

MANUAL

No. 3

ON

THE PATH

OF

KNOWLEDGE

(Jnana Marga)

BY

PHILOSOPHY, SYMBOLOGY, MYTHOLOGY  
MYSTICAL SCIENCE AND ART

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# JNANA MARGA

## MANUAL NO. 3

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# The Path of Knowledge

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## PROEMIAL

**T**HE Path of Knowledge in the Light of Inward Illumination has for its goal the Realization of the Absolute Truth.

Philosophy provides the foundation, the very pathway itself, upon which the Aspirant must establish himself. It is the High Ground from which he may the more clearly perceive, recognize, distinguish, unify and correlate aspects of Truth.

Symbology unfolds on all sides a perpetual panorama, the inner significance of which is more and more revealed to the Aspirant in the light of Philosophy. He glimpses Beauty as well as Truth, Harmony as well as Unity.

Mythology awakens his Intuitive Faculties, bringing them also into the quest for the True; calling him to the unsuspected heights and the wondrous profundities of the Divine Mysteries.

And lastly, Hermetic Science and Art lead the Aspirant to the portals of Mystical Participation through which the Below is to be transmuted into the Above.





## I.—“HERMETIC PHILOSOPHY”

THE human mind naturally reasons about Truth. In its unremitting operations, wittingly or unwittingly, it is always seeking Truth.

To find Truth is to see Truth, therefore, in proportion as the mind is able to recognize and distinguish what is true from what is false, so it may be said to find Truth, or at least an aspect of Truth.

All things express or represent, in some manner, aspects of Truth. In fact, in this sense, Truth itself is the very Reason of their existence—objectively and subjectively.

Hence, since the Mind cannot conceive of anything that has no existence, it follows that whatever the human mind reasons about, is, in this same sense, an aspect of truth, however far removed from the final and absolute Truth.

But the full significance of any aspect of truth is to be understood only when seen in its correct perspective and proper relationship with all other aspects.

Therefore, a living consciousness of Truth is dependent upon the integrity and comprehensiveness of the human reason.

In like manner, universal and integral aspects of truth are more easily recognized and accepted than particularized and partial expressions.

But, in every case, the clearness of perception is modified by the pre-conceptions or prejudices already in the mind, and, likewise, by the objects or motives for which Truth is sought.

For instance, the object may be to collect and classify countless expressions of finite truth in order to formulate generalized laws for practical ends—personal or impersonal.

Such conceptions are scientific, in the common acceptance of the term.

On the other hand, the object may be for the sake of Truth itself, in order to attain, through It, a consciousness of the ultimate Reality.

Such conceptions are philosophical—in the original and best application of the term.

Philosophy, in contradistinction to Science, deals with the essential, universal and abstract nature of things, more than with their apparent, particularized and concrete characteristics.

Philosophy, as its name signifies, is wisdom rather than knowledge, and is more unitive and synthetic, while Science is more partitive and analytical.

Moreover, among Systems of Philosophy, those that are the most universal in world-view and most adequate in expression, are also the most self-evident and harmonious, both in themselves and in their relationships with other systems.

The Hermetic\* System of Philosophy may be defined as the Wisdom concerning God, the Universe and Man.

As the Wisdom concerning God it presents a most exalted conception of Deity and is characterized by a tone of profoundest sanctity.

As the Wisdom concerning the Universe, or Macrocosm, it brings the Sensible World into the light of the Intelligible Sphere, and reveals the underlying unity substanding all duality.

As the Wisdom concerning Man, or the Microcosm, it is characterized at once by the principle of unity and universality, extensively unfolding all his principles, powers, vehicles and relationships, and intensively indicating his assimilation to the type and pattern of Perfect Man.

The principal Hermetic conceptions under these three headings are conveniently summarized thus:—

#### I.—GOD.

- (1) The Divine Unity.
- (2) The Divine Trinity.
- (3) The Divine Plurality.

#### II.—THE MACROCOSM.

- (1) The Intelligible Universe—Above.
- (2) The Sensible Universe—Below.

\* The Hermetic Wisdom derives its name from the first Master Hermes-Trismegistus of Ancient Egypt, but its philosophic tenets are perhaps best preserved and expressed by the original Platonic and Neoplatonic Philosophers and their genuine successors.



### III.—THE MICROCOSM.

- (1) Archetypal Man.
- (2) Threefold Man.
- (3) Pan-Humanity.

Many of these aspects are so self-evident that they hardly need expression, but by considering them in their hierarchical order, they not only become more luminous but also shed additional light upon other less obvious conceptions.

#### I.—GOD.

##### (1) *The Divine Unity.*

What could be more simple and yet, at the same time, more profound in ultimate implication than that Name for the Supreme which seems to ring reverberatingly through all the works of the Platonists and Neoplatonists?

They spoke of Him Whom they knew to be wholly ineffable as "THE ONE," sometimes, however, supplementing that Name by another, as if to confer a title which in some measure might be faintly applicable—"THE ONE AND THE GOOD."

For not only is HE, Who is so denominated, the *ONE* prior to all, and *THE ONE* superior to all, but HE is also *THE ONE* within Whom all things have their Being and without Whom nothing could possibly be.

But besides being in such an exempt transcendental sense *THE INEFFABLE ONE*, He is also denominated "THE GOOD," because the whole of existence thirsts to partake of His Perfect Plenitude and Infinite Goodness.

Simple, Reverent, and Ineffably Occult is this beautiful appellation of the Most High, Who must always remain transcendently beyond the highest conception of the highest philosophy.

##### (2) *The Divine Trinity.*

Although GOD is essentially ONE and the Unity of all Unities, yet He cannot be conceived without immediately introducing the Idea of a Trinity.

