

**Melchizedek AND
THE MYSTERY OF
THE FIRE**

And Treaty in Three Parts

by

MANLY PALMER HALL

INTRODUCTION

The intricate rituals of the ancient Mysteries and the simpler ceremonies of modern religious institutions shared a common purpose: they were designed to preserve, through symbolic and processional dramas, certain secret and sacred procedures, the understanding of which enables humankind to more effectively achieve its salvation. The following pages will be dedicated to interpreting some of these allegories according to the teachings of the ancient sages and seers.

Each man has his own world. He dwells at the center of his small universe as lord and ruler of its constituent parts. Sometimes he behaves like a wise king, dedicating his life to the needs of his subjects, but more often he is a tyrant who imposes many forms of injustice upon his vassals, either through ignorance of their needs or through a lack of understanding of the ultimate disaster he is bringing upon himself. The body of man is a living temple, and he is the high priest, placed there to keep the House of the Lord in order. Ancient temples were designed, modeled after the human body, as will be seen by studying the plans of the sanctuary of Karnak or those of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. And if the initiation places were copies of the human body, the rituals that took place in the different chambers and corridors symbolized certain processes that also take place in the human body.

Freemasonry is an excellent example of a doctrine that suggests, through ceremonies and dramas, that the regeneration of the human soul is largely a physiological and biological matter. For this reason, the Order is divided into two parts: Masonry speculative and the operative. In the Lodge Temple, Freemasonry is speculative, because the Lodge is merely a symbol of the human organism. Operative Freemasonry consists of a series of mystical activities that take place within the physical and spiritual organism of those who have assumed its obligations.

Possessing the hidden keys to human salvation through self-knowledge was the goal toward which sages of all ages labored. The hope of possessing these secret formulas strengthened the candidates who bravely battled all the dangers and obstacles of the ancient initiations, sometimes losing their lives in the pursuit of truth. The initiations of the pagan Mysteries were no child's play. Druid priests consummated their initiatory ritual by sending aspirants out to sea in a small boat that could barely navigate. Some of them never returned from that adventure, for when a sudden gust of wind arose, the boat would immediately capsize.

In Central America, during the time when the Mysteries of the Mexican Indians were at their height, aspirants seeking knowledge were sent into dark caverns armed with a sword, warned that if they neglected their vigilance, even for an instant, they would suffer a gruesome death. For hours the neophytes wandered, surrounded by strange beasts that seemed even more terrifying than they were because of the caverns' darkness. Finally, weary and on the verge of despair, they found themselves before the threshold of a magnificently lit chamber, hewn from the living rock. As they paused, unsure which way to turn, they heard a beating of wings, a demonic howl, and a great figure with bat wings and a human body darted swiftly overhead, brandishing a great sword with a razor-sharp edge. This creature was called the Vampire-God. His duty was to attempt to behead those who sought admission to the Mysteries. If the neophytes were unprepared or too exhausted to defend themselves, they died on the spot. But if they still possessed enough presence of mind to escape this unexpected danger or to leap aside in time, the Vampire-God vanished, and the room filled with priests who welcomed the new initiates and instructed them in the secret wisdom. The Vampire-God's identity has been the subject of much controversy, for although he appears frequently in Mexican art and illuminated codices, no one knows who or what he truly was. He could fly over the heads of the neophytes and was the size of a man, yet he lived deep within the earth and was never seen except during the Mysteries, even though he held an important position in the Aztec pantheon.

The Mysteries of Mithras were also true tests of courage and perseverance. In these rites, priests disguised as ferocious beasts and fantastic animals attacked the aspirants who passed through the dark caverns where the initiations took place. Bloodshed was not uncommon, and many lost their lives fighting for the Great Secret. When the Roman emperor Commodus was initiated into the Mithraic cult, he was a victim of this. As he was remarkably skilled with the sword, he defended himself so valiantly that he killed at least one of the priests and wounded several others. In the Sabazian Mysteries, a poisonous serpent was placed on the candidate's chest, and he would fail in his initiation if he showed the slightest sign of fear. These incidents from the ancient rituals may give us a glimpse of the trials that seekers of truth were forced to endure to merit entering the sanctuary of wisdom. But when we consider the knowledge they received if they succeeded, we understand that the risks were justified, for from between the pillars of the gates of the Mysteries emerged a Plato and an Aristotle, and a hundred others, bearing positive witness to the fact that in their day the Verb He wasn't lost.

The tortures of initiation and the severe mental and physical tests served to eliminate all those who lacked the necessary aptitude to be entrusted with the secret powers possessed by the priests and transmitted to the new initiates at the moment of their "elevation." Those who resisted being hung from high crosses for nine hours until they lost consciousness, like Apollonius of Tyana, initiated in the Great Pyramid, would never reveal the secret teachings for fear of torture.

Those who practiced corporal punishment, and those who observed Pythagoras's discipline, which required five years of silence as the first requirement for entering his school, were unlikely to have revealed, through thoughtless indiscretion, any part of the Mystery forbidden to the uninitiated. Because of the extreme care taken in selecting and testing the aspirants, and the priests' remarkable ability to understand human nature, none of them ever betrayed the most important secrets of the temple. For this reason, the Verb It was lost to all, except for those who always fulfilled the requirements of the ancient Mysteries, since the law established that To those who lived the life, the doctrine would be revealed. It is illicit to impart to the uninitiated the keys that close the links in the chain of the Mysteries. It is permissible, however, without betraying trust, to explain some of the lesser secrets, the consideration of which will not only vindicate the integrity of the ancient hierophants, but will also reveal part of the Divine Mystery of human nature. It can never be emphasized enough that, Despite claims to the contrary, the operative Arcanum of the temple has never been publicly revealed. A few candidates who followed the path only briefly, and who became discouraged or were eliminated due to their lack of honesty with themselves, have attempted to reveal what they knew, but the weakness that led them to betray had already been pointed out by their instructors. Therefore, they were never given anything that could provide a link connecting external teachings with the wisdom of the sanctuary. The inner world of man, not the outer world, was the focus of the Mysteries of antiquity. Hence, we often consider the ancient priests ignorant when compared to ourselves; but while the modern world is dominating the visible universe and building a colossal civilization, it is utterly ignorant of that mysterious power or breath of energy that dwells at the center of every living thing, without which no investigation could ever have been carried out nor any city built. Man is never truly wise until he begins to fathom the enigma of his own existence, and the temples of initiation are the sole repositories of that knowledge—knowledge that will allow him to untie the Gordian knot of his own nature. However, the great spiritual truths are not as deeply hidden as one might suppose. Most of them are exposed to view at all times, but they go unrecognized because they are shrouded in symbols and allegories. When the human race learns to decipher the language of symbolism and allegory, a great veil will fall from human eyes. Then they will know the truth, and, what is more, they will realize that from the beginning the truth has been in the world unrecognized, except by a few, but gradually in increasing numbers. number, appointed by the Lords of the Dawn as ministers to the needs of human creatures, who are struggling to regain their awareness of Divinity.

The supreme secret of the ancients was the key to the nature and power of fire. From the day the hierarchies first descended upon the sacred island of the polar ice cap, it was decreed that fire would be the supreme symbol of that mysterious and abstract divinity dwelling in God, man, and Nature. The Sun

was considered a great fire in the midst of the universe. In the blazing sphere of the Sun dwelt mysterious spirits who commanded fire, and, in honor of this great light, fires burned on the altars of countless nations. The fire of Zeus burned on the Palatine Hill, the fire of Vesta on the household altar, and the fire of aspiration on the altar of the soul.

PART ONE

FIRE, UNIVERSAL DEITY

From the earliest times, humankind has revered fire above all other elements. Even the most uncultured savage seems to recognize in the flame something closely resembling the volatile fire that burns within their own soul. The mysterious, vibrant, radiant energy of fire was beyond their capacity for analysis; yet, they felt its power. The fact that during storms fire descended in mighty bolts from the sky, felling trees and causing destruction, led primitive people to recognize in its fury the wrath of the gods. Later, when humankind personified the elements and created the numerous pantheons that now exist, they placed in the hands of the Supreme Deity the torch, the lightning bolt, or the flaming sword, and upon its head a crown whose golden points symbolized the blazing rays of the Sun. Mystics have discovered that the worship of the Sun dates back to ancient Lemuria, and that of fire to the origins of the human race. Indeed, the element of fire controls, to a certain extent, the animal and plant kingdoms, and it is the only element that can subdue metals. Consciously or instinctively, every living being honors the sun. The sunflower always tends to face the solar disk. The Atlanteans were sun worshippers, while Native Americans (remnants of the ancient Atlantean people) still consider the sun to be a representative of the Supreme Giver of Light. Many primitive peoples believed that the sun was more of a reflector than a source of light, as evidenced by the fact that they frequently depicted the sun god carrying a highly polished metal shield on his arm, on which the solar face was carved. This shield held the light of Infinity, reflecting it to all places in the universe. During the year, the sun passes through the twelve houses of the heavens, where, like Hercules, it performs twelve labors. The annual death and resurrection of the sun has been a favorite theme in countless religions. The names of almost all the Great gods and saviors have been associated with the element of fire, sunlight, or its correlative, the mystical and spiritual invisible light. Jupiter, Apollo, Hermes, Mithras, Bacchus, Dionysus, Odin, Buddha, Krishna, Zoroaster, Fo-Hi, Lao, Vishnu, Shiva, Agni, Balder, Hiram Abiff, Moses, Samson, Jason, Vulcan, Uranus, Allah, Osiris, Ra, Bel, Baal, Nebo, Serapis, and King Solomon are some of the numerous deities and superhumans whose symbolic attributes derive from manifestations of solar power and whose names indicate their connection to light and fire.

