

THE SCHOOL OF ANTIQUITY
L o m a l a n d C a l i f o r n i a

The [2]

Mysteries of Antiquity

Purucker, Goldenrod etc



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The THEOSOPHICAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

POINT LOMA, CALIFORNIA

Price 10 cents

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The Aryan Theosophical Press

The
Mysteries of Antiquity



IN view of the establishment of the School of Antiquity at Point Loma, California, by Katherine Tingley, its Foundress, the subject of the Mysteries of olden time becomes interesting from a new standpoint. What were these Mysteries, about which so much has been said? A picture is here presented of these traduced ceremonies and celebrations.

The Mysteries of the ancients are a sore point of contention among our savants. While the majority admit that they were in all probability sacred festivals, for the most part celebrated at regular recurring periods, not one dare say that he knows either their real meaning, or even the nature of the ceremonies followed. He dare not, simply because he knows it not! That these Mysteries date from untold æons of years in the dark, unknown past, is granted grudgingly; that they had an aim and purpose beyond that of duping the polloi and hoodwinking the profane, is supported by as few as the ten fingers of the hands; that they professed to be, and once were, the opening of the spiritual

nature of the neophyte by strange and holy ways, is denied outright! Yet great is Truth, and it will prevail.

Let us reason together. That human nature, in essentials, is different today from what it was tens of millenniums ago, is improbable; as long as man has possessed the intricate and composite whole he now directs, his human characteristics must have been what they are now; and this will lead us right back into prehistory, into unknown times. The first settlers on the banks of Sihor, Egypt's flooded stream; the ante-Dravidian occupants of the Peninsula of Hindustan; the forgotten peoples covering Central Asia with flourishing cities; and those ancient and unknown Americans who preceded the Toltec and Maya builders; aye, even to those races whose portraits we have on Easter Island, graven on enduring stone; where among any do we find evidence, historic, geologic, ethnologic or other, that man was not far back in prehistoric night just what he is today, in all that makes man a man?

So it must be, within and before the memory of man, from the time when he, like Enoch, walked with the gods, that he has been a seeker after Truth, and that his spiritual nature has forced a demand for recognition upon him, at times imperatively, so that the essence of Being was sought out as the *summum bonum* of life. It was once upon a time known, by intimate personal intercourse, that man is as much a part of Being, Universal Being, of the absolute vibrant life-energy of the Universe, as he is finite in his lower nature. And in the adyta of the sacred fanes of hoary Antiquity the rites were established, after his Fall

from his pristine high spiritual estate, and the teachings and powers resurrected, which would confer upon man his forgotten heritage. There were enacted those mystical ceremonies, and imparted those doctrines, making of him not slave, but Master of Life, not blind creature of sense and passion, but Initiate in the Wisdom of Isis, which the goddess so carefully veiled with her mantle from the too-presuming gaze of her passion-laden sons.

Hence the veneration in which these Mysteries were held. Hence the reason why these things were so carefully guarded from intrusion, that war and desolation were accounted as incomparably of less moment than, not to be compared with, the preservation of the holy flame: that flame burning not only upon the altar of the Temple, but likewise in the heart of the Resurrected.

In these initiations there were stages of progress for the seeker. To *know*, to *will*, to *dare* and to be *silent*, were the passwords peremptorily demanding admittance into the Brotherhood of Humanity's Saviors; and they were never refused, for he who came carrying their burden in his heart, and manifest in his life, came by divine right, and was already in spirit a member in secret. Veil upon veil was lifted to him; there remained veil upon veil behind.

Also, there were the Arcana of which I speak, and the outer Halls of Knowledge. Woe betide him who had not passed beyond the veil separating the two! Not yet is he an Initiate, but a probationer; not yet a master, but a disciple, pledged to the Cause of Humanity's spiritual

progress. Dark demons of doubt still held their sway over his soul; still was he subject to his self. If it so happened that his daring carried him beyond his strength to fulfill, so that he failed those above him in the Cause, then his doom came upon him swiftly, not by order, but by the Law under whose dominion he had so placed his life.

What life more significant in this connection than that of Julian, called the Apostate—called Apostate because he left the shell and form of exoteric Christianity, to seek the Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world? The Law fostered him and carried him along in its own working; perhaps a sadder cry was never heard than his: gathering his blood in his hand, from the wound in his body, he launched it upwards with the cry, so it is said, “Galilean, thou hast conquered!” The church today takes it one way; those who know, say that it was the voice of human despair, acknowledging not the starry Christos, but the iron hand that was to fall so heavily on man’s heart.

