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THE MASTERS OF WISDOM

BY

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A Manuscript Lecture into which is incorporated two previous Lectures entitled "The Masters, Part I" and "The Masters, Part II" to which is added further material not hitherto published.

By
Manly P. Hall

In searching through the annals of history we come upon a number of mysterious characters concerning whom practically nothing is known. Nevertheless these characters profoundly influenced the growth and development of civilization. Who were these mysterious men and women? Where did they come from, where did they go, and from whence did they secure their apparently superhuman knowledge and power? These questions are difficult to answer, yet every question has an answer if we can but discover it. Who was the shadowy personage who accompanied Christopher Columbus on his voyage to America and who, leaving the expedition at San Salvador, was never seen again? Who was "the man in the black suit" who assisted the framing of the Declaration of Independence? Who was the mysterious individual who was present in the house of Betsy Ross when the American flag was designed and who made a number of suggestions concerning its form and color? Why was the ancient pyramid of Egypt placed upon the reverse side of the Great Seal of the United States of America and who placed it there? These are difficult questions for a certain type of mind to answer.

Who was the mystic Count Cagliostro, whose valet did not know his master's age because he had been in his service only a hundred years. Was he Joseph Balsamo, the adventurer, or was he a character of unknown origin? Cagliostro claimed to have lived for over two thousand years and presented to his friends a mysterious elixir which temporarily restored youth to the aged. Who was the recondite Comte de Gabalis, who appeared so unexpectedly to Abbe Villars, who chronicled the meetings faithfully and was assassinated for his industry? Who was the prince of diplomats, the Count de St. Germaine, who dared to demand obedience and respect from the great Napoleon? It was the Count de St. Germaine who had much to do with the founding of the modern Masonic Order. This same shadowy individual was able to remove flaws from diamonds, and it was one of his eccentricities that he should put previous stones on his guests' place cards when he invited them to dinner.

Who was the maker of the mysterious red powder discovered by Wenzel Seiler, a monk of the Order of St. Augustine, who in the presence of the Emperor Leopold II and his court changed silver into gold? In the imperial treasury at Vienna is a medal, half silver and half gold. That part which had turned to gold had been dipped by this mystical alchemist into his powder. That part which had not been dipped remained silver. The monk was made a knight by the Emperor. Who was the baffling gentleman who, entering an art gallery in Venice with a friend, amazed all who were present by discovering his own portrait hanging upon the wall, painted by an artist who had been dead for several centuries? It is as difficult to answer these questions as to give the name of "the Man in the Iron Mask" and the reason for his confinement, or to give the identity of the mysterious one who, entering through the picket lines of Valley Forge, revealed to George Washington the future of the United States of America. Who inspired Wolfgang von Goethe to write "Faust" and why did he destroy it so many times before he permitted its publication?

We might go on indefinitely asking questions concerning such human enigmas who are mentioned in history but whose lives are riddles unsolved. The present European war revealed to those of a discerning mind three inscrutable personages, two in Europe and one in America, but as two of them are still alive they cannot be named. In summing up our thoughts concerning mysterious individuals, we should call your attention to a remarkable article which appeared in the "Dearborn Independent". The article is to the effect that in a certain Icelandic Saga is a curious tale concerning Vidforull, who presented himself to the great Charlemange. In the presence of the Emperor, by muttering incantations, Vidforull transformed himself from an aged, decrepit individual to one of great beauty and strength. The transformation was witnessed not only by the king but by his entire court. Vidforull said that he had gone through the same process on two previous occasions with similar results; and that he was then 545 years old.

During the Middle Ages, when alchemy was flourishing, many accounts are preserved of mysterious strangers who came to the struggling chemists while they were laboring with their instruments. These inscrutable individuals remained only long enough to instruct the seeker concerning the mysteries for which he was searching and then disappeared again. We have seen several letters written by these shadowy beings, correcting errors or offering advice. They were always sent anonymously and the recipients were totally unaware of their source. Very often these letters were signed with the words "A Brother" and sometimes the signature was accompanied with some strange Cabalistic seal or sign. It was generally admitted during the Middle Ages that there was a secret brotherhood consisting of a small but select group of illuminated philosophers, who devoted their lives to instructing sincere aspirants concerning the mysteries of life. This secret society, because so little could be discovered concerning it, was called "The Society of Unknown Philosophers". Many were suspected of being members of this Order, but few could bring forth any evidence to substantiate their assertions. Gathering together the fragmentary knowledge extant, we can present the theory concerning these unknown philosophers as it was accepted during the past centuries.