According to the Greek Mysteries, the gods, gazing down upon the world from Mount Olympus, regretted having created humankind. Having never bestowed upon this primitive being an immortal spirit, they decided that nothing would be lost if these discontented, quarrelsome, and ungrateful humans were utterly destroyed, leaving their place vacant for a nobler race. But upon discovering the gods' plans, Prometheus, who harbored a deep love for the striving humanity, resolved to bring humankind the divine fire that would render the human race immortal, so that not even the gods could destroy it. Thus, Prometheus flew to the home of the Sun God, and kindling a small reed in the solar fire, brought it to the children of Earth, warning them that the fire should always be used for the glorification of the gods and the selfless service of one another. But humankind was thoughtless and selfish. They took the divine fire that Prometheus had brought them and used it to destroy one another. They burned down the houses of their enemies and, with the help of the heat, tempered steel to make swords and armor. They became more selfish and arrogant, and defied the gods, but they could not be destroyed now, because they possessed the sacred fire. For his disobedience, Prometheus (like Lucifer) was chained, but the Greek hero was placed on the summit of Mount Caucasus, where he had to endure a vulture pecking at his liver until a human being managed to master the sacred fire and become perfect. This prophecy was fulfilled by Hercules, who ascended the Caucasus, broke Prometheus's chains, and freed the friend of humankind who had been subjected to torment for a very long time. Hercules represents the initiate,

who, as his name indicates, shares in the glory of light. Prometheus is the vessel of solar energy. The divine fire that brought men into being is a mystical essence in its very nature, which they must regenerate and redeem if they want to free their own crucified souls from the rock of their low physical natures.

According to occult philosophy, the Sun is actually a celestial body of triple manifestation, two parts of its nature being invisible. The globe we see is merely the lowest phase of the solar nature and is the body of the Demiurge or, as the Jews call it, Jehovah, and the Brahmins, Shiva. Since the Sun is symbolized by an equilateral triangle, the three powers of the solar disk are said to be equal. The three phases of the Sun are called: Will, Wisdom, and Action. Will is related to the principle of life, Wisdom to that of light, and Action, or Friction, to the principle of heat. By Will, the heavens were created, and eternal life continues in supreme existence; by Action, friction, and effort, the Earth was formed, and the physical universe, shaped by the "Lords of Fire," gradually passed from a state of fusion to its current, more ordered condition.

Thus the heavens and the Earth were formed, but between them there was a great void, for God did not comprehend Nature, and Nature did not comprehend the Deity. The lack of exchange between these two spheres of consciousness was similar to the state of paralysis in which consciousness recognizes the condition of the body, but, due to a lack of nerve connection, is unable to govern or direct bodily activities. Therefore, between life and action came a mediator, who was called Light or Intelligence. Light participates in both life and action: it is the sphere of union. Intelligence occupied the space between heaven and Earth; through it, humankind learned of the existence of its God, and God began to provide for the needs of humankind. While life and action were simple substances, light was a composite, for the invisible part of light was of the nature of heaven, and the visible part, of the nature of Earth. Throughout the ages, this light is said to have taken on a corporeal form. Although these bodies bear witness to that light, the great spiritual truth behind this symbol of embodied light is that within the soul of every creature in whose mind intelligence is born, dwells a spirit that assumes the nature of this intelligence. Every truly intelligent man or woman who is working to spread the light in the world

is Christian the illuminated because of the very work it is trying to accomplish. The fact that light (intelligence) participates simultaneously in the natures of God and Earth is proven by men given to personifications of this light, because sometimes they are called the "Sons of Man" and other times the "Sons of God."

The initiate into the Mysteries was always taught of the existence of three suns: the first—the vehicle of God the Father—illuminated and enlivened his spirit; the second—the vehicle of God the Son—developed and expanded his mind; and the third—the vehicle of God the Holy Spirit—nourished and strengthened his body. Light is not only a physical element, but also a mental and spiritual one, and the disciple was taught in the temple to revere the invisible Sun far more than the visible one, because everything visible is only the effect of the invisible or causal, and since God is the Cause of all Causes, He dwells in the invisible World of Causation. Apuleius, when he was initiated into the Mysteries, saw the Sun shining at midnight, for the chambers of the temple were brilliantly illuminated, even though there was no lamp in them. The invisible Sun is not limited by walls or even by the Earth's surface itself, because its rays, being of a higher vibratory intensity than physical substance, pass unhindered through all planes of material matter. For those capable of seeing the light of these spiritual stars, there is no darkness, for they are in the presence of infinite light, and at midnight they can see the Sun shining beneath their feet.

Through one of the lost arts of antiquity, the temple priests could make lamps that burned for centuries without needing to be refueled. These lamps resembled the so-called "Virgin Lamps," those carried by the Vestal Virgins. They were slightly smaller than a human hand, and according to surviving documents, their wicks were made of asbestos. It has been claimed that these lamps burned for a thousand years or more. One was found in the tomb of Christian Rosencreutz, which had been burning for 120 years without its fuel supply appearing to have diminished. It is believed that these lamps (which, incidentally,

burned in hermetically sealed urns, without the aid of oxygen) were constructed in such a way that the heat of the flame drew some substance from the atmosphere, which replaced the original fuel as soon as the mysterious oil was consumed.

Hargrave Jennings has collected numerous references regarding the times and places where these lamps were found. In most cases, however, they went out as soon as they were removed from their urns or, if they didn't break in a mysterious way, their secret could never be discovered. Regarding these lamps, Mr. Jennings writes: "It is claimed that the Romans kept lamps in their tombs for ages by means of the gold oiliness (and here the art of the Rosicrucians comes in), transformed by hermetic means into a liquid substance; and it is said that when monasteries were dissolved during the reign of Henry VIII, a lamp was found that had been burning in a tomb since approximately the third century AD, that is, for about twelve hundred years. Two of these underground lamps can be seen in the Museum of Rarities in Leiden, in the Netherlands. One of these lamps was found during the papacy of Paul III, in the tomb of Tullia, Cicero's daughter, which had been completely sealed for 1550 years."

Madame Blavatsky, in her work *Isis Unveiled*, she indicates a number of formulas for constructing perennial lamps, and says in a footnote that she herself saw one, made by a disciple of the hermetic arts, which had been burning continuously without the need for fuel for six years prior to the publication of her book.

The everlasting lamp was, naturally, the most fitting symbol of the Eternal Fire in the Universe, and while modern chemistry denies the possibility of their construction, the fact that many have been built and seen over thousands of years serves as a warning against dogmatism. In Tibet, Lama magicians have discovered a system for illuminating rooms using a greenish-white phosphorescent sphere that increases in brightness when commanded by the priests, and which, after those in the chamber have left, gradually fades until only a continuously burning spark remains.

This apparent miracle is no more difficult to explain than others performed by the Tibetans. In Tibet, there is a sacred tree that sheds new bark every year, and when the old bark falls away, an inscription in Tibetan characters is found on the new bark beneath. These secrets of so-called savage or primitive peoples continually refute the ridicule with which Caucasians almost invariably regard the culture of other races.

The Druid priests of Britain, recognizing the Sun as the representative of the Supreme Deity, used a ray of sunlight to light the fires on their altars. They did this by concentrating the ray onto a specially carved crystal or aquamarine, set as a magical brooch or buckle on the Archdruid's belt. This brooch was called the "Liath Meisicith" and was believed to possess the power to draw the divine fire of the gods from the heavens and concentrate its energies for the service of humankind. This buckle was, of course, a burning mirror. Many ancient nations revered fire and sunlight so much that they never allowed their altars to be illuminated except by concentrating the sun's rays through a lens (burning mirror). In some ancient temples, lenses were carefully positioned on the roof at various angles so that each year, at the vernal equinox, the midday sun's rays would shine through these lenses and ignite the altar fires, which had been prepared for the occasion. The priests believed this process was equivalent to the gods themselves lighting the fires. In honor of Hu, the supreme deity of the Druids, the peoples of Britain and Wales celebrated an annual fire-lighting ceremony on what they called Midsummer Day.

One of the reasons mistletoe was sacred to the Druids was that many of the priests believed this peculiar parasitic plant fell to earth in the form of lightning bolts, and that wherever a tree was struck by lightning, a mistletoe seed was deposited within its bark. The long time mistletoe remained alive after being cut from the tree was closely linked to the Druids' veneration of it. The fact that this plant was also a powerful means of capturing the mysterious cosmic fire that circulates through the ethers was discovered by these priests, who valued mistletoe for its close connection to the mysterious astral light that is, in reality, the astral body of the Earth. In this regard, Eliphas Levi writes in his *History of Magic*: "The Druids were priests and physicians who healed through magnetism and charged amulets with their fluidic influence. Their universal remedies were mistletoe and snake eggs, because these substances attracted astral light in a very special way. The solemnity with which mistletoe was cut inspired popular confidence in this

plant and made it extraordinarily magnetic. The progress of magnetism will one day reveal the absorbent properties of mistletoe. Then we will understand the secret of those spongy growths that absorb the untapped virtues of plants and become charged with their tinctures and flavors.”