Philosophically, this Root Trinity is conceivable as:—

The Divine Essence, abiding immanent in all, the cause of all being;

The Divine Life, proceeding providentially through all,  
the cause of all activity ;

The Divine Mind, transcendentally converting all  
things to Itself, the cause of all intelligence.

The Divine Essence is the Logos of Being, Light, and  
Love—the All-Father.

The Divine Life is the Logos of Life and Providence—the  
All-Mother.

The Divine Mind is the Logos of Power, the Creator Lord,  
and Great Architect.

This triadic conception beautifully unfolds the inconceivable Unity of the Supreme, revealing the Three Hypostatic Principles upon which the whole of manifestation fundamentally depends, and providing the human intelligence with a key to the understanding of the true nature of all things.

It has its analogies everywhere, in all realms—inner and outer—in the great and in the small, in science, religion, mysticism and in every field of activity.

### (3) *The Divine Plurality.*

The Three become the Many, and the Many are held subjectively within the Three; for, from and by and through each of the Three Logoi, a multitude of Divine Powers, Principles and Perfections proceed.

In the Platonic terminology these Divine Processions are celebrated under the appropriate title of “ The Immortal High Gods ”; Immortal because They are stable and eternal in essence and energy; and Gods, because They are the immediate Progeny of the One Only Supreme God.

The primal emanations of Deity must necessarily be most like unto It, therefore are They truly Divine and Their proper appellation is “ The Gods.”\*

Symbolically They are to God what the rays are to the Sun. For They are in no sense to be confounded with those exalted beings who are said to be the products of ages of evolution, but They are indeed Eternal Irradiations of the Supreme ONE.

Although They are a multitude of self-perfect Unities, They do not constitute a plurality of God-heads, but rather by magnifying the mystery of the One Godhead, They raise

\* In other systems they receive other names.

our conceptions of the Absolute to the most exalted point possible.

To deny the existence of the High Gods is to deny the existence of the universe, for They are those Powers, Principles and Perfections which substand the Universe.

And to doubt the Power of the Supreme to produce the Gods is to doubt His Omnipotence and to place a limit to His Unfathomable Prolificness.

Without His Plurality and Divine Irradiations, the Supreme would be like a rayless sun.

But the Gods, Who *are* God in His manifestations, bring Him near to man, for They all perpetually proceed from and return to Him as Unities from and to One Primal Monad.

They distribute, regulate and make manifest the Divine Essence and Life, and, as God's Eternal Ministers, are the support, guidance and upliftment of all that is, was or ever will be.

## II. THE MACROCOSM.

In philosophy it is customary to consider the universe as composed of a number of different planes of existence, consciousness and action. These are said to inter-penetrate each other and are difficult to conceive of from a purely finite standpoint.

But, more obviously, the Macrocosm is twofold, when considered apart from the Divine.

For example, its dual aspects are known as:—

- the Above and the Below;
- the Eternal and the Transient;
- the Subjective and the Objective;
- the Spiritual and the Corporeal;
- the Intelligible and the Sensible.

The lower is symbolical of the higher; the outer is an expression of the inner; the objective is a projection of the subjective.

Each, in turn, has various sub-divisions or sub-planes, but an intimate parallelism may be traced throughout, and for this reason their relative characteristics may be hypothetically postulated by means of the Hermetic Law of Correspondences, and, by taking them as a basis, a more or less complete cosmological scheme may be outlined.

The Spiritual Universe is the Field of Divine Operations



and is characterized by Intelligible Essence and Eternal Life, of which the Sensible Universe is the outer, lower and transient expression.

It subjectively comprehends the archetypes or Ideas of all things that have been or ever will be expressed.

These Ideas are unitary, fontal and productive; preserving, elevating and perfecting. Hence, the Spiritual Universe is not only potentially but likewise actually perfect. It is the Kingdom where all Ideals are realized.

The Sensible Universe embraces the objective life and corporeal existences by which the archetypes of the Intelligible Universe are made manifest under the limited conditions of time and space. It includes all kingdoms of nature.

### III.—THE MICROCOSM.

#### (1) *Archetypal Man.*

According to the Hermetic Philosophy Man is called the Microcosm of the Macrocosm.

The Macrocosm below analogically expresses the Spiritual Macrocosm above. In a corresponding manner, the human Microcosm below is an expression of the Spiritual Archetype Above.

The Archetype is essentially Monadic, Perfect and Eternal. From It all Microcosms may be said to proceed, and, inasmuch as they are potentially one with It, they inherit the right to participate and manifest Its attributes in varying degrees of glory.

The Archetypal Microcosm stands in the same relation to the Spiritual Sphere as Humanity holds in regard to the Sensible Universe, for the Supreme Microcosm, as the Universal Christos, is not only the Head of Humanity, but also the Lord of the Universe.

#### (2) *Threefold Man.*

The One, the Three and the Many are repeated in the Microcosm, Man.

The Mystery of the Trinity is reflected in each of the three root principles of Spirit, Soul and Body.

Of these, the first and the last, with their several aspects, correspond to the dual Macrocosm, while the Soul stands, metaphorically, between, with a twofold vision, power and purpose.

Above the Soul is the Spirit, the Ideal Principle, in and

by and through which the Soul participates in the Divine Unity, Trinity and Plurality, and without which it can never enter consciously the Kingdom of spiritual realities and perfections.

Below the Soul, the "Body"\* Principle is suspended, in and by and through which the Soul expresses itself and without which it could not enter into conscious relationship with the Sensible Universe.

When united to Spirit the Soul is assumed into Its likeness, and when identified with Body it becomes subject to the laws of the Sensible World.

The Soul, infinitely receptive, is destined to hold, on the one hand, the infinite plenitude of Spirit, and on the other, to manifest that plenitude through the principles of Order, Harmony and Beauty.

### (3) *Pan-Humanity.*

Pan-Humanity is essentially one, just as the Immortal High Gods are essentially one.