It is still believed by a great many people - in fact, the number is increasing every day - that there has been preserved from unknown antiquity a secret science devoted to the consideration of the invisible spiritual phenomena of nature. This knowledge is in the possession of a limited number of persons, to whom it has been communicated orally and who will perpetuate it in the same manner from one generation to another. Those to whom the secret knowledge has been entrusted were called <u>initiates</u>, and they are grouped together in isolated communities where they have established what are called <u>schools</u>. These compose a number of secret orders. These orders are, in principle, somewhat similar to Masonry, but their membership is restricted to a handful of persons and they are far more reclusive and exclusive than Freemasonry. The members of these orders have learned to communicate with each other, so they claim, by means of cipher languages and telepathic codes. The members of these orders are called <u>brothers</u>, and in each community was a house owned by one of these <u>brothers</u>. This house was called "The House of the Brethren" and any members of the order who chanced to be in the community dwelt in this house or stopped there temporarily while passing through. Each one of these secret orders had one headquarters, usually located in the fastness of some mountain range or in the depths of a forest. Here the members retired and from here they came forth for whatever labor they were expected to carry on in the outside world. While the membership in these orders was extremely limited, they were tremendously powerful. In fact, today, as then, they actually control the destinies of governments and peoples. Their members are chosen from the highest ranks of society, and the greatest poets, philosophers, and diplomats of the ages have been initiated into their mysteries. The various "mysterious strangers" which have been mentioned were members of these secret orders.

Dante was initiated in Italy and his Inferno conceals between its lines the secret teachings of one of the greatest of these philosophic schools. Sir Francis Bacon was a member of one of these bodies, as was William Shakespeare. It has always been a matter of conjecture as to where Shakespeare spent four years of his life. A Brother of the secret schools would be in a better position to answer that question than Shakespeare's many biographers. During the European War a certain American soldier quite by chance came upon one of these groups of isolated thinkers in the heart of a little-explored area of Central Europe. In the midst of several low rambling buildings stood a house of fair size and in this house and surrounding structures lived a number of mysterious men, concerning whom this soldier could discover nothing. He stayed with them a short time and was amazed at the depth of their philosophic understanding. He found them to be a group of kindly, humanitarian thinkers, deeply versed in natural lore, but they refused to take him into their confidence. It is rather interesting to note that after the war was over the American soldier returned, fired with the desire to learn more concerning these recluses, but although he tramped through the mountains day after day and tried to follow his previous path exactly, he was never able to rediscover either the peculiar locality where the buildings stood or the group of ascetics. Milton Pettinger in his work on "Masonic Symbolism" tells a somewhat similar story which occurred in the United States.

There are several secret schools still in existence in Europe and Asia Minor. In Bohemia there is a mysterious brotherhood called "The Bohemian Brethren", who are deeply versed in occult lore. One of the greatest of the schools is located in the Black Forest of Germany, and another in Transylvania. One of the famous adepts is referred to as dwelling on the borders of Poland, by which it is understood that the school to which he belonged is located in that vicinity. The great difficulty experienced in returning to one of these places even after it has been discovered suggests that in some occult way the rou-

bers of those orders are capable of concealing their whereabouts by surrounding themselves with a mental wall or cloak of invisibility. Dr. Franz Hartmann claims to have communicated with one of the Rosicrucian temples near Carlsbad, from which he secured the volume which he later printed containing the symbolic alchemical plates. The learned doctor writes that the school had branches near Cairo, Constantinople, and other great cities. The early schools of the Jews are still preserved intact by a secret order living in a monastery somewhere in the neighborhood of Mt. Lebanon, while the secret wisdom of the Greeks is preserved by a group of mystics on the Island of Crete.