Fungi, truffles, galls, and the various varieties of mistletoe will be intelligently employed by medical science, which will be new because it is old.”

Certain plants, minerals, and animals have been considered sacred in all nations of the Earth due to their peculiar sensitivity to astral fire. The cat, sacred to the city of Bubastis in Egypt, is an example of a particularly magnetic animal. Anyone who strokes a domestic cat in a darkened room will be able to see electrical emanations, in the form of a phosphorescent greenish light, emanating from its fur. In the temples of Bast, dedicated to the goddess of cats, calico cats were extraordinarily venerated, as were any other members of the feline family whose eyes were of different colors. Lodestone and radium, in the mineral kingdom, as well as various parasitic growths in the plant kingdom, are strangely sensitive to cosmic fire. Magicians of the Middle Ages surrounded themselves with certain animals such as bats, cats, snakes, and monkeys because they had the power to draw astral light from these beings and appropriate it for their own purposes. For this same reason, the Egyptians, and some Greeks as well, kept cats in temples, and snakes were always present at the Oracle of Delphi. The auric body of a snake is one of the most remarkable things a clairvoyant can contemplate, and the secrets held within its aura demonstrate why the snake is a symbol of wisdom in many cultures.

It is evident that Christianity has preserved (at least in part) the primitive fire worship of antiquity in many of its symbols and rituals. The censer so frequently used in Christian churches is a pagan symbol related to the regeneration of the human soul. The censer represents the human body. The incense within the censer, made from the essences extracted from various plants, represents the vital forces of the human body. The burning ember amidst the incense is the emblem of the spiritual seed enclosed in the heart of the human body. This spiritual spark is an infinitesimal part of the divine flame, the Great Fire of the Universe, from whose fiery heart the fires of the altars of all its creatures have been kindled. Just as the spark of life gradually consumes the incense, so too the spiritual nature of humankind, through the process of regeneration, gradually consumes all the gross elements of the body, transmuting them into soul power, symbolized by the smoke. Although smoke is actually a physical and dense substance, it is nevertheless light enough to rise in the form of clouds; likewise, the soul is in fact a physical element, but through purification and the fire of aspiration it acquires the nature of the intangible atmosphere; although formed from the substance of the earth, it becomes subtle enough to rise like exquisite perfume to the throne of Divinity.

While some authorities have maintained that the shape of the cross derived from the ancient Egyptian instrument called the "nilometer," used to measure the Nile's floods, others believe the symbol originated from the two crossed sticks that primitive peoples used to make fire by friction. The use of bell towers and spires in the construction of medieval Christian cathedrals, as well as the more familiar and conventional pyramidal structures of church towers, may have originated from the fire obelisks of Egypt, which were placed in front of temples dedicated to the supreme deities. All pyramids are symbols of fire. The Maypole had a similar origin, serving as both a phallic symbol and an emblem of cosmic fire.

The prevailing custom of orienting churches toward the East is, of course, further evidence of the survival of sun worship. Virtually the only branch of the human race that does not observe this rule is the Arab world. Muslims always orient their mosques toward Mecca, yet their prayer times are determined by the sun. Rose windows and ivy-covered walls are survivals of paganism, because ivy was sacred to Bacchus, due to the shape of its leaves, and it was always intended that this plant cover the walls of temples dedicated to the Greek sun god. The gilded ornaments found on the altars of Christian churches should remind the observant philosopher that gold is the sacred metal of the sun, because (according to alchemists) the sun's rays crystallized on earth, thus forming this precious metal, which, incidentally, continues to be formed even now. The candles that so often adorn these same altars, and which almost always appear in odd numbers, remind us that odd numbers are sacred. When three candles are used,

they represent the three aspects of the Sun: dawn, midday, and dusk, and thus are an emblem of the Trinity. When seven are used, they represent the planetary angels called Elohim by the Jews, whose Kabbalistic and numerical values are also seven. When the even numbers 12 or 24 appear, they represent the signs of the zodiac and the spirits of the hours of the day, called Izzids by the Persians. When only one light is displayed, it is the emblem of the Invisible Supreme Father, the One, and the small red lamp that always burns on the altar is an offering to the Demiurge-Jehovah or the Lord Builder of Forms.

What oil is to flames, blood is to the spirit of man. Consequently, oil is frequently used in anointings, for it is a sacred fluid for solar power. And since oil contains solar life, it is used in large quantities in polar regions, where it is necessary to generate much body heat. Hence the Inuit's inclination to burn candles made of tallow and whale blubber.

The very word "Christ" is sufficient proof that fire and fire worship are the two essential elements of the Christian faith. For the ancients, the sun's rays were like the blood of the Heavenly Lamb who, at the vernal equinox, died for the sins of the world and redeemed all humanity with his blood (rays).

The Mystery Schools of ancient Egypt taught that blood is the vehicle of consciousness. The spirit of man moved through the bloodstream and, therefore, was not localized in any particular point of the body. It moved within the body with the speed of thought, so that self-awareness, knowledge of the external world, and sensory perception could be located anywhere in the body through the exercise of will. Initiates regarded blood as a mysterious liquid, somewhat gaseous in nature, which served as the medium for the manifestation of the fire of man's spiritual nature. This fire, circulating through the system, animated and vitalized all parts of the form, thus keeping the spiritual nature in contact with its physical extremities. Mystics considered the liver to be the source of the blood's heat and power. Hence, it is significant that the centurion's spear pierced Christ's liver and that the vulture was placed upon Prometheus's liver to torment him throughout the ages.

Occultism teaches us that the presence of the liver is what distinguishes animals from plants, and that it is mystically true that small beings capable of movement, but lacking a liver, are truly plants in a spiritual sense. The liver is governed by the planet Mars, the dynamo of the solar system, which sends an animating red ray to all beings evolving within this solar scheme. Philosophers taught that the planet Mars, under the direction of its regent Samael, was the transmuted "Body of Sin" of the Solar Logos, which had originally been the "Dweller on the Threshold" of the Divine Being, whose energies are now distributed by the fire of the Sun. Samael, incidentally, was the fiery father of Cain, through whom a portion of humanity received the flame of aspiration and is thus separated from the children of Seth, whose father was Jehovah.

The Egyptians considered grape juice to be the substance most similar to human blood. In fact, they believed that the vine drew its life from the blood of the dead who had been buried in the earth.

Regarding this matter, Plutarch wrote the following: "The priests of the Sun in Heliopolis never brought wine into their temples, and if they used it at any time in their libations to the gods, it was not because they considered it acceptable to them, but because they poured it upon their altars as the blood of those enemies who had previously fought against them. For they believed that wine had sprung forth from the earth after it had been nourished by the corpses of those who had fallen in wars against the gods. And this, they say, is the reason why drinking its juice in large quantities drives men mad and out of their minds, filling them with the blood of their ancestors." (Isis and Osiris). Medieval magicians knew that they could, through their occult powers, dominate anyone if they managed to obtain a little of their blood. If a glass of water is left overnight in the room of someone sleeping there, the following morning the water will be so imbued with that person's psychic radiations that anyone who knows the procedure can discover in the water the entire life story and character of the person who occupied the room. These impressions are transmitted and retained by a subtle substance that medieval transcendentalists called thestral light, an ever-present and all-pervading fiery essence that preserves intact the impressions of everything that has happened anywhere in Nature.

The torrent of rays emanating from the face of the Sun has led to its association with the lion, due to the king of animals' shaggy mane. The blond, savior gods of many nations subtly symbolize solar radiation with their long, golden curls. The Sun was the king of the heavens, and earthly rulers, eager to proclaim their worldly power, delighted in considering themselves "Little Suns," their vassals recognized as planets bathed in the glory of the central light. The highest of each of Nature's kingdoms was also considered a symbol of the Sun. Hence, the sacred scarab, the most intelligent of all insects; the eagle, the bird of highest flight; and the lion, the strongest of all beasts, were considered appropriate symbols of the solar disk. Thus, the Mughals chose the lion as their emblem, while Caesar and Napoleon used the eagle to symbolize their dignity. The crowns of kings were originally bands of gold with radiant points, symbolizing their participation in the divine power with which the Sun was clothed. Over time, the crown became more conventional. Its surface was encrusted with precious stones, some of its features were altered, and its obvious resemblance to the Sun was lost.

The halo so often depicted around the heads of both Christian and pagan deities and saints is also emblematic of solar power. According to the Mysteries, there comes a moment in a person's spiritual development when the mysterious oil that has been slowly ascending the spinal column finally enters the third ventricle of the brain, where it takes on a beautiful golden hue and radiates in all directions. This radiation is so great that it cannot be contained by the skull, and it then emanates from the head, especially from the back of the neck, at the point where the upper vertebra articulates with the condyles of the occipital bone. It is this light, which fans out from the back of the head, that has given rise to the halo of saints and the nimbus so often used in religious art. This light signifies human regeneration and is part of the auric bodies of humankind.