Its apparent multiplicity is due to the numerous attributes possessed and manifested by each Microcosm in multifarious ways. For example :—

The Intellectual Activity, with its objective and subjective expressions; the Affectional or Vital Principle, with its lower and higher activities; the Volitional Faculty, with its free and determined aspects.

The action, inter-action, and re-action of these attributes, with their numberless phases in individual and collective Microcosms, result in the infinite diversity by which Pan-Humanity is characterized.

The destiny of each Microcosm is to manifest harmoniously all its attributes to the utmost on all planes of consciousness. This is partially to be achieved by various processes but finally it depends for its consummation upon conscious identification with the One Perfect Spiritual Archetype, Who, while transcending all multiplicity and diversity, is Himself the unification and co-ordination of all.

Through Him, Pan-Humanity, following the Divine Plan, is converted from its manyness to its basic triune nature, and from that to its Unity or One-ness with the Supreme.

\* The Body Principle here includes all that manifests—all vehicles—not merely the physical body alone.



## II.—“HERMETIC SYMBOLOLOGY”

### § 1. THE PRINCIPLE.

THE principle of Hermetic Symbology, and indeed of all symbology, is the hypothesis that the manifested expresses, in some manner, the unmanifested.

The Divine Manifestor is the Great Symbolist. It is He “who expresses in the panorama of the universe the Supernal Wisdom” of the Inconceivable Supreme. It is He who unfolds ideation into substantiality, and potentiality into actuality, and it is He indeed who causes the manifested to spring into being from the unmanifested.

This principle underlies the Laws of Expression, Correspondence and Affinity, whereby the Thoughts of God are so written in the world of form that “whoso desires to read, may read.”

The world of form is a vast symbolic code in which is concealed God’s Idea of all things—of the Cosmos, of Nature, and of Man himself. The outer objects have their inner significance, even as that which is below is in some way a reflected type of that which is above.

Man, as a symbol, is God’s masterpiece, for, hidden within him is to be found the key to every mystery. He is not a fleeting chimera of a few years, for, beyond, behind and above his transient nature is an eternal ideal archetype which it is his sublime destiny to realize. Extrinsically man is human; intrinsically he is divine.

The intrinsic value of a symbol is determined by the dignity of the idea represented, the degree to which that idea may be realized and the adequacy of its expression. The extrinsic value of a symbol is proportionate to the depth and dignity of the mind that uses it. To one mind a symbol might be meaningless but to another fraught with unutterable secrets.

A true symbol is a living emblem of Truth. It speaks to all who hear and understand. Nature is a gigantic system of symbolism and its voice is a living and intelligent voice.

The lore of Nature is the Book of God, which grows more and more legible in the light of the Hermetic Law of Correspondence.

The symbol Man, is set in the midst of a stupendous and mysterious mosaic of symbols with which he has countless hidden but intimate affinities. The more he realizes this the nearer he comes to a knowledge of himself.

Metaphysics alone mean little to the mind until amplified symbolically either by metaphors, allegories, personifications or other means.

The memory and recognition of phenomenal and concrete objects depend upon the faculty of symbolizing them mentally. The objects themselves cannot, concretely, enter our minds, but by substituting appropriate symbols or impressions for the objects contemplated we give them a place within the horizon of our consciousness. In this way our store of knowledge is said to increase, for by reproducing the idea of a thing we make it our own.

Conscious thought is impossible without symbols and when so employed symbols constitute a species of language whereby thoughts are rendered expressible. This language may verge towards abstractions or it may be quite concrete, according to the penetrative depth and power of the mind using it.

All language, necessarily, is composed of symbolic ideas, images, or characters, hence the study of symbology becomes, in reality, the study of those counters of thought used by man throughout the ages.

## § 2. THE CLASSIFICATION.

I. Symbols may be classified in many ways. For example, there are symbols corresponding to all the activities and accomplishments of man, falling naturally under those titles with which we are so familiar—Science, Art, Philosophy, Religion, Mysticism, Occultism, Mathesis, Technology, Music, Commerce, Sociology, etc.

II. A more comprehensive classification is the following :

(1) Universal Symbols.

(2) Arbitrary Symbols.

Universal Symbols are more or less self-evident and immutable in basic significance.

Arbitrary Symbols are subject to modification and mutability according to the manner of their use.

Numerical Symbolology is a good instance of the class that is universal, such as the number three, or the triangle, which reveals the root triplicity of all phases of existence and the triadic nature of all things.

Arbitrary Symbols are extremely diverse in nature and significance, for example the greetings used in conventionality or the chosen emblems in the symbology of the artistic. But even Arbitrary Symbols are connected with universal ones, however apparently remote the relationship may be.

III. The quaternary classification of symbols is an excellent one.

(1) Formal Symbols.

(2) Sound Symbolology.

(3) Symbols of Colours, Odours, Tastes.

(4) Symbols of Motion.

Each of these is twofold—Natural and Human.

Natural Symbols are those we perceive in Nature; they make up the stupendous mysterious Symbolology of the Great Architect.

Human Symbols are those made by man in all his works. The World of Art makes up Human Symbolology, just as the World of Nature figures the Symbolism of God.

The Sun is a splendid example of a Formal Symbol, revealing the vast centre of our System from which flows ceaselessly the Light, Heat and Force that sustains our Universe. Figures, numbers, letters, whether graphical, geometrical or hieroglyphical belong to formal symbolology. The astronomical symbols comprise the alphabet of the stars and are profoundly significant.

Of Sound Symbols there are :—the voices of Nature and of man; the music of the spheres; the sounds of the Great Mother and of all Her children.

Spoken words or names are symbols of ideas. Man is an incarnation of a word—a name.



The language used and the sound of the voice is an index of the dispositions of the speaker. All languages are symbolical. Some are elegant, some dignified, some mystical, some mantric.

