiced in the song thus: "...eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

The fifth step is *Unification*. As the two poles draw into closer rapport, harmonization rather than differences becomes the keynote of one's life. The poles no longer repel but increasingly reflect one another. When unification becomes the keynote of a person's life, he will no longer be dominated by violent extremes. Such an one ceases to be animated by fiery, emotional loves or intense hatreds. His judgement will be tempered by mercy; all differences will be amiable in expression. The very presence of such a balanced individual is a blessing, his words a benediction.

It is of this high attainment that the Song choruses, the masculine theme being "As a lily among the thorns, so is my love among the daughters;" to which the feminine responds, "As the apple tree among the trees of wood, so is my beloved among the sons." The more perfect the attunement between the two poles, the more successful will be the marriage relationship in the physical world. Schools and universities would do well to base their success-in-marriage curriculums on the equalization of the two poles in each partner thereof. No man can understand or appreciate a woman until he develops the feminine attributes within himself; no woman can properly evaluate the problems and responsibilities confronting a man until she awakens the masculine pole within herself.

That which may be termed the chorus of the beautiful Song is the theme of this perfect blending: "My beloved is mine, and I am his: he feedeth me among the lilies." Some inspired New Age musician will set these mantram words to music, and it will then be used

in advanced spiritual schools to aid in effecting polarity among the students.

The fifth step, *Unification*, correlates with the work of the Seventh, Eighth and Ninth Degrees of the Scottish Rite.

In ancient parlance, the sixth step in the Quest for the one Light was termed *Annihilation*, which means complete submergence of personality. Modern aspirants use the terminology "practice of the presence of God." Definitions are not important, for both the ancient and the modern apply to an identical state of consciousness. They indicate the awakening of the spinal spiritual fire which consumes all the dross of self-centered living, leaving no room for any interest other than that of the "divine beloved" (the Christed self), to use the language of the Song. This is the soul climax wherein a victorious Questor stands face to face with the Light of all lights and realizes that the seen is temporal while the unseen is eternal. To this the Song thus pays homage: "My beloved is unto me as a cluster of camphire in the vineyards of Engedi. . . thy belly is like an heap of wheat set about with lilies." It was only spiritual realization of supreme ecstasy or complete at-one-ment with the Divine Lover that could produce this Song.

The Sixth Step correlates generally with the Tenth, Eleventh and Twelfth Degrees of the Scottish Rite. These Degrees pertain to the completion and dedication of Solomon's Temple, and to the downpouring of fire from heaven. Solomon's Temple is really a symbol of man's own spiritualized body.

The seventh step is that of *consummation*. The Supreme Master made reference to this, the highest degree of consciousness possible while the Ego is in embodiment, when he declared "I am in the Father, and the Father in me." The Song describes it as follows: When the sexes (Adam and Eve) separated, the feminine partook of the glory of the Moon; the masculine, of the radiance of the Sun. Solomon, by his mastery, united these forces again. It is the consummation of this union that he commemorates in the beauty of his Song: "Who is she that looketh forth in the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?" The multi-colored banners are symbolic of the luminous auric emanation radiating from one who has attained unto the seventh step, that of Consummation. This final Step correlates with the Thirteenth Degree of Scottish Masonry, the Rite known as the Royal Arch of Solomon.

It is in this Degree that the ancient Mysteries unite with the Mysteries of later times, and the seven degrees become nine. The Nine Lesser Mysteries, as previously stated, were a direct preparation for

the coming of the Lord Christ, He whose chief work was to bring the Christ Mysteries to mankind. It was upon these Mysteries that the early Church was founded. It is also in these same Christ Mysteries that the higher Masonic Degrees are centered.

The Thirteenth Degree marks that attainment wherein a candidate is caught up into the heights and becomes a "living stone," the capstone of the arch. This is, in deed and in truth, the stone which the builders rejected but which must become the chief cornerstone of the perfected Temple.

Thus we note how Solomon, Grand Master of Masonry, has placed immortal and eternal keys within the cadences of his Song, keys which unlock the seven most important portals to mystic attainment in Masonry. Consequently, this glorious Song becomes a most valuable text for serious students of esoteric Masonry. It will enable them to comprehend the profound significance of a statement gleaned from the Zohar, one of the most illuminating treatises extant on the Ancient Mysteries: "Of all the days of all the world, the most important was that in which the Song of Songs was written."

The series on Masonic Masonry will continue through 1960. In the next issue: *Man—The Divine Masonic Pattern.*

* * * * *

Beethoven the Universalist

Beethoven was a musical Titan. His music has Promethian grandeur. He transcribed creative sound patterns on a celestial scale. What his music has contributed toward saving man from falling into deeper forgetfulness of his true heavenly tonal home world is beyond measuring.