Concerning the character and personality of these mystics it is difficult to write with any degree of definiteness, owing to the paucity of information available. Nearly all of them apparently possess supernatural power, especially in the form of clairvoyant power. Some apparently have the ability to of projecting their personalities to different places. Many disciples claim that these adepts, or Berthers, have appeared to them suddenly, entering rooms without opening the doors and, having delivered some message, vanished as quickly and mysteriously as they had come. Two well authenticated cases of this nature have come under the observation of the writer. Among the Oriental peoples who have exactly the same concept on the subject as those stated above, the coming of these teachers in their invisible bodies is generally accompanied by a peculiar sound, resembling the distant tinkling of silver bells.

The belief in the existence of human beings who have raised themselves above the mass of humanity and have become supermen and superwomen is not limited to the European or American cultures. The same idea appears in practically the same form among nearly all of the Oriental nations. The East believes in the doctrine of supermen. Instead of calling them "Brothers" it called them "Masters", "Arhats", or "Initiates", sometimes "Mahatmas". It is generally conceded that the secret schools of the Western Hemisphere and those of the Eastern Hemisphere are united in purpose and that a philosophic intercourse is always going on between them. Each one of these philosophic schools which has been established in the midst of any particular civilization presents its doctrine in the manner most acceptable to the people with whom it works, for it has been found that man learns most rapidly when his lessons are presented in a form familiar to him. This results in an apparent diversity of teaching, but in essential points the doctrines of all of those schools are the same. The Brethren have taught that there were sevel of their schools, which correspond to the seven divine planets. Each one of the schools has seven branches, which represent the seven sub-rates of vibration contained within each major rate, or the seven colors which are contained within each white ray. These schools and their branches are to be found in all parts of the world, even the most savage and primitive peoples are not left without representation. All together these schools are called "The Invisible Government of the Earth". Besides the seven schools there are five other groups which work through the exoteric septenary bodies. Each one of the seven exoteric and five esotheric schools have twelve initiated Brethren, or Masters, and these together constitute the hundred and forty-four which are the Lord's Elect.

Daily; Monthly, and yearly the various bodies meet, and they are forbidden to appear in the physical universe as an organization. The Mystery Schools cannot and must not organize as we understand organization, for organization is the first step towards crystallization, and crystallization is the cause of disintegration. Therefore, they are referred to as unorganized organisms. In one of their manifestos it tells that whenever three or more of the Brethren meet they constitute a Lodge. When they separate to go their ways the Lodge is adjourned. The controlling body of these schools is called "The Great White Lodge". This meets every seven years to control the activities and development of the order. It is said to have met in its present location every seven years since the world began.

The Gobi Desert of Mongolia is the place set aside for the meetings of The Great White Lodge. In the midst of this waste of sand, so the allegories tell us, is an island or shelf of rock, which represents the first part of the earth's surface to solidify. This area was originally part of the polar cap and when the Gobi Desert was an ocean, this rock was an island in the midst of the Sacred Sea. The island is of considerable area and is the only place on the earth's surface that has not passed through numberless changes. Recent expeditions to Mongolia are certainly substantiating the claim of occultists as to the permanence of this area, for scientists are now claiming that no other part of the earth will equal Mongolia in value to science for here they have found unchanged records left by the processes of the earth's formation which have been obliterated in other parts of the earth. In the midst of

the Sacred Island is the Sacred City of the Gods, protected like the other great centers by a cloak of invisibility. This may seem supernatural but as has already been noted, though an individual search painstakingly and apparently thoroughly, he has been unable to rediscover places which he previously visited. The Temple of the Mysteries in the Gobi Desert is called "Shamballah", and here The Great White Lodge meets and here certain of the advanced disciples of the Mysteries are permitted to go and, as Apuleius has said, "meet with the immortals".

The belief in the Masters in almost universal in the Orient and every effort on the part of Western culture to destroy that belief has failed. A belief so deeply rooted, so widespread, so universal, must have a firmer foundation than mere superstition. Superstition and fancy cannot explain the mysterious phenomena wrought by unknown beings who have deeply influenced the course of civilization. The miracle worker of India is laughed at, but his magic is never explained. The ring of serpents about the Temple of Shamballah has been scoffed at, but science seeking to conquer the Gobi Desert, has found such a ring. The philosophy of the Masters of Wisdom is just as sound and has just as much to substantiate it as any other religious viewpoint which is now held in the world. In fact, it has much more than most, for the theory that the earth is governed by a group of human beings who have fitted themselves for this labor which they perform under the direction of superhuman intelligences is as rational and logical as any other line of philosophy that can be advanced.