Words are vehicles of thoughts and symbols of feeling. There are words of love, words of wisdom, words of power, words of fire; winged words, sacramental words, and traditional words pregnant with power and mystery.

As examples of Colour Symbols there are the prismatic colours and their correlation in the septenary scheme; and the pigments used in art.

The odoriferous and gustatory properties also have symbolical correspondences.

The cosmic movements and periodic revolutions of the orbs in space, the flowing of a river, the flight of a bird, the attitudes and gestures of man are instances of Symbols of Motion.

### § 3. THE APPLICATION.

I. Some indication of the extent to which symbols are to be applied is opened out by considering the symbolical significance of the ten Aristotelian categories which can be predicated of all things.

(1) *Substance*. Substantial symbols provide the basis or groundwork of manifestation. In Neoplatonism there are spiritual as well as material "substances."

(2) *Quality*. The qualifications or attributes of all things are appreciable only through the medium of symbols. The qualities themselves inhere in things, whether recognised or not, but they are the more exactly estimated the nearer the symbols employed approximate to those qualities. For example, gold is an appropriate symbol of purity because it is the purest metal.

(3) *Quantity*. Mathematical theorems, as well as quantitative measurements, depend essentially upon suitable symbols. (Euclid was a great Symbolist as well as a Platonist.) Numerical Symbolology is perhaps the most profound and scientific of all.

(4) *Relation*. Self-consciousness implies, and is indigent of, the clear perception of relations between the knower and the thing known. In its expansion, this consciousness enters

into wider and also closer symbolical relationships with all beings, and, at last, with the Infinite Itself.

(5) *Place*. That which is placed Here symbolizes that which is placed "Yonder." All localities or planes have their analogical symbology. Heaven and Hell as places are symbolical.

(6) *Time*. The past and the future exist only as simple or compound symbols in consciousness,—human or cosmic. The present symbolizes the Everlasting Now. All chronological orders, sequences, and successions are symbolical.

(7) *Condition*. Symbols are applied to denote dispositions, the permanence or impermanence of qualities, the changes of properties—chemical, alchemical, or otherwise.

(8) *Situation*. The hierarchical order indicates symbolically where everything is situated.

(9) *Activity*. The symbolics of forces, functions, energies, etc.

(10) *Passivity*. All things are both positive and negative, symbolically and actually. They are positive to those less active, but negative or passive to those more active. The Sun is a passive symbol to God but a positive symbol to the planets.

II. In the Interpretation of any symbol there are at least three stages, leading from the outer and finite meaning to the inner and infinite significance.

(1) *Concrete Significance*. The consideration and predication of the extrinsic, explicit, particular and obvious properties, *e.g.*, the Sun, its subsistence, quality, activity, etc.

(2) *Transitional Stage*. The extension of the concrete significance by inference, deduction or induction; treating the symbol as a theorem to be explained by a chain of reasoning leading to axioms, *e.g.*, the characteristics of the Sun, the significance of its shape and position, its triple activity or manifestation, its numberless rays, its prior and causal relationships with the lesser orbs of its system, etc.

(3) *Abstract Significance*. The intrinsic, implicit, and more inner meaning, revealing the innate, essential and universal idea, when by analogy, correspondence, affinity and association, we penetrate beyond the visible and apparent; *e.g.*, the Sun, its spiritual significance as an emblem of Deity,



having its three primal characteristics, its numberless irradiations, its prior causality, etc.

The above method utilizes the concrete to interpret the abstract, the phenomenal to express the noumenal, the sensible to unfold the intelligible, the relative to sense the absolute, the outward to open the inward. It must be recognized that in itself alone this method is incomplete. For the finite does not represent the infinite, nor need a labyrinth of particulars necessarily lead to a universal truth. Nevertheless, since that which is below bears witness to that which is above, it may take us a few rungs up the ladder of Truth.

III. Example. As an illustrative application the front cover of our Quarterly is suggestive,—for instance :—

The Circle is symbolical of the Supreme Source and Goal of all, beginningless and endless.

The Triangle within the Circle denotes the three primal manifestations of the One Supreme.

The Two Ankhs and Columns suggest, among other things, the two streams of Life—the proceeding and the returning.

The Gammadion at the base of each column suggests the four-fold whirlings of the streams of life upon the Cross of Manifestation.

A true symbol has many applications however. It is a key that can be turned again and again. It may be 3-fold, 7-fold, 10-fold or even 12-fold. Its significance on one plane may reveal its meaning on another.

By the application of symbols, thoughts may be co-ordinated, ideas may be unified, vague conceptions may be clarified. Symbolism is concentrated ideation. The vividness of a thought depends upon the ability to create a true and clear symbol of it, separated from all extraneous elements.

Symbols portray ideas and ideals too deep and sublime for mere words; they evoke exalted and inexpressible thoughts and feelings. What wondrous varieties and combinations of forms and figures and colours can be adapted to express that which the human voice could never utter. What ineffable emotions, infinite reminiscences and majestic ideals can, by the use of symbols, be called forth from the unmanifest into manifestation.

### III.—“HERMETIC MYTHOLOGY”

#### § I. PURPOSE.

**T**HERE are three main modes by which great teachers have presented Truth to mankind,—Dogmatically, Scientifically and Mystically.

These methods are, more or less, interdependent, but nevertheless, there are occasions when, for special reasons, one may be predominant.

To affirm that the Kingdom of Heaven is within, is a dogmatic truth.

To explain the affirmation—if this be possible—by philosophy or other means, and then present it in terms of these, is to change it into a scientific truth.

But if the statement, although positively asserted, is considered to have more than a literal significance and is to be understood symbolically or metaphorically, then it is a mystical truth.

Absolute Truth is, of course, infinite and therefore never to be fathomed by finite means.