These auras have greatly influenced the color and form of the vestments used in religious ceremonies. The blue and gold robe described by Albert Pike and the garments of the different ranks in the hierarchies of all religious orders are symbolic of these invisible emanations that surround humankind, whose colors change with every thought and feeling. Thanks to these auras, the priests and philosophers of antiquity chose those disciples who could honor their teachings.

The "Robes of Glory" of the High Priest of Israel are symbolic, as Josephus, with his Eastern education, astutely noted. The plain white linen symbolizes the purified physical nature; the multicolored garments represent the astral body, while the blue robe represents the spiritual nature, and the violet the mind, because violet is a color composed of two shades, one spiritual and the other material.

In Egyptian Mysteries, it was not uncommon to see the sun's rays ending in human hands. One of the chairs recently discovered in Tutankhamun's tomb depicts a sun whose rays terminate in human hands. Among the ancients, the hand was a symbol of wisdom, because it was used to lift up the fallen, and no one is as fallen as the ignorant. The sun's physical virtues and its power to absorb water were used to symbolize a spiritual process in which the divine nature of humankind was exalted, illuminated, and elevated by the sun's warmth, whose rays expand the threefold spiritual power of love, wisdom, and truth.

PART TWO

MAN, THE GREAT SYMBOL OF MYSTERIES

Pythagoras said that the Universal Creator had made two things in His own image: first, the cosmic system with its myriad suns, moons, and planets; second, humankind, in whose nature the entire universe exists in miniature. Long before the introduction of idolatry into religion, early priests, to facilitate the study of the natural sciences, would draw the figure of a man and place it in the sanctuary of their temples, for the human figure symbolized Divine Power in all its intricate manifestations. Thus, the priests of antiquity took humankind as a textbook, and through its study came to understand the greatest and most abstruse mysteries of the celestial plan of which they were a part. It is not improbable that this mysterious figure erected on the early altars was something like a mannequin and that, like certain emblematic hands in the Mystery Schools, it was covered with hieroglyphs, either engraved on its surface or painted with permanent paints. The statue could be opened to show the relative position of the organs, bones, muscles, nerves, and other parts.

The present generation is always ready to dismiss the anatomical knowledge possessed by ancient civilizations. Due to the destructive effects of time and vandalism, existing documents cannot reveal the wisdom of antiquity. Professor James H. Breasted, an archaeologist at the University of Chicago, recently stated that his research has demonstrated that the wise Egyptian physicians during the 18th Dynasty—that is, some seventeen centuries before Christ—possessed scientific knowledge comparable to that which we possess in the 20th century. Professor Breasted states, “For example, the word ‘brain’ appears for the first time in human language in the Edwin Smith Papyrus, an ancient scientific document, and there is evidence that the Egyptians knew the brain regions that control the muscles, something that has only been rediscovered in the last generation.”

The knowledge of the Egyptian priest-physicians concerning the functions of the different parts of the human body not only equaled that of many modern scientists, but, with respect to those functions and powers related to the spiritual nature of man and to the organs and centers by means of which the spiritual essences control the body, exceeded that which we possess in the present world.

For centuries, research had contributed greatly to the fundamental principles of the early philosophers, and when Egypt reached the glorious zenith of its civilization, the mannequin was a mass of intricate hieroglyphs and symbolic figures. Each of its parts held a secret meaning. The measurements of this stone figure corresponded to a basic model by which it was possible to measure all parts of the cosmos. It was a glorious emblem embodying the knowledge of the sages and hierophants of Isis, Osiris, and Serapis.

Then came the time of idolatry. The Mysteries decayed internally. The secret meanings were lost, and no one knew the identity of the mysterious man who stood on the altar. It was only remembered that this figure was a sacred and glorious symbol of universal power. This figure came to be regarded as a god, in whose image man had been created. Having lost the secret knowledge of the purpose for which this mannequin had been constructed, the priests venerated the wood and stone from which it was made, until finally their lack of spiritual understanding brought down the temple, whose ruins fell upon their own heads, and the statue crumbled along with the civilization that had forgotten its meaning.

In our day, the great faith of our race—Christianity—is professed by a great number of sincere, devout, and honest men and women. And although all are dedicated to their tasks, they are only partly effective, because most of them are completely ignorant of the fact that so-called biblical Christianity is merely an allegory for the true spirit of Christianity and for that esoteric doctrine created in the temple by the initiated minds of paganism and promulgated to satisfy the religious inclinations of the human race.

Today, this great faith is professed by millions of souls and understood by only a handful, because while the Mystery Temples no longer exist as institutions on street corners, as they did in ancient times, the Mystery School still exists as an invisible philosophical structure. It entrusts the knowledge of its secrets only to a few, allowing the great masses to enter only within its walls.

Go outside and make your offerings on the bronze altar. Christianity is essentially a Mystery School, but most of its adherents do not understand it well enough to realize that there are secrets in its parables and allegories that constitute an important part of its dogma.

Why shouldn't Christianity be a School of Mysteries? Its founder was an initiate in the Essene Mysteries. The Essenes were disciples of the great Pythagoras and were also in contact with the Secret Schools of India. The Master Jesus was a hierophant deeply versed in the ancient Arcanum. Saint John himself, through his writings, proves that he was familiar with the ritualism of the Egyptian cults, and it is maintained that Saint Matthew was the teacher of Basilides, the immortal Egyptian sage, founder, along with Simon Magus, of Gnosticism, the most elaborate system of Christian mysticism ever to emerge from the main trunk of the Church of Saint Peter. During its early history in Rome, Christianity was in constant contact with Mithraism, the philosophy of fire, in Persia, from which it drew no small part of its rituals and ceremonies.

If Christianity were viewed less as a church and more as a Mystery School, the modern world would quickly gain a clearer understanding of its principles. Every priest of Christianity, every minister of the Gospel, should be an anatomist and a physiologist, a biologist and a chemist, a physician and an astronomer, a mathematician and a musician, and above all, a philosopher. By philosopher, we mean one who can intelligently study all these different lines of thought and discover the mutual relationship between them, and use all the arts and sciences as means of interpreting the magnificent emblematic representation and mysterious drama of the Christian faith. If they could intelligently consider the secrets handed down by the priests of pagan antiquity (whose stupendous genius soared far above the routine prejudices of modern thought), they might make a number of important discoveries.

First, they would discover that current translations of the Old and New Testaments contain numerous errors because their translators were not spiritually competent to interpret the sacred mysteries of the Hebrew and Greek languages. They would find countless contradictions due to misunderstandings, and they would also discover that the so-called Apocryphal books (rejected as uninspired) contain some of the most important keys bequeathed to us by antiquity.

They would learn that the Old Testament should not be taken literally: that between the lines there are certain hidden teachings without which the true meaning of the Hebrew scriptures cannot be discovered.

They would no longer ridicule pagans for their plurality of gods, for they would discover that they themselves, if they are faithful to their scripture, are polytheists. The word "Elohim," as used in the first chapters of Genesis and translated as God, is a plural, masculine-feminine word that designates a number of androgynous gods and not a Supreme Deity. They would also understand that Adam was not a man but a species, a race of creatures, and that the Garden of Eden was not in Asia Minor.

But even if some men knew these things to be true, a large part of humanity would still reject them, because they do not agree with traditions accepted and venerated not because they are certain, but because they have been accepted for generations. They would crown their discoveries by realizing that the Promised Land of all nations is the human body, and that this is the holy ground consecrated to the gods. They would understand that their own bodies are the Holy Sepulchres, which have so long remained in the hands of the infidels, and that there is no infidel of any race half as wicked as that which dwells in the heart of man; that there is no greater enemy of the faith than one's own lower individual nature; no Judas to compare to selfishness, no traitor to ignorance, no tyrant to compare to pride, and no Red Sea to be crossed to compare to that which comprises the emotional nature of man, which springs from the red, blood-creating centers in the human liver.

If modern theologians could see the ancient mannequin on the altar, they would clearly understand all this, but since they are unaware of the existence of a secret doctrine, they do not seek it. Yet, who can read the Book of Ezekiel or Revelation and not realize that the beloved disciple John, surpassing all

others in his vision, was undoubtedly exalted or “elevated,” as the modern Freemason might say, and beheld the splendor of the Mysteries? St. John’s allegories are drawn from all the religions of antiquity. The drama he unfolds in Revelation is synthetic and, consequently, truly Christian, because it includes the great teachings of all ages. Some believe that God did not intend for humankind to understand the mystery of its own destiny, but let us remember those immortal words: “There is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, and nothing concealed that will not be made known.” If this is true, let us undertake the task of resolving, revealing, or reconstructing it. Following in the footsteps of enlightened individuals throughout history, we too will discover the truth if we continue the ascent up the spiral staircases climbed by aspirants from all nations and religions, leaving their footprints marked on the stones. The spirit of man is a small, invisible ring of fire from which emanate currents and twinkling rays of force. By a mystical process, these rays build bodies around this formless central germ, and man dwells in the midst of these bodies, governing them by waves of energy in a way that is very difficult to appreciate unless one is familiar with the hidden constitution of man. This invisible ring of fire is the eternal fire, the spark of the Infinite Wheel, without birth or death, the eternal center that includes within itself all that has been, all that is, and all that perpetually will be.