Never has the universal, cosmic elements in Beethoven's divinely inspired compositions been put to more direct, effective and arresting use than it was on October 24th last, the occasion of wide-spread observances of United Nations Day. On that day there reverberated around the world what is perhaps the loftiest and noblest tonal design ever to have been transcribed for human hearing, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. It was being performed simultaneously in the capitals of the Free World and throughout the Soviet Union. It was being heard in thirty cities in the United States and in sixty foreign countries. In this we truly witness the weaving and interweaving of the spirit of unity and brotherhood by a medium far transcending in influence that of any other at man's disposal.

BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS

By ELIZABETH HILL

REINCARNATION and Our Future, Gladys Mayer, disciple of Rudolf Steiner.—1958 by New Knowledge Books, 18 Crescent Pl., E. Grinstead, Sussex, Eng. Paper—stiff covers—109pp \$1.75

Who, what, where is the I AM, the Divinity that incarnates and reincarnates throughout the entire cosmic cycle of manifestation? This is the riddle of the eternal sphinx. I AM is not my body, for it is *mine*. I AM not my thoughts, for they are *mine*. Ditto my actions and reactions. I AM is the possessor, not the possessed.

Gladys Mayer contributes greatly toward arriving at a solution to this ever recurring query. Drawing upon reason, emotional response, knowledge gleaned from years of spiritual culture and personal experience, she presents her subject with such clarity one is prompted to exclaim, "Why, of course!"

YOURS IS THE POWER, Florence Widutis. 1957—Cloth—224pp—\$3.50. The Pilgrims, Box 495, Somerville, N. J.

You can if you will is the theme of the five opening chapters (Part One) headed "The Possibility." This section is given over to preparation—through improved relationships—of the will-to-do in anticipation of "The Experiment" (Part Two), a seven day program for acquiring the "mechanics by means of which you can enter new states of consciousness and improve the quality of your personality." Part Two is, in a way, an elaboration on the idea of improved relationships dealt with in Part One.

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One hears so very often the cry "Things are going from bad to worse in the world, but what can one lone person do about it?" Here is the answer.

BROCADE (lovely title), A Homemade Magazine. Miss Violet M. Appeman, 750 Hyperion Ave., Los Angeles 29. Mimeo—26 pages—June, 1959.

Once a year only, but what a once! *Whimsical* is one word for it. *Charming* is another. *Illuminating* too. A whole string of adjectives wouldn't do it justice. "Angel Notes" is followed by "Love Letters to God"; and then, of all things, "Hatching Eggs." Next comes "Me-ne, Me-ne! On Mine Rafter" and its a story about—guess what... Daniel, believe it or not. "Star Light" delves into astrology while "Teach Me About God" does just that. Oh yes, there is more, such a delightful more. And imagine, the contents page states "BROCADE is always free of charge to all who ask for it! (Friends, it's worth whatever your heart prompts you to give, either before or after reading.)"

Above books available from New Age Press



THE SUPREME INITIATIONS of the BLESSED VIRGIN

BY CORINNE HELINE



This is another contribution which the author has made toward bringing about a better understanding of the nature and mission of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. It deals with the four principal Initiations which starred the life of the Madonna, namely, the Annunciation, the Immaculate Conception, the Pentacostal Illumination and the Assumption.

This is Mrs. Heline's third brochure devoted to an exposition of the life and mysteries of the greatest feminine Initiate ever to have walked the earth. It is a further effort to secure for the illumined Mary a position which she does not occupy among the adherents of either orthodox Catholicism or Protestantism. Esoteric Christianity places her rather on middle ground between the two extremes of divinization on the one side and virtual indifference on the other.

Mary of Bethlehem is neither to be worshipped nor ignored, but to be revered for the exalted state to which she has attained and for the redemptive service she continues to render to the world from the higher plane of being on which she now functions. Mary and Jesus stand together in forming the two equal pillars before the entrance to the Temple of Light. A recognition of this Place of Balance occupied by this Feminine Master Initiate in the spiritual life of humanity will contribute greatly to the power and efficacy of the forces operating in the life of Christendom.

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* * * * *

The miniature reproduction above on the right is the Assumption of the Virgin by Ambrogio Borgognone, an Italian pre-Reformation artist. The original is in the Metropolitan Museum, New York. The picture to the left is the Annunciation by Pinturricchio, also an Italian, and of the 15th century.

* * * * *

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