Faith may accept Its dogmas. Reason may perceive Its science. Intuition may receive Its mystery.

But Absolute Truth Itself remains,—ineffable, although the whole universe is fashioned to unfold It.

The acceptance or perception of truth avail nothing unless productive of effect.

A dogmatic truth may be acted upon because of its moral influence on the will.

A scientific truth may be made practical because of its rational influence upon the mind.

But, as an impelling power, a mystical truth, when intuitively perceived, is more potent and productive than either of these, because it sheds its own intrinsic, irresistible beauty on the Soul and lifts up all things to higher and more effective levels.

Myths and Allegories are, in this respect, important means

for presenting mystical aspects of truth. They are tales of wonder and beauty, containing "images of what the Soul longs for and thirsts for." Their "beauty is the most unforgettable thing in the world" (Fiona McLeod).

And, because of the Immortal Ideals they contain, these legends of the "old ancient days" still retain their hold upon all lovers of beauty.

They have fulfilled, and continue to fulfil, at least a three-fold purpose—viz., to veil, to preserve and to reveal mystical aspects of truth as presented in sacred legends and traditions.

Hermetic Mythology is that which pertains particularly to the Hermetic Tradition, which, emanating originally from Egypt flowed from thence through Chaldea to Greece. Therefore it embraces the pre-eminent mythological systems of the Egyptian and Grecian mysteries.

A myth is a veil that may be lifted, little by little, as its allegorical and inner significance is perceived.

Because the meaning of a myth is not self-evident, there is sometimes a tendency to regard it as an enigma purposely devised to hide truth. But this, although to some extent incidental, is not the primal purpose. Truth is not self-evident save when suitably presented to faculties that are capable of perceiving it. When the true vision is attained, Truth is perceived however much it may be veiled. Therefore, although myths veil truth, they do not exactly conceal it but rather are they the means of gradually preparing the eyes of the Soul to behold that which would blind by excess of light, if seen without meet preparation.

The mythological systems of antiquity constitute an immense repository of truth, which is the common heritage of humanity.

Considered collectively, they form a universal tradition in which the inspired utterances of the Great Ones are preserved. For almost without exception the mythical or fabulous element enters into every philosophic and religious system. Invariably, too, the basic principles of a tradition are embodied in the myths belonging to it.

Therefore, even if such a tradition should ever become corrupt, the characteristic preservative power of its myths will enable it to be periodically purified and revived.



Furthermore, they are more readily handed down through the generations or translated from one language into another than are philosophical or metaphysical treatises.

It is difficult to transmit the full significance of a philosophical principle in its original purity, but the story of a myth is easily conveyed even by those who do not understand it, and its significance is retained.

As the accumulated myths, fables, legends, allegories, and sacred traditions are more and more widely disseminated in many languages, so they grow more and more in universality and thus provide criteria of Truth of increasing value. They have an inherent vitality and perennial freshness although their beginnings may be lost in the remote past.

It is not without reason that myths have been called the truest things ever written, for they can reveal deep truths that would, in all probability, remain hidden if presented through other media.

Moreover, the truth in them is to be *seen* rather than to be reasoned about or accepted blindly.

The Hermetic Myths tell of the Irradiations of the One Supreme, *i.e.*, the Eternal High Gods; of the Incarnation of the Logos or Christos-Osiris Principle; of the descent of the Soul into manifestation and of its final redemption and perfection. They repeat in varied forms, the divine macrocosmic and microcosmic history—fabulous and yet true.

Interwoven with these magical mystery tales are ideas of almost fathomless significance. And the view-points from which they may be approached are without limit. Their influence is all-comprehensive.

Religion draws upon them for the personifying of its divine principles, through which, in worship, concrete and finite conceptions may lead to the abstract and infinite.

Philosophy adopts mythical terminology as soon as it leaves the concrete and practical and enters the realms of the Ideal. Plato, the Master Idealist, continually alludes to the Orphic and Homeric fables. His own allegories, too, are masterly examples of the mythic art.

Art, in turn, could not well dispense with mythology. Poets, painters, sculptors and musicians—all have recourse to mythology as the fount of their inspiration.

The day for myths and allegories is by no means past. Long will they serve useful purposes while mankind continue to speak in figures and metaphors. Indeed, bereft of these products of imagination, language would be shorn of those elements that give to it, not only its strength and beauty, but also much of its power of appeal to the intuition and that innate sense of truth and taste for beauty.

A true myth is a narrative, complete in itself, as a story, but having a veiled meaning. The visible world is complete in itself but it too holds its veiled mysteries. An ancient writer truly said: "We might call the whole world a myth, which contains visible bodies and things, but souls and spirits in a hidden manner."—(Sallust on "The Gods and the World.")

## § II. EXEGESIS.

The principles underlying Hermetic Symbology enter largely in the exegesis or interpretation of myths. Certain general guiding principles, however, may be laid down, embracing their construction, significance and application.

(a) *Construction.* There is a similarity in nearly all myths inasmuch as the localities—historical or purely fabulous—usually denote not only places but also states or realms of existence; the personages, proper names and terms also are employed, as a rule, symbolically; and the events narrated are often extraordinary and permit of more than one interpretation.

(b) *Significance.* Here again, similar stages can be remarked in lifting the veils of nearly all myths.

The first veil is lifted by obtaining the literal explanation and derivation of the proper names and principal terms used.

The second veil is raised by reconstructing the narrative in the light of these literal and suggestive meanings.

The third veil is gradually removed by the aid of reflection, when the symbolical and allegorical significance is applied and developed. This process may be extended, and intuitional flashes obtained, in which there may be glimpses of the infinite truth behind.