This seed dwells in the state called Eternity, because for this immortal spark time is illusory, distance does not exist, joy and sorrow are unknown, because concerning its function and consciousness all that can be said is that IT IS. While other things come and go, IT IS.

This seed of immortality enters the embryo at the moment of vivification and departs at death. With its arrival, heat is generated; with its departure, heat disappears. Just as the blazing sphere of the Sun is at the center of the solar system, this fiery ring of the spirit is at the center of the human body. It is the altar fire that never goes out, and to whose service the sages of all nations have dedicated themselves, for in this flame resides all perfection and the possibility of ultimate attainment. This flame manifests itself in individuals and personalities, but the essences drawn from the experience, intelligence, and activity accumulated in these individuals and personalities are ultimately absorbed by this flame, supplying it with the fuel with which it shines and burns more brilliantly. From this unique altar fire are kindled all the fires of the human body, just as the countless flames originated from the sacred fires of the Parsis.

Compare the blazing spirit of man to the flame of a candle. First, in the center of the candle, near the wick, there is an almost colorless blue glow. Around this is a ring of golden light, and further toward the periphery, surrounding the yellow part, there is a flame of dark orange or brick red, which gives off more or less smoke. These three lights—blue, yellow, and reddish—are closely related to the flame of man, because there is a blue one, which gives light without fuel, and a yellow one, fueled by pure oil, which burns with a steady brilliance without producing smoke. Then there is a red flame, which consumes coarser fuel. This is called the annihilating fire of the ancients, because in the human body the blue flame is the fire of the aspiring and transcendent spirit. The yellow flame is the clear and burning light of reason that illuminates the mind and lights up the darkness of night, while the red flame is the false light, the fire of passion and lust. This is smoky like the battlefield, where hatreds and fears rise together in a seething, brick-red flame that is a gruesome shroud.

These are the three fires: the fire of divinity, the fire of humanity, and the fire of demons. All three are enclosed within human nature, from where their brilliance shines forth as the sacred three-syllable word through which the heavens were created, the Earth formed, and the works of evil destroyed. The disciples of the Ancient Wisdom knew that, at the dawn of this earthly scheme, certain instructions were deposited in safe places by the Sons of the Dawn, or as we call them, the Gods, who, after ensuring that these doctrines would be preserved for the ultimate salvation of the race, penetrated the constitution of humankind and lost their identity. For this reason, it is said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, because it includes the Divine Father, His Trinity, and His seraphim, cherubim, powers, dominions, principalities, thrones, angels, and archangels.

Each of these celestial beings has contributed something to human nature. Through the power of one, we feel; through the power of another, we feel., He sees; through the power of a third, he speaks; through the power of a fourth, he understands; by the power of the Divine Father, he is immortal; by the

power of the Trinity, he is threefold in his constitution—spiritual, intellectual, and physical—through the power of the seraphim, he was given the great fires, while through that of the cherubim, he obtained his composite form. Hence, these spirits are confined within their own nature until humanity has succeeded in elevating it to the point where it liberates these cosmic powers by giving them proper expression and ceasing to limit or enslave them further with its own ignorance and perversion.

In reality, the Kingdom of Heaven is within man himself, far more than he imagines; and just as heaven is in his very nature, so too are earth and hell found in his constitution, for the higher worlds circumscribe and include the lower ones, and earth and hell are included within the nature of heaven. As Pythagoras would have said: “The higher and lower worlds are encompassed within the area of the Supreme Sphere.” Thus, all the kingdoms of earthly nature—mineral, vegetable, animal, and his own human spirit—are included in his physical body, and he himself has been designated guardian spirit of the mineral kingdom, being responsible to the creative hierarchies for the destiny of stones and metals. The infernal world is also a part of himself, for within his nature reside Lucifer, the Beast of Babylon, Mammon, Beelzebub, and all the other infernal furies. At the base of his spine burns a hellish fire, and the Witches' Sabbath, so splendidly described by Eliphaz Levi, can be traced back to its origin in the lower emotional centers of the human body.

Thus, man is in himself heaven, earth, and hell, and his salvation is a far more personal matter than he imagines. Given that the human body is a mass of psychic centers, that during life this structure is traversed by incessant currents of energy, and that throughout its entire constitution are found vortices of electrical force and magnetic power, man can be contemplated, by those who know how to see him, as a solar system composed of stars and planets, suns and moons, with comets orbiting irregularly through them. And just as the Milky Way is supposed to be a gigantic cosmic embryo, so too is man himself a galaxy, each of whose stars will one day become a constellation.

Wherever we look, we find life. Wherever we find life, we discover light, for in the midst of all these living things there are faint sparks of immortal splendor.

Those whose eyes are bound by earthly limitations see only forms, but for those who can transcend materiality, each life appears as a flash of immortal brilliance. Even the atmosphere itself is filled with light, and the clairvoyant passes through spheres of flame. There are lights of thousands of iridescent colors and hues that surpass the brightness of the sun, lights a thousand times more varied than those of the spectrum we know, colors not even dreamed of, lights so bright they cannot be seen but felt like resounding chimes in the head; some lights that must be heard, and others, like solid columns of fire that must be felt. Wherever the seer directs their gaze, they behold fire. It springs from stone; it flashes in geometric stars from the petals of flowers and radiates in waves from the skin of animals. It surrounds man with a brilliant halo and the earth with the halo of a rainbow whose bands extend for miles from its surface. Fire radiates light upward through the surface of the Earth; it sends light downward from the vast expanse of space; it radiates light outward from the center of all things and inward from the circumference of each thing.

Is it strange that this living, universal splendor was golden? It is the most perfect human symbol of God, because this light is the primary manifestation of the Eternal Unmanifest.

This eternal fire, burning without fuel in the soul of all things, has been, since the beginning of time, the most sacred symbol in the world. For while images of wood or stone, paintings on canvas, and even songs are more or less expressions of form, the physical side of Nature, this radiant light, this fiery splendor, symbolizes the spirit, life, the immortal seed enclosed in the heart of form. It was consecrated to the Supreme Deity, and all worshipped it and made offerings to it. It was the cause, and humankind worshipped the cause, striving, through the secret culture passed down through the ages and based on the teachings of the gods themselves, to make the light shine more brightly from within themselves. This is the origin of the symbolism of light and fire.

Light is sacred not only because it dispels the darkness in which all the enemies of human life hide. It is also sacred because it is the vehicle of life. This is evidenced by the effect of sunlight on plant, animal,

and human life. Light is also the vehicle of color, for the Sun imparts color to all earthly matter. It is likewise the vehicle of heat, and according to ancient wisdom, it carries within it the seed of all things, originating from the Sun. Through light also pass all the impulses of the Great Man. According to the Mysteries, God governs His universe through impulses of intelligence that project through visible or invisible light rays. This light plays the same role in the universe as the nervous system does in the body. Pythagoras said that "the body of God is composed of the substance of light." Where there is light, there is God. He who worships the light, worships God. He who serves the light, serves God. What more fitting symbol could humankind conceive of the eternal and ever-present Divine Father than the living, vibrant, and radiant fire? Fire is the most sacred of all the elements and the most ancient of all symbols. This being so, the ancients were not wrong when they adopted fire, or light, as their supreme symbol and chose the central glory of the Sun as the emblem of universal light. In doing so, they became not worshippers of the Sun, but worshippers of God as He manifests Himself through the light of truth. The philosophers of fire worshipped three lights—the light of the sun, the light of the Earth, and the light of the soul—the latter being the light within humankind that they believed would ultimately be reabsorbed into the Divine Light, from which it was temporarily separated by the prison walls of humanity's lower nature. The Mysteries of all ages were dedicated to facilitating the reunion of this lesser light with the Great Light, its Father and Source. For the Gnostics, Christ was the colorless Divine Light that assumed the form of radiant splendor (Truth), thus attending to the needs of the lesser light struggling to express itself in the soul of every human being. This Divine Light entered into the light of Nature and, strengthening it, helped to vitalize all living things.

The light that exists in man, the miniature God, was saved - or rather, released- through a process called regeneration. The secret method used to achieve this regeneration without having to follow the long, spiraling path of evolutionary progress was the great and supreme secret of the Mysteries, revealed only to those who had proven themselves worthy of possessing the power of life and death. These Mysteries have been perpetuated to this day by Freemasonry.

The Masonic Order is based on the Secret Schools of pagan antiquity, many of whose symbols have been preserved to this day in the various degrees of the Blue Lodge and the Scottish Rite. Regarding the origin of the term "Freemason," which is itself a key to the doctrines of the Order, Robert Hewitt Brown, 32nd Degree, writes: "Long before the construction of King Solomon's Temple, masons were known as..." Children of Light. Freemasonry was practiced by the ancients under the name of Lux (light), or its equivalent in the various languages of antiquity. We have been informed by several eminent authors that the word Freemasonry is a corruption of the Greek term Mesouraneowhich means "I am in the middle of the sky," alluding to the Sun, which, "being in the middle of the sky," is the great source of light. Others derive it directly from ancient Egyptian. Phrethe Sun, and But, a son, that is Phre masses- Children of the Sun or Children of Light."

