

The Training & Work of an Initiate by Dion Fortune

FOREWORD by Gareth Knight

If we take seriously the tradition that it takes at least three lives to make an initiate, then some form of appropriate training and guidance must be available to those who might be still on one of those preparatory lives leading to the door of initiation.

The primary role of an initiate should be to lead to a normal life in the world, rather than to emulate the role of an incumbent of an enclosed religious order.

INTRODUCTION

The higher achievements in any pursuit can be obtained only by the man who gives his life to it.

Our individual lives, and every happening of those lives, is an integral part of the cosmic whole.

Even if we have no hope of making this life one of achievement, we can resolve to make it one of preparation.

PART I - ETHICAL

CHAPTER I - LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

We must render the body an absolute servant which has no longer the power to make its needs imperative.

Advance may be made to the study of philosophy and metaphysics, and a good introduction to this study is Herbert Spencer's *First Principles*.

The good occult student should have a sound general knowledge of natural science, history, mathematics and philosophy.

When the student wishes to undertake the higher studies of esoteric science, he should come as completely equipped as exoteric studies can make him.

CHAPTER II - THE WAY OF INITIATION

What is this power that great souls contact? Esoteric tradition affirms that they take initiation of one kind or another; for there are two kinds, physical and non-physical... The physical initiation admits to the study of the esoteric wisdom acquired by generations of men who sought beneath the surface of existence, who sought the inner meaning of things rather than their outer forms; it admits the student to the fellowship and confidence of these men, and disposes them to share their knowledge and to accept the initiate as a co-worker or pupil.

The second form of initiation is declared to be a spiritual experience, wherein the soul establishes contact with the higher powers and is admitted to the fellowship of great souls on the Inner Planes.

Esoteric science always thinks in terms of an evolution, whereas the ordinary man thinks in terms of an incarnation, a single life; this difference of view-point fundamentally influences their attitude towards life; to the one, death is the end of all; to the other it is the end of a phase. To the one it is a cataclysm, to the other a sunset.

If a mind can once be stimulated to ask a question, it proves its readiness for the answer.

He is not introducing ideas into his mind for the first time, but recalling to consciousness that which is lying dormant in the subconscious mind.

CHAPTER III - PREPARATION FOR INITIATION

This great initiation is invariably gone through out of the body... It is also gone through in full consciousness and the memory is retained.

The Higher Self comes into manifestation in the physical body when Initiation takes place.

The personality will have entirely to re-orient its standpoint before it can come into line with the Higher Self.

The personality and the things of the senses have to be sacrificed in order that the Higher Self may manifest.

The merchant who sold all he had was able to purchase the Great Pearl.

Turn away from the mirror of form-consciousness and look straight at Reality, which is Life, not form.

The mystic aims at escaping from the bondage of the flesh, never to return; whereas the occultist designs to return to matter, bearing with him the fruits of his labours.

The mystic works in the Higher Self exclusively; the occultist brings the Higher Self into manifestation on the planes of form.

CHAPTER IV - THE PATH OF THE HEARTH-FIRE

There are three Initiators who bring us to the altar of the Mysteries; the Great Initiator, who is the Master, and Lesser Initiator, who is the Teacher, and our own Higher Self, which trains us by means of the lessons of life and the realisations they bring.

What cannot be cured must be endured; this is the first lesson which karma teaches us.

The adept is a man of unruffled serenity, for he is a man of perfect self-control. Let us strive for mastery of the inner astral kingdom of the emotions.

If we live our daily life according to cosmic principles we shall work out whatever karma has been given us for our portion in this incarnation and win our freedom.

In order to make the home a Temple of Initiation for the soul, its duties must be dominated by two ideals - love and beauty.

CHAPTER V - THE INITIATE'S IDEAL

The Path is a way of life.

The discipline of the Path in its earlier stages is directed primarily to the production of a definite type of character... There is a simplicity of life and a serenity of demeanour.

It is the charlatan who seeks to attract attention to himself.

The hand plays an important part in occult work, and the person who cannot express his will and imagination through the fine muscles of the hands will seldom be able to perform the practical operations. The importance of manual work is well known among students of the occult.

CHAPTER VI - DAILY LIFE UPON THE PATH

The rule of the Path is not a written code that demands an outer conformity, but a dedication to an ideal, and involves self discipline in order that the ideal may be attained. Those who follow the Path... learn certain spiritual principles which, as underlying cosmic laws, govern all things.