There is no doubt that a secret teaching has been handed down from the early periods of civilization. This teaching underlies religion, but is concealed from sight by the endless superstition and religious controversy which have made the Father's House a place of debate and argument. An investigation of the teachings of the world's Saviors Buddha, Chrishna, Zoroaster, Hermes, and Jesus proves beyond all possible doubt that all of these men, living in different ages and among different civilizations, taught one and the same doctrine and taught it in practically the same way. What was the source of their learning? If we say inspiration, then we ask what is "inspiration"? What inspires? Who inspires? The religionist will answer, "God is the source of inspiration." This is granted, but who is the channel through which God works? In many cases it seems to have been a mysterious being. When we are poor and ask for alms, it is not God who drops the coin in our lap. It is some other creature, perhaps one little better off than ourselves. God works with man through man, and as some fellow-worker must answer our prayer for physical help, why is it illogical that some fellow creature will answer our prayer for philosophic help and spiritual understanding? The Brethren are the hands and feet of their Lord, as we are the hands and feet of others who depend upon us.

Membership in the Schools of the Mysteries can never be applied for in the ordinary sense of the word. No one can demand the right of entrance. Those who aspire must prepare themselves as best they know, striving to make themselves worthy of admittance, and then await the pleasure of the Brothers. There are twelve degrees of Brethern in each of the Great Schools and the disciple is promoted according to his aptitude, as vacancies occur in the superior ranks. There can never be but a certain number in each of the degrees. Each member has a disciple. When the member passes out or is promoted, the disciple takes his place. There are three general degrees which we may say constitute a Blue Lodge in these Mystery Schools. The First degree is that of "student", or as they were called in the ancient world, "candidates". The Second degree is that of "disciple" or "accepted pupil", and the Third degree is that of "Master" or"Brother" . In various orders the grades differ, but these three major divisions are fundamental, for all humanity is divided into three great divisions. The first is made up of those who do not know, the second is composed of those who are trying to find out, and the third division, much smaller than the other two, comprises those who have found out. Those who are learning inspire those who do not know to begin their studies, while those who have found out teach those who are learning. There are many grades in the occult schools which differ in the Eastern and Western worlds. We shall try and explain to you the most important of these grades and tell you the exact position those occupy who are called by the various names which are symbolic of their dignity.

Student

This is the name given to those who are on the first step and is generally used to designate aspirants to the occult path. Therefore, they are called "aspirants," "candidates," "neophytes," and comprise the lower grades of lay brethren. A student is one of twelve who are appointed to study at the feet of a disciple. A student is one to whom is assigned the task of mastering the exoteric side of occult philosophy and the requisites of a student are self-purification and consecration.

Disciple

This is the title given to an accepted candidate, who has prepared himself according to the law and has been raised to the second step in spiritual preparation. There are many grades of disciples. The lesser disciples study at the feet of more exalted disciples, and the higher disciples gain their wisdom from the lower grades of Masters. In India the disciples are called "chelas," and are on the second step of the order of lay brethren. The key to discipleship is "continuity", and the ability to remain with a task until it is accomplished. The periods of discipleship vary in length, but they are always a considerable number of years, from two to thirty. Pythagoras demanded five years' discipleship, which must be spent without speaking, that the disciple might learn to hold his tongue. The higher disciples are privileged to pass consciously into the invisible worlds with their teachers and study the mysteries of nature at first hand on the astral plane.

Guru

This is an Eastern word, meaning "teacher", and is often the title of respect with which a young disciple refers to his teacher. Sometimes it is merely used as a title for veneration. It is not necessarily synonymous with the state of mastery or initiation. The guru is often a lay brother, educated in the temple and sent into the world for the purpose of instructing the ... lower orders of students and disciples. He gathers his _lanoos_ about him and to them he is a great soul, but to the higher initiates he is still one of those chained by his worldliness to the lower plane of nature.