The true secret of the regeneration of fire in the human soul is revealed by the ritual of the third degree of the Blue Lodge, under the allegory of the death of Hiram Abiff. The name Hiram It is, as has already been noted, closely related to the element of fire. Its direct descent from Tubal-Cain, the

The first great metal craftsman to work with fire further links this skilled worker to the immortal flame of life within man. In his work *Secret Societies of All Ages* In his book, **Secret Societies of All Ages**, Charles W. Heckthorne presents an ancient Kabbalistic legend concerning the connection between early Freemasonry and fire worship. According to this legend, Hiram Abiff was not a descendant of Adam or Jehovah, like the sons of Seth, but of a nobler lineage, because the fire of Samael, one of the Elohim, flowed through his veins. Furthermore, there are two kinds of men in the world: those with aspirations and those without. Those without aspirations are the sons of Seth, true children of the Earth, who cling tenaciously to their mother, being Earthliness the key word of its nature.

There is another race, the Children of Fire, descendants of Samael, the regent of fire. These children of the flame are always driven by ambition and aspiration. They are the builders of cities, the erectors of monuments, the conquerors of worlds, the forerunners, the metalworkers—true children of the eternal flame. Their souls are vehement and tempestuous, and the Earth is a burden to them. Jehovah does not

answer their pleas, for they are children of another star. Aspiration is the keynote of their natures, and often they rise like new Phoenixes from the ashes of failure. They never rest, like the element of which they are a part: they wander the face of the Earth, their eyes fixed on the blazing star from which they came.

This fundamental difference is clearly visible in daily life. Some are always content; others never reach their goals. Some are the Children of Water, the guardians of the flock; others are the Children of Fire, the builders of cities. One group is conservative, the other progressive. One is the king, the other the priest. But within the nature of all living things, the Children of Fire and the Children of Water coexist. In the Holy Scriptures, those born of the flame are called Children of God, and those born of water are called Children of Men, because the one born of the flame is divinity in man, and the one born of water is humanity in man. These two brothers are mortal enemies, but in the Mysteries they were taught to cooperate with one another, and they are symbolized in Freemasonry by the double-headed eagle of the 33rd Degree.

According to ancient wisdom, a time will come when humankind will have two complete spinal systems, both equally developed, and their lives will be governed by two powers working together in harmony. To express this, ancient alchemists symbolized this realization with a two-headed figure, one head male and the other female. The hermaphrodite Ishwar, the planetary lord of the Brahmins, has the right half of his body masculine and the left feminine, thus symbolizing that he is the archetype of the final human race. Humanity, once it is both positive and negative, will no longer reproduce as it does now.

One of the ancient Mysteries taught that the end of all things is equal to their beginning plus the experience of the cycle, and one day the human race will give birth to its new bodies through its own generation, as certain primitive animals still do. Then, undoubtedly, humankind will be its own father and its own mother, complete in itself. Initiation makes this process possible in humankind long before the natural course of human evolution would allow. Such is the true mystery of Melchizedek, king of Salem, the priest-king (priest, water; king, fire), who was his own father and his own mother, and whose footsteps all initiates follow.

Only the highest of all the occult orders that exist solely in the inner world can be called the "Order of Melchizedek," even though it may have other names in other nations. This Order is composed internally of graduates from other Mystery Schools who have already reached the point where they can give birth to their own true natures, like the mysterious Phoenix, which, upon dying, gives rise to another bird that flies away from within itself. The Phoenix was once considered a true zoological rarity, but it is now known that it never existed, except as a symbol of a high state of human development. Furthermore, it built its nest of flames, which is extraordinarily significant.

The secret Order of Melchizedek can never appear in the physical world while humanity is constituted according to its present scheme. It is the supreme Mystery School, and only a few have reached that point where their human and divine natures have been united so perfectly that they have become symbolically two-headed. The perfect balance of heart and mind must be achieved before true thinking or true spirituality can be attained. The highest function of the mind is reason; the highest function of the heart is intuition. A sensitive process does not require the normal work of the mind. Reason alone is cold; feeling alone lacks reason, but together they temper justice with mercy and benevolence with fortitude.

The spirit is neither male nor female, but both at once: an androgynous entity. The perfect manifestation of the androgynous spirit must occur through a self-generating androgynous body. But many millions of years must pass before the human race learns the lessons of polarization well enough to intelligently assume this new nature. On that day, everything will be complete by itself. Understanding will be mature and of such depth and breadth that it could not manifest in an isolated male or female organism. Such is the mystery of the priest-king, and such was the position Jesus attained when he was called forever a priest according to the Order of Melchizedek. All of this is symbolized in the emblems of the 33rd Degree of Freemasonry.

When viewed clairvoyantly, the human body resembles a large bouquet of flowers, for throughout its physical form are found petal-like clusters of emanating rays of force in various shapes and colors. There is one of these mysterious centers in the palm of each hand and on the sole of each foot. Nearly all vital organs have radiant, swirling vortices of light as their spiritual bases. These swirling, vibrant flowers are extremely important hidden centers. Each of them can, under certain conditions, help a person attain a greater expansion of consciousness.

It is possible to see with the palms of the hands or the soles of the feet. In reality, humankind will eventually see with all parts of its body. A symbol of this ultimate state was preserved in the Egyptian Mysteries, in the figure of Osiris, who is often depicted seated on a throne with his entire body composed of eyes. The Greek god Argos was also famous for his ability to see with different parts of his body. Eastern Buddhas are often symbolized by geometric patterns on the palms of their hands and the soles of their feet. The famous Buddha footprints, imprinted in stone, have a miniature sun in front of the heel of each foot. Some Japanese jiu-jitsu practitioners master the secret science of these mysterious nerve centers, although this knowledge has been concealed by most of these fighters. In Japan, there are drawings that show the exact location of these sacred centers. The slightest pressure on any of them paralyzes the entire body, so great is their control over the rest of the nervous system.

Jiu-jitsu experts are also taught how to revive a person who is dead by applying pressure to specific points on the upper vertebrae of the spine. This method is successful in almost all cases, even after other methods have failed.

The vortices of variegated light within the body constitute the buds of the sacred lotuses of India and Egypt, and the roses of the Rosicrucians. They are also the immortal beads of Bhagavad Gitastrung on a single thread. Through these centers entered the nails of the crucifixion. The crucifixion holds the secret of how to open the centers of the hands, feet, side, and head. The three nails that accomplished this work have been preserved in Freemasonry as the three principal dignitaries of a Lodge and as the three assassins of Hiram Abiff.

The Indian-Mexican Osiris, called Prince Coh, died from three wounds inflicted by his enemies, and his heart was found in an urn by Augustus Le Plongeon, who spent many years investigating Central American antiquities.

The relationship between these sacred centers and the jewels on the breastplate of the High Priest of Israel should not be forgotten, because both symbols have a similar meaning.

The most sacred part of the human body is the brain and spinal system, revered since ancient times and symbolized time and again in all the world's religions. While other parts of the body are of great interest to the student, the mysterious work of the spinal fires, through which liberation is achieved, is so formidable that many years must still be spent understanding the fundamental principles. The spine is the staff that blossomed, the Tree Yggdrasil, the flaming sword, the supporting staff, the Magician's wand.

PART THREE

THE SACRED FIRE IN THE SPINE

DORSAL AND THE BRAIN

Santee called the spinal cord (spinal cord) the central axis of the nervous system. In an average-sized person, the spinal cord is about eighteen inches long, weighs approximately one ounce, and terminates opposite the first lumbar vertebra. The upper end of the spinal cord passes through the foramen magnum (the large opening in the occipital bone of the skull), ending in the medulla oblongata. A thin central canal called the spinal cord runs through the spinal cord. This is described as follows: "It is barely visible to the naked eye, but it extends along the cord and widens over the fourth ventricle. In the medullary cone it also dilates, forming the terminal ventricle (Krausai)".

According to the Eastern occult system, there are 49 sacred nerve centers in the human body, of which the seven most important and key centers are located near the spine at various intervals. The total number, 49, is the square of 7, and is also the number of rounds and sub-rounds in a planetary chain. When viewed clairvoyantly, all these centers resemble flowers or electrical sparks. Each of these seven main plexuses has six lesser ones surrounding it, thus forming diagrams in the shape of six-pointed stars, although the centers are not arranged in the body in that order.

Regarding the recurring presence of the sacred number seven in connection with the organs and parts of the human body, H. P. Blavatsky writes: "Remember that physiology, imperfect as it is, shows septenary groups throughout the exterior and interior of the body: the seven orifices, the seven 'organs' at the base of the brain, the seven plexuses (the pharyngeal, laryngeal, cavernous, cardiac, epigastric—equal to the solar plexus—, prostatic, and sacral plexus, etc.)." These seven are the negative plexuses of the spine of primary importance, but disciples of the Mysteries are advised not to attempt the development of these centers, because they are negative poles. All the positive plexuses that the true disciple of the highest knowledge should strive to develop are located within the skull, because the body is a negative pole of that spiritual body contained within the cranial cavity. Since the body is controlled by the brain, the true adept works with the brain, avoiding the negative poles of the brain centers located along the spinal column. The proper development of the seven interpenetrating brain discs, or spiritual spheres, culminates in the awakening of the spinal flowers through an indirect process. Beware of the direct process of concentrating or channeling internal breathing towards the spinal centers.