With him died the Mysteries, I mean their formal recognition by men. But there is hope. There is Atonement, and it is known among hierophants of the old-world Wisdom, as the BAPTISM OF BLOOD. Humanity has been passing through it, and the day has come now, in cyclic time, when Wisdom shall again reclaim her children, the widow weeping for her sons.

The religions of earth are the children of the sacred Mysteries of Antiquity. Profound study of the facts shows us clearly that at certain periods in history, at times of great dearth and stress, at times when the flow of spiritual life

is at its ebb, there appear Messengers among men, whose mission it is to preach a "new" gospel to the people. They come like shooting-stars into our midst, and when they vanish a new religion has been founded; a new philosophic cult has been instituted; a new code of morals has been given. Those who are entitled to speak with authority say that these Messengers from the gods appear at cyclic periods, and that their advent is known, and their coming heralded, by signs and wonders. It is, nevertheless, all done in so natural a way, that not having the key, historians record the fact and pass on.

These religions, these philosophies, these moral codes were born in and of the sacred Mystéria. Time, in its mysterious working, marks off the epochs; the Mysteries are profaned by the spirit and turmoil of the outer world and are withdrawn from sight; the temples become the dens of priestcraft and human terrors. And so it continues, until the cyclic course of Destiny brings forth the Deliverer, the Regenerator. He outlines his doctrine publicly; he gives the key thereto to those he has tried and proven faithful beyond doubt. The Mysteries are *reborn*, to last for a time, for times, and half a time.

Who today can read the full meaning of the old Mystery language of the old Initiates? What Egyptologist has understood the *recondite* meaning of the Temple writings of Egypt? What student of their sense, in this our day, may claim to have unraveled the skein of their abstruse significance? None! They are scarcely to blame, for who of them is to know that these picture writings must be

read not merely in signs, but also in color; in juxtaposition to each other; and by certain formerly well understood rules regulating their interpretation, whether in a religious, a civic, a mystic or an historical sense?

In those old days, part of the knowledge imparted to the neophyte in the Mysteries, is today common in every school in the land. Such were Geography; Astronomy; the Science of Numbers, and Mathematics in general; Chemistry; Alchemy; Divine Astrology; and, above all, History. But they went farther than is done today. The secret bearing of these sciences on man's destiny was explained and demonstrated, while the future of races to come was proven by these very branches of human knowledge. They went farther; that is, the gifts to man in ages far gone, *conferred by great souls who came to this state of life for that purpose*, were then given with a key, now forgotten, but which was then verily a reality. It is easy to hear the thinkers of our day scoffing and deriding this idea, but, after all, what proof have they to offer that it was *not* so? Is man the *only* being in this Universe endowed with will-power and intelligence? If he is, how comes he by such divine powers? If he is not, where are they who are sharers with him therein? They must be above and below him; and our answer is there.

Now what knowledge have we today, that is not derived from what our forefathers had? Our systems of weights and measures; our jurisprudence; our codes of ethics; our forms of government; the very languages we speak, are all derived from antiquity; and the ancients were our precu-

sors in all that we may now lay claim to. Music, numbers, art, architecture, government, law-making, industries—in short, everything we know, was known and practised before ourselves. On the old monuments, and in the signs of Egypt, may be seen the shoemaker drawing his twine; the jeweler at his task; the glass-maker blowing his glass, just as we may see it today.

Why should the conceited phantasy of the age fancy that our knowledge is self-created, and that it symbolizes a civilization, such that the records of past time have no parallel to it?

Among the Mysteries of Antiquity, none perhaps are so well known to us, through the voice of rumor handed down, as those of Eleusis. Of prehistoric beginning, the Eleusinia took place at the time of the harvesting of grapes each year, in the month of September, called the month of Boëdromion, and lasted for a period of seven days. The Eucharistia was one of the oldest rites of the old time. Ceres signified *bread*, and Bacchus *wine*, the former exemplifying life regenerated from the seed; and the wine, or grape, was emblematic of Wisdom. Jesus the Christ said, "I am the Vine, and my father is the husbandman," referring here to the secret and mystic knowledge of things that he could impart. This again shows the standing of Jesus the Christ, spiritually; for the pledged disciple might receive, but was not empowered to, and *could not*, impart, or initiate.