Adept

This name is given to one who has been initiated into the Mysteries and has reached a very high degree of proficiency in the manipulation of the subtile forces of the invisible worlds. It has two meanings. The adept is one who is adaptable, meaning that he has broadened out his faculties so that he is no longer limited by that ignorance which inhibits normal human beings. The word adept also means that he is a specialist on some particular line that has raised him head and shoulders above the average idindividual. The adept, however, is still subject to the laws of birth and death. He is not privileged, like some of the higher initiates, to construct a new body while he is still living in the old one and then step from one to the other. Those who are above the stage of adept are free from the laws of birth and death.

Mahatma

This is an Oriental title. The word _mahatma_ means _great soul_ and is given by the Oriental disciples to a highly illuminated and spiritualized mind. Under this general heading are listed both advanced disciples and lower grades of Masters. The word is often used to designate all of those who have secured spiritual illumination or have opened the third eye. It is almost synonymous with the Western word _adept_.

Arhat

An _arhat_ is one who has reached a high degree of initiation in the Eastern path. It is above the stage of adept or mahatma. Consequently it is used to represent one who is capable of manipulating the laws of nature from behind the veil which separates the Causal Universe from the Visible Universe. The arhats seldom go out into the world, but remain almost continuously at their spiritual work in the higher planes of nature.

Initiate

Of late years the word initiate has gotten into bad company and its dignity has been seriously impaired. Initiations have been sold from a dollar up and no questions asked, and the name is often given to individuals with long hair and soulful eyes. The title should be given only to those who have actually been admitted into the schools of the Great Mysteries. In some schools it requires five, in others nine and in others seven initiations to entitle the candidate to call himself an initiate. In Masonry all who are "raised" are called Initiates, but none save those of the 33°, initiated in the spiritual temple, are privileged to call themselves true initiates. None are privileged to bear the name initiate in the East, save those who have reached the point where they are in conscious communication with the invisible spiritual hierarchies of nature. In the West none are privileged to use this title save one of the Twelve Brethers in the inner temple of a Great School. All others should use the words disciple or candidate.

Master

This word is generally used to designate the next grade superior to the one which the candidate is in himself. The chela calls the disciple master; the student calls the chela master; the disciple calls the adept master;; and so on.

Elder Brethers

This is the title given to adepts and initiates of certain European schools. It is a title which should be applied only to the Twelve Initiates who constitute the governing body of an occult order.

Buddhas

The Buddhas in the East are those who have so spiritualized their consciousness that they are capable of functioning consciously upon the Buddhic plane. The Maha Buddhas are those who have consciousness upon the Nirvanic plane, or the fifth world of the spiritual universe. From these last are drawn what we commonly call the "World Saviors". All of the World Saviors have passed through the Schools of Initiation, for there is no other way by which they could secure the knowledge which they must possess before they are capable of administering to the spiritual needs of a race of people.

Part II.

Whenever an art or science is developed, there are a certain number of persons who as the result of concentrating their efforts and focussing their energies upon that science reach a point of proficiency which brings them recognition. There are but a few great musicians, great artists, or great philosophers living at any one time, and we respect and reverence these shining lights who stand before the world as models of human excellence. It matters little the line of undertaking in which a person is proficient, for there is as much a science and an art in . . driving a rivet as there is in painting a picture. It is the state of excellence that man reveres. There is something in the soul of every creature that seeks perfection. All human beings are striving to reach a greater degree of proficiency and make greater use of the powers which, lying around them, await the skilled touch of the Master's fingers.

If this be true in the material arts and sciences as we see them about us, then is it not also true of the spiritual arts and sciences? Are there not apprentices in the School of Life as well as in shipyards and shops? Are there not master craftsmen in spiritual matters as there are master craftsmen among the builders of bridges and the hewers of stone? Are not the three grand divisions of human craftsmanship equally applicable to the sciences of the soul and the sciences of the body? There is no reason under the sun why they should not be, and the true student of the science of living realizes that the analogy is perfect between the material arts and crafts and the spiritual arts and crafts, and that the laws which apply to one control the other also.