Madame Blavatsky could have added to her list of septenaries the seven sacred organs surrounding the heart, the seven layers of the epidermis, the seven endocrine glands of primary importance, the seven methods by which the body is vitalized, the seven sacred breaths, the seven systems of the body (bones, nerves, arteries, muscles, etc.), the seven layers of the auric egg, the seven major divisions of the embryo, the seven senses (five awakened and two latent), and the seven-year periods into which human life is divided. All these recall the fact that the seven primitive and primary spirits have come to incarnate in the composite structure of man and that the Elohim are truly within his very nature, where, from their seven thrones, they are molding him into a septenary creature. One of these Elohim, corresponding to a color, a musical note, a planetary vibration, and a mystical dimension, is the key to consciousness for each kingdom of Nature. The Elohim take turns controlling the lives of human beings.

According to the ancient Brahmins, the Lord of the human race is attuned to the musical note F, and its vibration travels through the tiny conduit of the spinal column. This conduit is called the sushumna. The essence that moves through the sushumna finally blossoms outward, forming a magnificent flower in the

brain. This is called sahasrara. The thousand-petaled lotus, in the center of which is enthroned the divine eye of the gods. In India, it is possible to obtain inexpensive postcards depicting a Yogi meditating with these floral centers along his spine, connected simultaneously by three nagas or serpent gods, which represent the divisions of the spinal cord. The caduceus of Hermes shows the two serpents coiled around the central staff where they vibrate like the flat and sharp notes of the central shaft.

The gods naga Snakes, often symbolized with human heads (sometimes as seven-headed cobras), are favorite motifs in Oriental art. In a solitary spot in the jungle of Indochina lie the remains of the ancient city of Angkor Wat, about whose construction nothing is known, although the natives maintain that its great structures were erected in a single night by the gods. These buildings contain hundreds of sculptures of large snakes, most of them hooded cobras. In some cases, the bodies, being of great length, have been used as railings around the walls and along the sides of staircases. In Indian chromolithographs, the blossoms along the spine are often depicted with varying numbers of petals. For example, one at the base of the spine has only four petals; the next, around six. Each of these petals is engraved with a mysterious Sanskrit character representing a letter of the ancient alphabet. The petals are believed to indicate the number of nerves branching from the plexus or ganglion.

Lotus flowers are often adorned with figures of gods, since all the deities of the Brahmanic pantheon are associated with nerve centers of the human body, and the tendencies they mythologically demonstrate are symbolic of the internal activities of human nature. An Eastern painting depicts three vortices, one covering the head, in the center of which sits Brahma with four heads, his body a dark and mysterious color. The second vortex, covering the heart, solar plexus, and upper abdominal region, shows Vishnu seated in a lotus bud upon a bed formed by the coiled serpent of cosmic motion, its seven hoods forming a canopy over the god. Above the generative system is the third vortex, in the center of which sits Shiva, his body a grayish-white, from whose crown flows the Ganges River. This painting was the work of an Indian mystic who spent many years creating the figures, subtly concealing profound truths within them. Christian legends could be related to the human body using the same method employed by Eastern traditions, because the underlying purposes in the teachings of both schools are identical.

In Freemasonry, the three vortices represent the gates of the Temple, at which Hiram was wounded. There is no gate in the North because the Sun never shines from the northern corner of the heavens. The North is the symbol of the physical realm due to its association with ice, crystallized water, and with the body, crystallized spirit. In man, light shines toward the North, but never from there, because the body has no light of its own; it shines with the reflection of the glory of the particles of divine life hidden within physical substances. For this reason, the Moon is considered the symbol of man's physical nature. Hiram, or Chiram, as he should more appropriately be called—considering that his name is composed of the Hebrew letters for fire, air, and water—represents the mysterious fiery air and water that must rise through the three great centers symbolized by the three-step ladder and the floral vortices mentioned in the description of the Indian painting. It must also ascend the seven-step ladder, the seven-petaled bud described earlier. These flowers should not be considered entirely from an Eastern perspective. Christianity might aptly call them the Stations of the Cross, for they are sacred places where the redeeming fire pauses for a moment on its journey to Calvary and liberation.

The spine is a chain of thirty-three segments divided into five groups:

- (1) the vertebrae cervical or of the neck, seven in number;
- (2) the vertebrae dorsal or thoracic, of which there are twelve (one for each rib);
- (3) the vertebrae lumbar region, five in number;
- (4) the sacrum (five segments fused into one bone), and
- (5) the coccyx (four segments considered as one).

The nine segments of sacrum and from coccyx are crossed by ten foramina through which pass the roots of the Tree of Life. Nine is the sacred number of man, and there is a great mystery hidden in it. The sacrum and the coccyx. The part of the body from the kidneys down was called the Land of Egypt by the ancient

Kabbalists, to which the Children of Israel were taken during their captivity. Moses (the enlightened mind, as his name signifies) led the tribes of Israel (the twelve faculties) out of Egypt, raising the bronze serpent in the desert above the Taoist cross symbol. At the base of the spine, there is a small nerve center about which nothing is known, although occultists believe that the symbolism of the second crucifixion, the one supposedly that took place in Egypt, is connected to the crossing of certain nerves at the base of the spine. A friend who visited Mexico was kind enough to count the rings on the tails of the stone images of Quetzalcoatl, or Kukulcan, as he is now known. In almost every case, there were nine.

The cosmic hierarchy that controls the constellation of Scorpio has dominion over the hidden fires of the human body. To symbolize this, they were given the name serpent gods and the priests initiated into its mystery displayed the serpent coiled in the shape of gold on their foreheads. These priests also often carried flexible staffs carved in the shape of a serpent, six to ten feet long. The wood from which they were made was specially treated by a now-lost process. At a certain point in the ceremony, the priests bent the flexible staffs into a circle, placing the carved serpent's tail in their mouths and accompanying the action with secret invocations. The transcendentalists of the Middle Ages did the same thing, but not with the full knowledge possessed by the ancient priests. The Lords of Scorpio, who are the great initiators, accepted no one into the Mysteries except when the Sun was in a certain degree of Taurus, symbolized by Apis, the Bull. When the Bull carried the Sun between its horns, the neophytes were admitted. In geocentric astrology, this occurs when the Sun is supposedly in the last decan of the constellation of Scorpio. This was not only true in ancient Egyptian rituals, but it still is in the Mystery Schools. Those aspiring to follow the hidden path of fire are admitted to this day only when the Sun is geocentrically in Scorpio and heliocentrically in Taurus. The group of stars that makes up the constellation of Scorpio closely resembles an eagle with outstretched wings, and this is one of the reasons why that bird is sacred to Freemasonry, which is a fire cult.

Although the three ducts of the spinal cord are called in ancient wisdom the undulating snakes and since the serpent that cannot die until sunset was accepted as its symbol, the scorpion has also been used as an emblem of spinal fire. This scorpion was called Judas, the traitor, because he is a detractor, bearing the sting in his heart. We remember the legend of Parsifal because the castle of the evil sorcerer Klingsor, situated at the foot of the mountain in the middle of a garden of illusion, is simply a symbol of this City of Babylon and the Land of Shades, where the Son of God is often tempted to sacrifice his immortality. Here, too, is the scene that Goethe called

“Walpurgis Night.” Here too, the false light is chained for a thousand years, as Milton recounted in his *Paradise Lost*.

Regarding the descent of spiritual fire down the spine, into the place of shadows, Milton says: “He, the Omnipotent Power, boldly hurled himself blazing from the ethereal sky, with horrible devastation and combustion, into unfathomable perdition, to dwell there in diamond captivity and under the punishment of fire!”

It is also from here that the hordes of scorpions arose, spreading decay and destruction throughout the earth, as recounted in the Book of Revelation. Here also is the rock of Moriah, upon whose summit Hiram is buried. Here lurks Typhon the Destroyer, and Satan, who was stoned. This is the dwelling place of the false light, to distinguish it from the true light that shines outside the regions of *schamayim* Above. Between these two is located the spinal cord, a rope that connects the Ark and the Anchor.

There is a legend among Eastern cultures that tells how Kundalini, the goddess of the spinal serpent fire, having grown weary of the heavens, decided to visit the new earth that had been created in the sea of space. Therefore, she descended a ladder of ropes (the umbilical cord) from the heavens and found an island (the fetus) in the Sea of Meru (the amniotic fluids), surrounded by the Mountains of Eternity (the chorion), all of which was within the egg of Brahma (the womb of *Matripadma*). After exploring the island, Kundalini decided to climb the ladder again, but as she was about to do so, the ladder was cut from above (the umbilical cord being severed at birth), and the island drifted far into space. Out of fear, Kundalini retreated into a cave (the sacral plexus), where, according to certain Eastern teachings, it

remains coiled like a cobra in the snake charmer's basket, from which it can only be drawn back by the three mysterious notes of the charmer's flute. When Kundalini begins to uncoil, it ascends like a serpentine stream of fire through the spinal cord and into the brain, where it stimulates the activity of the pituitary gland.

