

# READERS' QUESTIONS

## *Initiations: Occult and Mystical*

**QUESTION:** WHY DO the occultists speak to us of Masters and Initiations, while other schools—mystics— seem to teach that man may teach himself and reach God without the necessity of initiation and Masters? Cannot man reach the consciousness of the “I” without these things? Do the Initiations refer solely to the unfoldment of latent powers in man? Are there Initiations in mysticism? Are they the same as in Occultism?

**Answer:** If everybody was born with the same temperament it would be necessary to have only one path for them. Everybody would need the same experience in order to raise his consciousness to union with God. But as everyone is fundamentally different from all others, the experience necessarily differs and certain great lines of demarcation are necessary in order to obtain the desired results for all. Therefore, strictly speaking, there are as many paths to God as there are separate spirits in evolution. But, broadly speaking, there are two—one which leads to *union by faith*, and the other which is the path of *salvation by works*. At a certain point, however, these two paths converge and the one who has been growing by faith finds it then necessary to take up works also, while the person who has developed by works, apart from belief, finds himself or herself compelled by experience in the present condition to have faith also.

A person may learn how to speak a foreign language by means of grammars and kindred helps, though he never visited the country where that language is spoken; but it is probable that his pronun-

**THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION  
AND  
THE FOUR GREAT INITIATIONS**

ORDINARY HUMANITY PURSUES THE SPIRAL PATH  
THE INITIATE GOES THE STRAIGHT AND NARROW WAY THAT LEADS  
TO  
G O D

<b>1</b> SATURN-PERIOD (SATURDAY) VIOLET		<b>7</b> Vulcan-Period THE WEEK (EMBRACING ALL THE DAYS) WHITE (INCLUDING ALL THE COLORS)
<b>6</b> VENUS-PERIOD (FRIDAY) RED	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b> SUN-PERIOD (SUNDAY) INDIGO
<b>3</b> MOON-PERIOD (MONDAY) BLUE	<b>2</b>	<b>5</b> JUPITER-PERIOD (THURSDAY) ORANGE
<b>4</b> EARTH-PERIOD MERCURY HALF (WEDNESDAY) YELLOW	<b>1</b>	<b>4</b> EARTH-PERIOD MARS HALF (TUESDAY) GREEN

**THE WAY OF INITIATION**

THERE WAS NO INITIATION PRIOR TO THE END OF THE  
MARS HALF OF THE EARTH PERIOD. THE LESSER  
MYSTERIES EMBRACE HUMAN EVOLUTION IN THE  
MERCURY HALF OF THE EARTH PERIOD

*In terms of occult anatomy, the mountain of initiation is the physical body, whose directional headquarters are the nerve plexes centered around the spinal column. Common humanity ascends the mountain gradually by the spiral sympathetic path. The occultist takes the “straight and narrow” path via the central nervous system. The “steps” are the spinal vertebrae. Thus the Masonic rite has thirty-three degrees.*

ciation will make what he says unintelligible to a native. With the help, however, of one who has visited the country he may learn much more efficiently and in a shorter time. Likewise, also in the mystic life. There are some who have progressed

farther than others, who have visited the land of the soul and who have attained the mystic union with God, and their help is of inestimable value to those who are endeavoring to tread the path. Having gone before they are able to direct the seeker intelligently, though of course he must walk every step of the way. And the steps upon the path are commonly referred to as *degrees of initiation*.

An illustration will perhaps make the matter clearer. Let us suppose that God is at the pinnacle of a very high mountain, and that humanity is scattered over the plain below, from the foot of the mountain a spiral circles towards the goal at the top. This is the path of evolution followed by the great majority of mankind, who thus gradually climb the steep sides toward the top without perceptible effort. But there is also a stair leading straight from the bottom to the summit. This is the Path of Initiation which is climbed only by great and conscious effort. The spiral path of evolution goes past the stairway of Initiation at different points; thus some who are still upon the path of evolution, the pioneers for instance, may be more advanced towards Truth than those who have advanced along Initiation from a lower spiral. But the latter of course, will soon attain a higher point if they keep on.

The more backward peoples of the East enter the Path of Initiation at a lower point than that already attained through evolution by the pioneers of the West. But being younger, and therefore more feeble, it is really more necessary for them to have a Master, who can help them over the first part of the rugged road, than for those who have attained to the evolutionary state common among the western people. Also, the higher we climb, either by evolution or initiation, the clearer we see the Light which shines upon the top, which is God, the more we are strengthened thereby, and the better we are fitted to walk or climb alone. Therefore, after a time, it is unnecessary to have *Masters* to help us, and their place is then taken by the Elder Brothers, known in the West as *friends* and advisers.