As the student of music crosses the ocean to study with one whose fingers have brought divine harmony from strings of steel, so the student of the great mysteries of life, in spirit or in body, crosses the ocean of ignorance to study at the feet of the masters of wisdom, whose fingers bring not only strings of steel to life but also play celestial melodies upon the strings of the human soul. If we would be a master of men we must learn from the masters of men, or as it is said in one of the Apocrypha, he who would be a disciple of Christ must first become a disciple of a disciple of Christ. If we would be masters of life and its problems, we must learn from those who have lived life to the end. If we would excel in the sciences of the soul, we must learn them from those master craftsmen who have slowly moulded the dark abyss of their own chaos into a magnificent and glorious character.

There are three grand divisions into which each of the crafts of the world is divided. They are three steps which, like the Masonic ladder, lead upward from ignorance to omnipotence, from perfect helplessness to perfect helpfulness. In Masonry these divisions are called those of Entered Apprentice, Fellow Craftsman, and Master Mason. In this world there are millions of apprentices in the various walks of life, and there are also hundreds of thousands of fellow craftsmen, but out of the seething mass of struggling human life only a few are raised in each age to the position of Master Builders. Only a few find the ray of light which shines in the darkness and climb upward above the battle. The rest are contented to labor and to wait, plodding along in the darkness of ignorance, even denying the light which they do not understand.

There are three great paths open to mortals here below by means of which they may achieve immortality and attainment in those things which are spiritual and honor and respect in those things which are material. These three are known as the threefold path which, like the strands of a braid, wind in and out amongst each other, weaving a strong rope up which man may climb hand over hand to the light of truth. All who would reach the goal of human superiority and spiritual supremacy must walk this upward path. No living thing can hope to be greater than his arts, for they are the expressions of the Divinity within himself. But perfection is gained for man when he has completed within himself the living temple in which he is enshrining his dreams and his aspirations. Man's labor glorifies him only when man glorifies his labors. When he crowns the humblest talk with accomplishment it adorns him as a precious jewel. The symbols of the three paths are:

1. A mother with a child in her arms.
2. A warrior clothed in armor and mounted for battle.
3. A sage poring over his books and surrounded with scientific instruments.

The mother with the child in her arms symbolizes the path of the Madonna. It has as its ideal the Immaculate Conception and Divine parenthood. In the Mystery Schools each Master must appoint his successor and the one whom he chooses is his philosophic son whom he educates and to whom he literally gives birth, for through his Master the disciple is born into spirituality and the invisible spheres of Nature. The symbol of this path is water, for those who take it must purify themselves and must form of themselves a molten sea capable of catching within its brazen basin the Waters of Life. This may be called the Path of Duty, but herein duty has become a joy. It is the way of the mystic, within whose nature has been born the Christ-Child of the soul. It is the bath of meekness and of love, of faithfulness and of trust, of beauty and of compassion. Those who walk it slowly transmute the body until they reach that degree of purification in which the soul radiates from all parts of the disciple's nature, surrounding the body with that same soft glow seen about the head and form of the Madonna. Meek, tender ways, the hand of friendship, mother-love and father-protection mark this path. Those who walk it bring into the mortal vale of tears a glorious star of hope and light. They carry in their hearts the same child of radiant splendor that the Virgin bears in her arms. Those who walk the way of service and purity cannot go wrong, for though the path is beset by sorrows and dark clouds ofttimes obscure the light, this way leads surely to the Divine heart and prepares the candidates for a sphere of greater and broader activity.

The warrior clothed in armor symbolizes the path of action. Like the knights of old, the soul of man rides out conquering and to conquer. This is the path of strength and of determination, of courage, valor and aspiration. Armed with the sword of Truth, clothed in the shining armor of a purified and regenerated body, the knight rides out to slay the demons of darkness and strike to the heart of the beasts of passion and degeneracy. Like Lohengrin in the legends of the Grail, those warrior souls go forth to right the wrongs of the world. The warrior mystic is the one who fights the battles of the world. He is the worker. While the mystic kneels in prayer and the philosopher sits in contemplation, the knight is fighting the battles which make this world a place where dreams can come true. The mystic labors with his heart, the philosopher with his brain, and the warrior with his hands.