The spine can be divided horizontally into three sections. The lower section includes the vertebrae lumbar region, along with the segments that make up the sacrum and the coccyx, and is surrounded by a fiery, purplish vapor. This vapor is oily in nature and makes the sacrum and coccyx the color of dried blood. This color, however, is rather vivid than dull. Higher up, toward the lumbar vertebrae, the color becomes lighter and less inflamed in appearance. Gradually it turns orange, and through the section formed by the twelve thoracic vertebrae there is a radiant golden glow emanating from a threadlike line of what appears to be a river of yellow fire. These colors extend somewhat outward along the nerves that branch off from the spinal cord between the vertebrae. A little higher, the yellow is tinged with green, and through the section cervical the current turns a faint electric blue. Because of the ida and pingala—two lateral channels along the spinal cord, parallel to the central tube, one on each side—this stream of fire rises and falls incessantly. The higher this fire goes, the softer and less brilliant its hues and the purer and more beautiful its colors, until finally they meet in a seething, molten mass in the pons of the medulla oblongata, where the fire begins almost immediately to pass through the third ventricle and stirs the pituitary body.

Santee describes this small shape as follows: The pituitary gland (pituitary body) is composed of two lobes joined by connective tissue. A layer of dura mater (diaphragm of the saddle) keeps them in the hypophyseal fossa. The anterior lobe, which is the larger, is derived from the epithelium of the oral cavity, and its structure resembles that of the thyroid gland. Its closed vesicles, lined with columnar epithelium (partly ciliated), contain a viscous, gelatinous substance (pituita), which is what suggested the ancient name given to this organ. The anterior lobe is hollowed on its posterior surface (kidney-shaped) to receive the posterior lobe, the infundibulum, in the concavity. The pituitary gland has an internal secretion that appears to stimulate the growth of connective tissues and be essential for sexual development. The pituitary gland is the negative pole, although it plays many roles in the development of spiritual consciousness. In a certain sense, it is the initiator, because it "elevates" the aspirant (the pineal gland). Being of feminine polarity, the pituitary gland lives up to its role as the eternal temptress. In Egyptian myths, Isis, who shares the nature of the pituitary gland, conjures Ra, the Supreme Sun Deity (who symbolizes the pineal gland here), to reveal his sacred name to her, which he eventually does. The physiological process by which this occurs is worthy of detailed consideration.

The pituitary body begins to glow very gently, and small, undulating rings of light arise around the gland, gradually fading away a short distance from it. As the occult unfolding continues, in accordance with the proper understanding of the laws of occultism, the rings emanating from the gland grow stronger. These are not evenly distributed around the pituitary body. The circles lengthen on the side facing the third ventricle and reach the pineal gland in graceful parabolas. Gradually, as the current becomes more powerful, they draw ever closer to the slumbering eye of Shiva, coloring the form of the pineal gland with a golden-orange light and slowly activating it. Under the gentle warmth and radiation of the pituitary fire, the divine egg begins to stir and move, and the magnificent mystery of occult development unfolds.

The pineal gland is described by Santee as follows: "The pineal body (corpus pineale) is a conical body 6 mm (0.25 inches) high by 4 mm (0.17 inches) in diameter attached to the cover of the third ventricle by a flattened stalk, the beak. It is also called epiphysis. The pineal gland is located at the bottom of the transverse fissure of the brain lies directly beneath the splenium of the corpus callosum and rests between the superior follicles of the quadrigeminal bodies on the posterior surface of the midbrain. It is closely enveloped by the pia mater. The habenula is divided into two laminae, the dorsal and the ventral, separated by the pineal recess. The ventral lamina merges with the posterior commissure; however, the dorsal lamina extends forward over the commissure, continuing the epithelial covering. The margin of the dorsal lamina thickens at the line where it joins the thalamus and forms the stria medullaris thalami (pineal stria). This thickening is due to the presence of a bundle of fibers from the fornix column

and the intermediate stria of the olfactory center. Between the medullary striae at the posterior end there is a transverse band, the junction of the braidstrough which the fibers of the striae partially intertwine with the habenulate nucleus in the thalamus. The interior of the pineal body is composed of closed follicles, surrounded by growths of connective tissue. The follicles are filled with epithelial cells, mixed with calcareous matter, the brain sand (brain cluster). Calcium deposits are also found in the pineal stalk and along the choroid plexuses."

"The function of the pineal gland is unknown. Descartes humorously suggests that it is the dwelling place of the spirit (the sand) of man. In reptiles, there are two pineal glands, one anterior and one posterior, the latter remaining undeveloped, but the anterior one forming a rudimentary cyclopean eye. In the Hatteria, a New Zealand lizard, it projects through the parietal foramen and has an imperfect retina and lens, and nerve fibers along its long stalk. The human pineal gland is probably homologous with the posterior pineal gland of reptiles."

The pineal gland is a link between human consciousness and the invisible worlds of Nature. When the pituitary gland makes contact with this gland, flashes of momentary clairvoyance occur, but the process of making both bodies work together constantly requires not just years, but entire lifetimes of dedication and special physiological and biological training. This third eye is the Cyclopean eye of the ancients, because it was an organ of conscious vision long before physical eyes were formed, although this vision was more a sense of cognition than of sight in those remote times.

As man's contact with the physical world increased more fully, he lost his inner understanding along with the conscious connection to the creative hierarchies. In order to regain this connection, it is necessary to rise above the limitations of the physical world. He must not, however, sever his connection with humanity by becoming a recluse or an impractical dreamer. The occultist must not flee; you're welcome; you must transmute it. Everything. In the pineal gland there is a fine grit, or sand, about which modern science knows practically nothing. Research has shown that this grit does not exist in idiots or in those who lack a properly organized mind. Occultists know that this grit is the key to man's spiritual consciousness. It serves as the link between consciousness and form.

The foregoing will suffice to give some idea of part of the mystery of man's hidden anatomy. Those who can discern will see in the spinal canal that reaches the cerebral ventricles—through certain gateways unknown to science—the passages and chambers of the ancient Mysteries. And they will understand that the spinal spiritual fire is the candidate being initiated. In the triangular chamber of the third ventricle, the Degree of Master Mason is conferred. Here the candidate is buried in the coffin, and here, after three days, he rises from the dead.

The lower degrees of the ancient Mysteries led through tortuous passages where howls and wails filled the air, and the flames of Hell blazed in the darkness. The neophyte seeking the light was first led through the underworld, where he had to fight strange beasts and heard the wails of lost souls. All this symbolized humanity's own lower nature, through which its spiritual ideals must raise it to enlightenment and truth. The higher degrees of the Mysteries were conferred in magnificent domed buildings, where priests, clad in white robes, chanted and sang, and the lights of unseen lamps shone upon precious jewels. The Greater Mysteries represented the happiness of the soul surrounded by light and truth. They symbolized humanity's "ascent" from the darkness of ignorance, attaining the light of philosophy. Plato said that the body is the sarcophagus of the soul, because he understood that within the form existed an immortal principle that could be freed from its mortal shell only through death or initiation. For the ancients, both were considered almost synonymous. For this reason, Socrates, on his deathbed, instructed his disciples to make an offering upon his death, similar to that made by candidates for initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries.

The mystery of the All-Seeing Eye was sometimes symbolized by the peacock, because this bird had eyes on all its feathers. In honor of the sacred eye on the crown of the head, monks of all nations shave their heads in the place where it is believed to be located. Infants who have barely completed their embryonic recapitulation of humanity's primal struggle for life have a hypersensitive region near the crown of their head. The skull does not close there immediately. In some cases, it never closes, although

the sutures generally unite between the ages of two and five. Extreme sensitivity in the area of the third eye is often accompanied by a degree of clairvoyance. The young child is still largely living in the invisible worlds. While their physical organism is unresponsive, they are conscious and active (at least to some degree) in those worlds with which they are connected through the open gateway of the pineal gland. Gradually, certain manifestations of their higher consciousness enter their organism.¹⁷ physical and crystallize into the fine grit found in that gland. There is no grit in the pineal gland until consciousness enters.

Not only are these two glands of the head enormously important, but the entire glandular system, especially the endocrine glands, exerts a tremendous influence on the human body. White blood cells are not actually generated by either the pancreas or the spleen, but are formed by the activity of the etheric double, which is connected to the physical form through the spleen. A continuous stream of white blood cells, partly etheric, flows from the invisible world to the visible organism through the spleen. The same is true of the liver, because red blood cells are, to a certain extent, a crystallization of astral forces, since the liver is the portal leading to the astral body.

The seven major endocrine glands are under the control of the seven planets, and each of them is truly a septenary body, just as all the vital organs are. The heart is divided into seven complete organs by a certain process of occult anatomy, as is the brain. The fact that the human brain closely resembles, in certain details—especially the organs clustered at its base—an androgynous human embryo is sufficient to incite further investigations. Physicians will one day discover that knowledge of the organs and functions of the human body is the most important and complete method for understanding the religions of the entire world, because all religions—even the most primitive—are based on the functions of the human form. It was not, therefore, without reason that the ancient priests placed the immortal saying above the lintels of the temples:

MAN, KNOW THYSELF.