(c) *Application and development.* To apply myths is to use them to present and explain aspects of truth. The



majority of true myths are applicable from many stand-points—natural and artistic, moral and ethical, philosophical and metaphysical, religious and theological, mystical and occult. Moreover they may be treated macrocosmically or microcosmically, and correspondences may be traced between them all.

Thus from a simple story, with a literal and finite meaning, we are led stage by stage, to the apprehension of an infinite truth with its application in all realms of consciousness.

These mystery tales are inexhaustible sources of suggestiveness. At different times they hold different messages, and, likewise, different eyes see different messages at the same time.

And, even as the vision of exterior beauty is intensified by the realization of interior beauty, so the beauty embedded in myths is more and more perceived as the Soul's own beauty unfolds.

A myth does not reveal the same mystery to all. It reflects only as much as the eye of the Soul can receive and understand, even as the secrets of Nature, although laid bare, are seen only by the eyes that can behold them with veneration and love.

### § III. EXAMPLE. "THE MYTH OF OSIRIS & ISIS."

#### (1) BRIEF OUTLINE OF NARRATIVE.

In the legendary Golden Age of Egypt, Osiris and Isis reigned as King and Queen. They were not only the rulers but also the teachers of their subjects. They were not as their people but were said to have come direct from the Gods; their parents, according to some, being the Divinities Seb and Nut.

For a time all was peace. Then, while Osiris was away in a distant part of his kingdom, his brother Typhon arose to usurp his place.

Eventually, when Osiris returned, Typhon, by cunning, slew him and cut his body into 14 pieces which were scattered over the sacred land of Egypt.

Then began the lamentations and search of Isis for her lost lord. Long did she wander, and as she found fragments of his holy body, so did she bury them and cause tombs and sanctuaries to appear.

At last a son is born to her, named Horus, who becomes the conqueror of Typhon.

Osiris rises again from the dead, ascends into Heaven, and, through his resurrection, becomes the redemption of all who identify themselves with him.

This is but a very cursive story of the myth and does not reveal its beauty, but nevertheless it will be found that in the full narrative there is much of that indescribable beauty which is the special characteristic of the Grand Egyptian Mysteries.

## (2) RELIGIO-MYSTICAL SIGNIFICANCE (Suggestive).

Egypt may be regarded as symbolical of the field of the Divine operations, in which the mysteries of God are hidden and yet revealed.

The Egyptians may be taken as symbolizing Pan-Humanity.

Nut and Seb represent Heaven and Earth respectively. As such they constitute that principle of duality through which all things proceed from and return to Unity.

Osiris is the Divine Incarnation. God's Idea or Archetype of Man: Potential Perfection.

Isis is the Divine Mother Incarnate.

Typhon is comparable to material darkness, "that which is below," where the universal essence and life of Osiris and Isis are "slain," in a mystical sense.

Horus is comparable to spiritual light, "that which is above"; the re-born or risen Osiris, also called "Osiris-Horus," Actualized Perfection.

This bare outline, which is given merely as an example, may suggest a multitude of interpretations, especially when other details not given here are added.

Osiris, the central figure of the myth, may be considered as personifying the Divine Immanence, the Indwelling Spirit, "slain from the foundation of the world." He is God and also Man. Son of Heaven and Child of Earth.

To be identified with Him, as Osiris-Horus was, according to the Priest-Hierophants of the Pyramid, to become "osirified," "divinized in the Hall of Seb." Without Osiris there was no regeneration, no resurrection, no perfection, but with Him there was, and *is*, Life Everlasting.

## IV.—“HERMETIC MYSTICAL SCIENCE AND ART ”

### § I. DEFINITIONS

**M**YSTICAL Science is the precise delineation of the principles, and the exact formulation of the laws underlying mysticism and mystical concerns.

Mystical Art is the application of these scientific principles and laws to mystical purposes.

Religion is inseparably connected with Mystical Science and Art and cannot properly be divorced therefrom.

For Mystical Science is the culmination of that phase of Religion which aims at the correlation of the outer to the inner and of the partitive to the integral. While Mystical Art is the consummation of that aspect of Religion which ordines the human nature to the divine. It is a process by which Spiritual Ideals and Types of Divine Science are expressed in the Worlds of Form.

Science should precede Art even as Knowledge should go before Practice; for Science explores the means and Art applies them to the end in view. True Science is therefore essentially illuminative, and true Art essentially perfective.

Special and particular Sciences investigate external causes and effects: Hermetic Science reveals their inner analogy and intelligibility.

Practical Arts put into application that which Special Sciences explain, directing them to useful ends.

Absolute Science is the revelation of True Being: Perfect Art is conscious active union with True Being. Indeed, from the human standpoint, Perfection is the fullest possible expression of Real Being.

### § II. THE PRINCIPLES

The principles substanding Mystical Science and Art are those upon which the Hermetic Laws of Correspondence, Affinity and Expression depend.

There is an intimate correspondence between the micro-



cosm and the macrocosm, the intelligible and the sensible, the inner and the outer.

There is a profound affinity not only between the Divine Unity and the Divine Trinity in Man and in the All, but also between the Divine Plurality and the many faculties of Pan-Humanity.

By Hermetic Mystical Science the principles and laws of the Universe are brought into correspondence and relationship while their mutual interactions and affinities—human and divine—are revealed.

By Hermetic Mystical Art these same principles and laws, thus intimately integrated, are brought forth perfectly expressed.

The light of Hermetic Mystical Science penetrates the veil of multiplicity, explores the deep metaphysical recesses of the Universe, and sheds its luminous rays over all things so that at last the Perfect Divine Order itself is to be seen.

Hermetic Mystical Art, established in the Divine Order, traverses the path opened by the light of Hermetic Science, bringing into perfect ordination and expression all that was latent and unmanifested before.

This alternate ingoing and outgoing, constitutes the life of Mystical Science and Art; the former disclosing the treasures concealed within the centre of the Cosmos and the latter beautifully unfolding them into the Orb of the Circumference in plenary manifestation.