If the cosmic laws are obeyed, results are obtained; if they are disregarded, there follow the inevitable consequences of a broken natural law.

The growth of the soul takes place through many incarnations, and different attainments are required of it at different stages of its development.

Students must accept the concept of the absolute rule of law - that nothing is fortuitous, accidental or incidental. Whatever happens is the result of a cause.

Acknowledging the justice of karma, he accepts the reactions of the past ungrudgingly. It is this serene and cheerful acceptance by which the initiate can always be known. His one care is to keep in tune with the cosmic harmony...

He knows that certain conditions come to him in order that they may provoke certain reactions in his own nature, and according to his handling of these reactions will be his karma, even in the present life. When he has harmonised these reactions, he has worked out his karma.

The initiate is always revaluing things according to cosmic principles. He knows that his real life is lived in his higher self, (the unit of evolution), and that this human personality is but a phase of his life...

PART II - THEORETICAL

CHAPTER VII - A GROUND-PLAN of ILLUMINISM

Esoteric science must be distinguished from natural science by method rather than by subject-matter.

Our subject is altogether in a parlous condition as regards nomenclature; burdened on the one hand with a Sanscrit terminology which has been wrenched from its original significance by the usages of modern Theosophy, and on the other by a barbarous jargon derived partly from the Mysteries of Greece, partly from the Qabalism of Israel, and partly from Mediaeval Alchemy, which employed bastard Latin to conceal its thoughts.

In its essence, the whole subject under consideration is the extension of consciousness to planes of experience which are not available for the physical senses.

Mysticism aims at the speediest possible attainment of the Divine Union of the soul with its Source.

Occultism accepts the phenomenal as actual enough if not real, if we use the term "real" in its technical mystical sense as eternal and self-existing. The aim of the occultists is to organise and master phenomena and bring them into harmony with the eternal law of the Real.

The occultist, while he agrees theoretically with the mystic's proposition, prefers the terms Eternal and Temporal to Real and Unreal; for he maintains a thing may be theoretically Unreal, yet actually very much in evidence in all practical calculations made in time and space.

No man's work is lessened by showing its derivations, for all work must necessarily be derivative at this late day of human history.

According to our classification... we would assign such religions as Buddhism and Christianity to the Mystic Path... to the Occult Path we would assign such religions as Hinduism and Qabalistic Judaism; also such derivative movements as Theosophy, Alchemy, and Spiritualism.

The root ideas of all of them are not original, and can be traced back through many different enunciations into remote antiquity.

In Mysticism, whose method of approach is by feeling, rather than by knowing, we find two broad divisions into Nature Mystics (Pantheists) and Spiritual Mystics... The Pantheists we may further subdivide into the Beauty and the Power schools.

The Religious School of Mysticism seeks its God apart from Nature, and desires to know Him direct, at first intention, as it were, and deprecates all secondary expressions as idolatry. This school may again be subdivided into the Path of Service and the Path of Contemplation.

CHAPTER VIII - A GROUND-PLAN of ILLUMINISM II

Occultism differs from Mysticism in that it makes no attempt at any direct or immediate approach to its goal, but rather seeks to establish a graded way to the Divine Union which it recognizes, equally with Mysticism, as the ultimate goal of evolution. Working from this standpoint, it neither condemns nor disregards the material conditions in which we find ourselves, but accepts them as part of the soul's discipline and proceeds to study them, first, with a view to harmonising the soul with its environment, and secondly, with a view to exercising a controlling, or at least a modifying, influence over that environment.

Occultism

1. Harmonizing with Cosmic Law by means of right understanding.
2. Adjustment of disharmonies by means of the right use of the power that knowledge gives.
3. Purification of the soul by good works on all planes.

All these three things belong admittedly to the plane of the phenomenal universe. There is nothing intrinsically spiritual about any of them, yet nevertheless they are the first three steps of the stair that leads up to the heights of Spirit.

Esoteric science holds that matter is built up on a framework of spirit; that spirit emanates matter, not matter spirit.

The Doctrine of Correspondences, philosophically understood, implies that there will be mental and astral states of the said spiritual principle in its descent into matter and mental and astral congeners of its manifestations, and that these are inter-acting among themselves and profoundly influence the material conditions with which they are allied.