So much for what were termed the Eleusinia "the greater." These were celebrated between harvest and the

seed-time. Then there were the Eleusinia "the lesser," which were held ceremonially in the early springtime.

Here, at Eleusis, in Pelasgic times, whatever may be said to the contrary, were enacted the wondrous *Mysteria*, the "Things Veiled" from the eyes of men, in and during which the inner eye of the prepared neophyte recovered its power, and the Fields Elysian were opened to his searching gaze. He saw life as it is; he saw BEING, uncovered from its enshrouding veil of matter; his soul bathed in the radiant light of pure Truth; he was reborn, for he had received the baptism, and then had undergone the rite of the "laying on of hands"; he was *confirmed* in the life spiritual. Christos was henceforth his name, for he was one of the anointed; the mantle of the Chrestos, the servant, the disciple, was laid aside.

Here he received the sacred teachings, the doctrine, to preserve which from the knowledge of the people, he promised on his life, and to serve it faithfully for the saving and healing of the people. Hence was he addressed as Kurios, Lord; and as Soter, Savior.

The institutions of all past time were based upon what filtered out through many channels from the veiled Mysteries; little was understood, for may it be said that the people of any day are born spiritual metaphysicians? So what was before their eyes was misunderstood; divisions arose among men as to the meaning of this or that Logos, or doctrine (please mark); division, or sectarianism, grew apace among those into whom the good seed fell; and the result came to be division in all branches of life and thought; for one un-

derstood a thing so; and another so; and still another so. The teeth of the Dragon of Wisdom had been treacherously sown here and there, and, to follow the legend, the teeth produced other dragons who turned upon each other, and rent and tore.

What may be gathered up from the remnants of these teachings, which it was Fate's dire decree should be so misused?

What remains of this ancient Wisdom has been surveyed by the historian in its corruption among barbarous nations, or during the decline and fall of Greece and Rome.

It may be said, briefly, that the ensemble of these doctrines was no less scientific than sublime. Firstly, this Theologia, this divine Theology of the Mysteries, celebrates the immense principle of natural things, as even superior to being; as being exempt from all, though nevertheless the source of all. From this unnameable source proceeded a progression of beings, growing, by their nature, more and more material as they neared man; the course of growth was circular, or rather spiral, in character, and man might mount to whence he had come, and higher still, by the use and development of the spirit within him; and as he mounted back, all Nature was carried along with him; so that the ultimate of all creation was a sublime reentering into Divinity.

It would be absurd to dogmatize on this being the case during what we may call the archaic period of known history, for it was not so. The Mysteries had already felt the impelling force of Destiny; men had drunk out of the

iron cup of Karma, or Nemesis. Pythagoras, Plato and others—even he who drank the deadly hemlock draught, Socrates (though not *initiate* he)—were a living proof, by the very nature of their teachings, as we know them, that the Mysteries had been withdrawn; for while conveying truth, they taught publicly, and established their schools and coquetted (may their shades pardon me!) with the State. They came, as said before, as the Messengers to help the people; but they came almost alone, and reft of the mighty power protective of the Mysteries.

From Eleusis sprang the hidden life which made Greece, and adjoining folk; great in all that our higher sense holds dear. To Eleusis went they who sought the Light, and who were called to go; they returned as Leaders of men.

From the downfall of the Mysteries, and from the stock of these latter, sprang into life two vigorous shoots: exoteric Christianity, and the body *now* called Freemasonry. On the face of each is found the imprint of its origin.

Nor should it be forgotten, and it should be emphasized here, that woman held a place in the Mysteries of olden time; and that her status in the sight of men felt the shock of the loss of the Mysteries, possibly more than any other aspect of Society.

Sans the central spiritual life; sans the fountainhead of true Wisdom; sans the knowledge of the secrets of life and of man's complex nature, which the Hierophants of ancient days represented—religion became in our Occident what we have it today, and what it has been: warring, an-

tagonistic, sectarian. No more is it a beacon light guiding the steps of the children of man upon the Path, but a will-o'-the-wisp, leading his wearied feet hither and thither; possessing just enough of the old fire and flame to seduce his intelligence and to blind his eyes to the eternal spiritual Sun of Truth and Righteousness, which cometh with healing in its wings.

G. DE PURUCKER

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