### § III. THE APPLICATION

It is the Soul—universal and human—that is for ever putting into application the principles of Hermetic Science, because, since it subsists midway between primary and secondary natures, the Soul has affinity with both, and can, not only enter into correspondence with every Order of being in the hierarchy of existence, but also give actual expression to what is potentially inherent.

Therefore, it may be said that the Soul contains all sciences and arts and that its purpose is to realize and apply them.

The Soul's affinity with primary natures is dependent upon the Spirit, *i.e.*, the Logos or Nous, through which the Soul is potentially united (1) by its being to the Divine Unity and

Trinity; and (2) by its life and activities to the Divine Plurality, *i.e.*, the Eternal High Gods; while (3) by its secondary natures and instruments of expression the Soul is united to the universe and humanity.

In the Divine Unity is the Supreme Science of the Soul.

In the Gods is the Pure Art of the Soul, for pure art springs from divine inspiration which, in reality, is the activity of the Gods within the Soul.

In the universe all sciences are applied by the Art of the Gods operating in and through the Soul's secondary natures.

The perfection of the human Soul's Art depends upon its conscious living union with God and the Gods, through the Spirit.

This perfective-union is to be attained by three processes in which the Soul's Art is gradually unfolded,—consciously or unconsciously.

(1) The free expression of the Soul's faculties as they emerge from potentiality into actuality by evolutionary processes; this alone will not accomplish the desired end for it only leads to a certain point.

(2) The assimilation of these faculties to their divine affinities, which is to be accomplished by the action of the personal will when it serves or tries to serve the Divine and is thus converted from self-seeking to the light and life of the Gods.

(3) The elevation and transformation of the Soul's faculties or secondary principles to their primary archetypes by fuller and fuller participation in the Divine.

These three means are summarized as the processes of Evolution, Redemption and Participation all of which have a deep significance when considered in the light of Hermetic Science and Art.

(1) *Evolution*, regarded mystically, has a more profound meaning than when explained solely from a material point of view; not that the latter is untrue but rather that it is only a partial truth which is not always seen in its correct relationship with the universe.

The Soul's essential nature is not subject to evolutionary laws because it is rooted in Spirit, and Spirit cannot truly be



said to evolve. Therefore, evolutionary processes refer to the Soul's activities and secondary natures.

As a result of these activities and by means of the Art of the Gods, the Soul follows the Divine Plan and produces or evolves three instruments of expression, each of which, in turn, is a plural-unity, or a multiplicity in a unity.

These are called the Volitional, Vital and Intellectual Instruments.

The will to exist evolves vehicles of manifestation; the vital principle generates life and stimulates activity, and the intellectual principle develops new contents of consciousness. All these, in the first place, spring from the deep fontal impulses in the Soul—to move, to stand forth, to open out, to unfold, to express, to create and to make manifest. But as a natural consequence of these evolutionary impulses, the Soul changes its centre, and, in a mystical sense, is said to depart from its summit, losing knowledge of its Real Being, and forgetting its allegiance to its Source.

Hence it lapses, so to speak, from the Above to the Below, there to gain experience and knowledge. This is what is implied by the fall and descent of the Soul.

The evolution alone of the Soul's secondary principles cannot restore the Soul to a consciousness of its original but innocent state, because, since these principles are secondary and subsidiary to the Soul, they can neither change the Soul's essential nature nor cause it to be united to that from which it proceeds.

Therefore, it is evident why evolution alone neither changes humanity's essential nature nor leads the Soul of Man to its goal.

Moreover, if the attainment of the goal depended solely upon an infallible natural evolutionary law, then there would be no need for individual effort nor would there be any intrinsic value in it. Mystical Science and Art would have no place in the affairs of mankind. All Souls would be subject, voluntarily or involuntarily, to one General Law and Cosmic Process which they could never transcend.

But purely natural evolutionary processes apply only to humanity's natural principles and cannot affect in any way the Eternal Spiritual Principles, which must necessarily subsist

above the transient and mutable conditions of Nature. Therefore, in order that the Soul may be introduced consciously to its spiritual principles, further processes must be superimposed upon those of evolution.

(2) *Redemption* is the means for restoring the proper relationship between the human and the Divine natures. It is an inner process more than an outer one.

When applied to the Soul, redemptive processes do not necessarily imply any inherent change of nature, but only a conversion of activity by which its secondary principles are redeemed.

Evolution has more to do with leading out from the potential into the actual, while redemption is more concerned with leading out of the actual into the ideal.

The Soul cannot freely and consciously exercise its potential lordship over Nature until it is liberated from the limitations imposed upon it by Nature's conditions and no longer entangled in Matter.

The redemption of the Soul is the removal of its false and illusory alliances; while the redemption of the Soul's secondary principles is their orderly orientation to the Pure Art of the Gods.

Redemption is conversional, *i.e.*, it is the turning away from that which is inordinate, negative and disintegrating.

It is Purgatorial, *i.e.*, the elimination of the effects of this departure from Real Being by the substitution of that which is orderly, positive and integrating or re-integrating.

Redemption is also Regenerational, *i.e.*, the generating anew of the Soul's instruments on higher planes so that they may be used to contact that which is above Nature.

The conversion of the Mind, Heart and Will from ignorance and darkness, selfishness and attachments, and inertia and aimless drifting tendencies, prepares the human nature for the reception of Divine Light, Grace and Strength.

The Purgation of the Soul's secondary vehicles is the dissolution, separation and purification of their impure elements by the Spiritual Life which opens them to the influence of Divine Art through which the whole being is ennobled.

Regeneration is an awakening of the inner life, a quicken-

ing and a re-birth of the Soul's vehicles, elevating them to the participation of Divine Goodness, Truth and Beauty.