The sage poring over his books is symbolic of the thinker. The world must have its workers and it must have those who inspire the workmen. Of the three, the philosopher most keenly feels the weight of life, for the more he knows of life the more he sympathizes with life, and knowledge brings sadness. One by one the nations of the earth are buried by their philosophers, for the thoughtless millions will not listen to the voice of counsel. Deep in meditation, the sage seeks to unite himself for a moment with the mind of the Infinite, thinking thoughts and dreaming dreams no mortal dares to think. So amidst his books or among the narrow circle of his pupils the sage spreads the wisdom of his God while the mystic whispers of His mercy. Only the philosopher can know, even in part, the thoughts of his God. Only the mystic can feel the heart throbs of his Divine Father. The path of philosophy will sometime bring men closer to his God through teaching man the ways of God. Surrounded by his disciples the philosopher sows seeds into the minds of men and while he may not live to see the plant bear fruit, through the ages growth goes on and tomorrow will reap the harvest. In the ages to come races then unknown will listen to his words. Children then unborn will light their flame at his lamp, for the work of the philosopher is to remove the veil of the unknown before which the mystic must kneel in prayer. Each attains his end - one in thought, one in works, and the other in prayer.

These three are the noble paths by which all creatures gain perfection. Within each living soul are three powers, each striving for expression, each capable of bringing closer the day of human liberation, each in its own way capable of serving man to his attainment. And those who aspire to mastery must learn of these three immortal powers hidden within their coils of clay, which wait patiently to be given expression that they may immortalize the creature within those nature they exist. Those who would truly be with the immortals and desire to become masters of the science of the soul must realize that the greatest of all wisdom is to walk all three of these paths as one, for only in all is completion. The Masters of the Craft of Soul-Building are those who have built from the base substances of their own being Glorious temples for the worship of Divinity. They have cultivated these three sparks in their own natures and have walked the threefold path firmly and consistently to the end of attainment.

Knowledge comes only to those who prepare themselves to receive knowledge, for the Lord will enter into the temple only when the temple has been prepared according to His direction. The price of knowledge is responsibility and those who are unwilling to shoulder their burdens should not seek illumination, for it would be their undoing if they discovered it. Upon the realization of this depends the growth and development of the student of occultism. The powers a disciple receives are only loaned to him. , He is accountable to his Creator for the use he makes of each of them, and unless they are applied according to the instructions of the Great Teacher, the student will fail in his task, and instead of growing will destroy himself. The Veil of the Unknown must forever hang between the pillars of the temple, concealing the interior until, with the sword of his own spirit fire, the student can rend it in twain.

The Masters of Wisdom are not superphysical beings, nor should we view them as gods - nor even demigods. They are but Craftsmen from the world of men, who have reached a little closer towards the goal than we have. They have lived the life and have learned to know the doctrine. They are devoting their egoic evolution to the perfection of certain qualities and powers and stand a little above the average individual. Compared to men, they are a little godlike, but compared to God they are only a short ways above men. In their varying degrees and temperaments, they are just as human as we are, abut they are old in experience, which in occultism is the measurement of age. In the Western world, mystics refer to these enlightened ones as "Elder Brothers", for mysticism recognizes one bond, one relationship, and this bond and relationship is that of universal brotherhood. All things greater than man they call "Elder Brothers". All things less than man they call "Younger Brothers". In thinking of the Masters we should realize that each one of us may be what they are, for they have all been what we are. They are made from no better mold nor finer stamp, but are diamonds; in fact, they are called <u>diamond</u> souls, for like diamonds, they have been cut and faceted by their ages of experience.

In order to help those of the human race who still wander in darkness and ignorance, those few who have seen the great Light of Truth return age after age to labor with mankind and help them to attain to that state of understanding which glorifies the entire. These Masters are, in truth, the Lords Elect. Each of the Masters of Wisdom is on a different path, but each is laboring for the good of the whole, regardless of color, race or creed. The Masters strive together for a single end - the attainment of wisdom by the entire human race. Like loving parents, the initiates point out the way and try to ease the path for their younger brethren. The only way that human creatures can learn the will of the Divine is for one of their own kind who has attained to come back and tell them of the way of attainment. The Divine compassion of the Gods pouring as a stream through the hearts of those who have achieved unity with their higher natures sends these Elder Brothers back into the battle of life to rescue less fortunate ones who have found the path of life too hard and who have either fallen by the way or are wandering about lost in the darkness. The one who goes forward for himself alone does not reach the highest goal. It is those who bring with them to attainment other creatures who reap most from their labors.