The Master of the East urges his pupil, praises him when he has done well, punishes him when he has been neglectful. In the West, the Elder Brothers never urge, never praise, and never blame. The

urge must come from within the pupil, and they teach him to judge himself. At certain stages upon the path they require him to write impartial opinions of his own conduct, so that it may be known in how far he has learned to judge correctly. Thus in every respect they educate him to stand upon his own feet without leaning upon them or anyone else. For the higher we attain, the greater would be the disaster of a fall; and only as we cultivate *equipoise and self-reliance*, coupled with zeal of devotion, are we really fitted to go on.

Now with respect to these Initiations, please understand and get this very thoroughly into your mind, *there is no ceremony of any kind connected with the true Initiation*. The elaborate ceremonial of pseudo-occult orders as today seen in the visible world of fraternal orders or of churches, does not in any particular resemble the true Initiation, for that does not take place in the physical realm at all, and there is absolutely no ceremony connected with it. Neither does it consist of a ritual, read by anyone else, nor of lectures or preaching or anything of that nature. Not a single word is spoken during the process. That I know to be true in the Lower degrees of Initiation, which I myself have passed. And it would be contrary to reason to suppose that such means should be used in the higher degrees.

Further, having had conversations with Lay Brothers who have passed into higher degrees, the truth of this supposition is corroborated by their word. And in this fact you have a very good reason why the secrets of true Initiation cannot be revealed. *It is not an outward ceremonial but an inward experience*. The Initiator, having evolved the external picture consciousness of the Jupiter period, fixes his attention upon certain cosmic facts, and the candidate, who has become fitted for initiation by evolving within himself certain powers, which are still latent, however, is like a tuning fork of identical pitch with the vibration of the ideas sent out as pictures by the Initiator. Therefore he not only sees the pictures—anyone might see them—but he is able to respond to the vibration, and vibrating to the ideal presented by the Initiator, the latent power within him is then converted into dynamic energy and his consciousness is lifted to the next step upon the ladder of Initiation.

This may sound abstruse upon first reading, but if you will read and re-read until you have mastered this idea, you will have attained to the nearest description of what Initiation is which can possibly be given to one who has not experienced it himself. Neither is there any secret about the picture, in the sense that one would not tell, but it is secret because no physical words are coined which could adequately describe a spiritual experience in material language.

It is true that the Initiation takes place in a Temple particularly suited to the needs of a certain group of individuals who vibrate within a certain octave and that there are others present; but I reiterate that it is not what they might do or say which constitutes Initiation. It is an inward experience whereby the latent powers which have been ripened within are changed to dynamic energy.

Now with respect to the difference between initiations along the occult lines and those of the mystic, you will find from what has been said from the beginning that they are, and must be, exactly opposite. The *occultist*, who takes his initiative from the *intellectual* side, is shown the connection of spiritual causes with material facts; while the consciousness of the *mystic*, who has perceived the *spiritual fact*, is directed to their connection with the effects on the material plane. All this with a view toward blending both sides and developing man normally.

The *Rosicrucian Initiations*, being designed for the present pioneers of humanity, endeavor to *blend the mystic with the occult*. But as the western world has developed the intellect to the detriment of the emotions, a little more stress perhaps is laid upon the mystic side. Here the Elder Brothers always direct their pupils to look to Christ, but though the genuine eastern Masters are as devoted in the service of humanity, they cannot thus teach their pupils, because from the standpoint of the eastern aspirant the Christ Light is yet invisible, hence they are forced to teach their charges to do exactly as they say, and in the course of time, when they have ascended to the western level, Christ will appear to them also. □

—Max Heindel

## The Soul's Prayer

In childhood's pride I said to Thee:  
'O Thou, who mad'st me of Thy breath,  
Speak, Master, and reveal to me  
Thine inmost laws of life and death.

'Give me to drink each joy and pain  
Which Thine eternal hand can mete,  
For my insatiate soul would drain  
Earth's utmost bitter, utmost sweet.

'Spare me no bliss, no pang of strife,  
Withhold no gift or grief I crave,  
The intricate lore of love and life  
And mystic knowledge of the grave.'

Lord, Thou didst answer stern and low:  
'Child, I will hearken to thy prayer,  
And thy unconquered soul shall know  
All passionate rapture and despair.

'Thou shalt drink deep of joy and fame  
And love shall burn thee like a fire  
And pain shall cleanse thee like a flame,  
To purge the dross from thy desire.

'So shall thy chastened spirit yearn  
To seek from its blind prayer release,  
And spent and pardoned, sue to learn  
The simple secret of My peace.

'I, bending from my sevenfold height,  
Will teach thee of My quickening grace,  
*Life is a prism of My light,*  
*And Death the shadow of My face.'*

—Sarojini Nayadu