Each of the redemptive processes has a beginning in the realms of Time, but each may be continued perpetually, leading to more and more perfect art and to fuller and fuller life and consciousness in all realms of existence and activity.

(3) *Mystical Participation* is communion with the Divine. It is a growing conscious response to the Being, Life and Mind of God by the spiritualization of the Soul's instruments of contact.

From another standpoint it is the action of the Gods upon the Soul, the mystical and magical operations of the Art of the Gods producing in the Soul supernal representations and revelations of Their Glory and Greatness.

Participation attunes the instruments of the Soul to the music of the Gods, and in the enjoyment of Their Inspiration the Soul responds and corresponds to the Divine Harmony.

This is the ultimate function of mystical and religious Art or Spiritual Alchemy.

There are various theories concerning Participation or Divine Inspiration, *e.g.*, that it is by Divine Right, or that it is by Divine Grace, or that it is self-determined.

Each of these is partially true.

When the Soul is united to God through its divine principle, Spirit, it may participate in Him by Divine Right.

When the Soul becomes immersed in Matter as a natural result of evolution and bound to the activities of its secondary principles, it becomes subject to the decrees of Fate and is obliged to wait for what appears to be the intervention of Divine Grace for the removal of its limitations.

Again, the Soul, by entering into intimate relationship with the manifested universe may be said to fall. But it retains its essential inherent purity and can always exercise its Elective Power or Freewill, although it cannot always immediately accomplish what it wills. Hence its conversion to Heaven and to mystical participation is self-determined, because even the Gods cannot redeem the Soul unless it becomes receptive to Their Inspiration or Supernal Breath.

There are four distinct modes by which the Soul may be conjoined to the Gods in mystic participation. These corre-



spond to the four Inspirations distinguished by Plato in the dialogue "Phædrus,"—viz., the Musical, the Telestic, the Prophetic and the inspiration of Mystical Love.

When under the influence of any of these Divine Breaths, the Soul is for the time being transported from the world of the Actual into the Realms of the Ideal.

These Inspirations provide subject matter for subsequent treatment, but each of them has its place in the three principal pathways of Perfective Union, *i.e.*, the Path of Union by Good Works (Telestic), the Path of Union by Knowledge in which the Prophetic Inspiration is especially a requisite, and the Path of Union by Devotion, or Mystic Love, in which Music or Harmony also has its place.

However, the four inspirations are not limited to any one particular pathway, but may enter into all in varying degrees.

The most important, of course, is Mystical Love.

#### § IV. THE EFFECTS

The consummation of Hermetic Mystical Science is in the realization of the True even as the consummation of Hermetic Mystical Art is in the attainment of the Beautiful.

Each of the three great processes of Evolution, Redemption and Participation has manifold effects.

Evolution tends to the production of finer and finer vehicles of expression and to a more and more perfect subjugation of Matter to the Formative Principle of the Soul.

Redemption not only purifies and sublimates the Soul's vehicles of expression by purgation, preparing them for the supranatural action of the Gods, but also opens the whole being, by regeneration, to an altogether fuller and deeper realization of Real Being.

Participation, which is the natural fruition of purgation and regeneration, is a re-ascent to the Divine Likeness, a return of the Soul to its Sovereign Source. By it the Soul's vehicles are transformed, reordinated and revived and brought, Mystically by Sacred Sympathy, into the hands of the Master Artist whose Art is Perfect and whose Acts are absolutely Just.

Sanctification, Transformation and Justification are there-



fore the three primal effects of the Hermetic Mystical Science and Art.

It is evident from these considerations that there is a clear distinction between the purely natural process of Evolution and the altogether supranatural process of Participation.

Man naturally inherits the Kingdom of Earth, but it is only by an awakening to a realization of his true relationships with the Above and his true destiny in regard to the Below, that Man inherits the Kingdom of Heaven.

Not only is Hermetic Mystical Science necessary—the pursuit and perception of the True,—but also Hermetic Mystical Art—the manifestation and perpetuation of the Beautiful; not only Realization but also Attainment.

By the natural progression of Nature towards higher and higher manifestations of the Formative Principle and finer and finer manifestations of the Material Principle, Man evolves the secondary vehicles of his Soul, but it is not until the Soul begins to look above and to be converted to its Principle, the Shining Spirit, that the reception of the Art of the Gods becomes possible. For it is only by and through the Spirit, that Man can participate in that which is above, even as it is only by and through his secondary principles that he can participate in that which is below.

The culture of the Soul's vehicles is very different from their Sanctification, for the way of Participation is not the seeking to attain this goodness or that virtue, but rather the pursuit of the Good Itself. It is indeed the consecration of all things to God, so that all acts become sacramental and all the vehicles of the Soul are sanctified, *i.e.*, made holy.

Again, how different is the sublime transfigurations in the lives of the Great Ones, to the merely natural growth and improvement witnessed in the lives of the unawakened. Evolution may change a man's habits, his thoughts, his actions, but only a Participation in the Divine Art of the Gods can change the tenor of his Soul and give a sublimity and sanctity to his life.

And lastly, the awakened man is justified; his purpose in life is in course of fulfilment, of conscious fulfilment. A holy peace pervades him in the realization of all that can be accomplished under the wise guidance of the Inner Master Artist,

Who brings all acts within the Divine Circle of Accord, confirming and strengthening them and imbuing them with Light and Life and Love.

Hermetic Mystical Science is ultimately the finding and knowing of God, even as Hermetic Mystical Art is ultimately the loving and serving of God.

And by the unification of the two processes in the Soul of the awakened man, his secondary principles are woven into the pattern of perfection as the Divine Wisdom gradually unfolds within his Mind, the Divine Life within his Heart and the Divine Power within his Will.

Such a one is justified, for his is the life Eternal.