The Masters of Wisdom do not desire the worship of men nor do they want man's veneration. Their hearts are overjoyed when we just listen to the advice they have to give and will learn to profit by it. Man's duty is to respect these Elder Brothers, but he must not make idols of them. They ask nothing of man but the privilege of cooperating with humanity that the races may attain more rapidly than they could alone. Man has the privilege of offering himself to be used by these higher ones in their work of spreading light and truth. When he makes this living sacrifice of his own life to them, man takes the first step toward his own mastership. Although many offer themselves, but a few are accepted, for it is only those who are useful and intelligent in their daily living who are of value to themselves or to anyone else.

One of the saddest forms of deception practiced in Black Magic is that which is not uncommon in the occult world today - the misuse of the concept of Masters for the attainment of personal ends. Not only are there a great many people impersonating or trying to impersonate the Great Teachers, but there are a still greater number who claim to be receiving messages from or acting under the direction of these Exalted Brothers. A great number of the teachings purported to come from the Masters are fabrications of the imagination, and in all too many cases downright falsehoods. After considering many of these so-called authentic reports, we are forced to the conclusion that the Masters are hopelessly ignorant concerning some of the most simple truths which the average school child should know, or else the messages purported to come from them are not authentic. We prefer to accept the latter theory as being more logical and rational, in the light of the great wisdom that these Exalted Brothers have actually given the human race at various times. All is not gold that glitters nor is everyone with a gifted tongue illuminated. The reason why there is so much

controversy concerning the existence of the Great Teachers is largely because of the spurious and unworthy documents and teachings attributed to them. An occultist cannot afford to be gullible nor can he afford to be too critical. With an open mind, but one capable of sure and intelligent operation, each problem must be analyzed for itself, for things are often not what they seem to be. This is a word to the wise. It should be unnecessary to say more.

Nature makes use of every individual according to the knowledge which that individual possesses, for every creature must work along the lines of familiar things. When the Masters choose their disciples they assign to each a labor which it is reasonably certain he can accomplish intelligently. A candidate is not given knowledge by initiation; he is merely shown how to use most wisely the knowledge which he already possesses. If the disciple knows the human body as the result of medical training, he can be used in those problems which involve and require a knowledge of the human body. The fine art of spiritual healing in the majority of cases is practiced by individuals without the slightest concept of how this mysterious creature, man, is put together. As a result, they often do more harm than good when trying to manipulate the influence unknown elements. If we have learned to think thoughts that are valuable to men, our minds will be used and we shall be instructed as to how our thoughts may be of still greater value to a still greater number of persons. The faculties and talents which we evolve are what we actually offer to the Masters when we offer ourselves, and we are useful to the same degree that we have accomplished things and evolved centers of consciousness within ourselves. When we develop qualities useful to the plan of Nature and essential to the good of our fellow creatures, we shall then be accepted by the Masters of Wisdom. We shall be taught how to increase the length of our lives that the world may benefit longer from our accomplishments. Why should a person want to live forever or even for a few hundred years unless he means to benefit others by his living? What right has man to live when he is no longer useful? Nevertheless if all men were to live only for that span of time during which they contributed to the growth and development of others, the lives of many would be short indeed.

At any time we so desire, we may take the path which in time will lead us to Mastery. We may by sincere desire come close to those Elder Brothers who guard and guide the destinies of men. Conscientious endeavor in whatever walk of life we find ourselves will ultimately lead to excellence, and excellence in any line of endeavor, be it sweeping streets or digging ditches, is the mark of mastery. When we have a power or faculty developed through ages of labor to a point of extreme excellence, that ability entitles us to know the Masters. When we dedicate our ability to the unselfish development and unfoldment of all things, then we are very close to the Masters. When we have studied at their feet and have learned from them the proper use of that power or faculty, then the time is not far off when we shall be admitted to that inner circle of Illuminated Ones where we shall mingle with those who at various times since the world began have reached that point of excellency which entitles man to immortality.