Manuscript Lecture

No. 13



Subject: The Masters

Part II

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THE MASTERS.

Part II.

Mastery vs. Omnipotence.

The mastery of one plane of nature does not constitute divinity neither are those who have excelled in the physical world gods or anywhere near them. The quality of mastery is merely the transference of citizenship from one plane of nature to another, and the master of the physical plane is merely a beginner on the more attenuated realms of the superphysical world. Mastership is not the end of the trail for as high as the Initiate is above man, so much higher are the gods above the Initiates.

People have the idea that when they become Initiates they have reached the goal. This is a false concept for in the great cosmic plan of things there is no end that mortal sense has ever reached. There is no completion of the great work but it stretches on eternity after eternity, divided like night and day by Pralayic Night and Manvantaric Day. As a day upon this earth is but a fleeting second so, truly, a cosmic day is but a fleeting second in the endless eternity of possibility. The Initiate, with his broader sense, his greater knowledge, his deeper understanding, is just beginning to grasp the possibilities of the universe and instead of being closer to the end of all things he has just reached the point where he can begin to understand the endless horizon. As surely as the man on earth can never walk to the horizon line so surely the Initiate has no power within his soul which can bring eternity closer than the infinite.

The path of conscious union with the cause-all world is a long and tedious one and many steps divide the pupil from even the first degree of mastery. These steps reach like a mighty ladder up into the darkness of cosmic sleep towards the blinding radiance of enlightened dawn. On this ladder stand the creatures of creation, each on a different round. Somewhere down in the mist still enveloped in the seething vapors of humid materiality, stands man—behind him an endless row of shadow shapes of cruder creatures, animals and plants,—all with heads upward like his own to where the light of the sun shines faintly through the clouds. Above him on this endless ladder stand those who have gone before, shining, enlightened ones, who have seen that which man's eyes have not beheld, who know that which his senses do not respond to. And yet each, like himself, has his eyes turned upward, upward to the infinite light, ever shadowed by the Maya of unreality.

For man this ladder is the Jacob's ladder of the soul, reaching upward from the dirt through the seven worlds of Brahma, with its upper end resting on the footstool of omnipotence. Who shall climb this ladder up whose steep rungs a million creations have plodded and vanished in the haze of the unknown? We sometimes feel that when mastery is ours (and we have made a proper trip to the Orient, etc.) that like in the Greek fable we will don our wings of wax and go sailing over the heads of all these plodders and land gracefully upon the upper rung. But this does not seem to be the plan of things and the amount gained by perfect mastery in this world holds just enough power to lift ourselves one rung, no more. To us the one who stands upon the step above us is a mystic, unknown god but he in turn is praying and plodding along the way that through the mercy and justice of the powers that be and the consecration of his own soul he may lift himself just one more step also. We live in a growing world, the fruitage of a growing God, and between man and divinity stretches not just an open void to be crossed by the clever schemer but an endless path of rounds and periods to be crossed and slowly passed through according to the law of being. None

are superior to this law but the greatest are those who learn to be satisfied with its plan and to work honestly and sincerely in their effort to attain the position of usefulness in the plan of things.

Many motives are held out to the pupil to lead him upward on the path of being. Many of them are not sincere but play upon the weaknesses of the human soul. Man hates opposition and the law of physical body, keyed to inertia, hates exertion. The pressure of the physical combat is irksome to most, therefore unscrupulous people, playing upon these weaknesses of man, have held out the inducement of rest, inaction and all power as the fruitage of mastery. But such is far from the case. Those who would be the greatest among men must be the servants of all, those who would attain the highest must realize that the answer to the problem is not in the attainment but in the ability to preserve the qualities once attained. Under certain conditions the soul of man reaches a very great height; in moments of great sorrow, of tribulation or danger he often becomes a superman for a fleeting moment then lapses back again. Unless the candidate seeking spiritual power is capable of sustaining his mastery he sinks right back into the rut from which he came, less than before he started. The Master is under the same laws as is man, upon his shoulders rest responsibilities many times as heavy as those which we must shoulder, and his soul with its clearer vision is often more weighted with sadness than those of people who think least. The more thoughtless we are the more happy we usually are for thought brings with it responsibility and man today is happy only in his laziness, but until he can learn to transmute his ideals until he is happy in his labors it is useless for him as an occultist to attempt the path of mastery. Unless his desire for rest and superiority is transmuted right here into the desire for action and humility, the path of mastery will bring with it only horror, melancholia and death.

Occult wisdom is useless unless it is cooperated with by the human functioning organism. No master attains initiation in spite of himself or in spite of his lower bodies but climbs upward through the assistance of them, and unless he is first able to mold them and gain their confidence and support he will never be able to use them for the attainment of omnipotence. The true master is not seeking omnipotence nor power but is seeking to unwind the spiral of his own consciousness from the shell of unconsciousness that he may gradually become what he was intended to be—a self-conscious, self-responsible, self-perpetuating, self-governing unit. This is the ultimate of the earth chain. He is slowly transmuting the servant into the master and in so doing becomes a master of his own servant before which he now bows and whose bidding he now carries out.

The God we worship is a great grownup child with the same human touch, the same human qualities, the same likabilities that fill the souls of those around us in the material world. For years we have worshipped God as a creature of hate and revenge, an awe-inspiring, very dignified individual. Such is far from the truth. The God of the occultist is the Elder Brother of His flock, His interest is their interest and their interest is His interest. Their suffering reaches Him, their joys impress Him, He smiles with them and weeps with them, at the same time with the stern hand of correction He guides them. Like the parent who guides the child, He must often seem cruel but in His own soul He suffers more than they do at every sorrow of their lives. The Master, on a smaller scale, is seeking to reach the same spiritual position where from the adoration of a few he seeks and attains the position where his heart and soul are wound up in the salvation of all.

The Masters of Wisdom are the hardest working creatures in the universe. For them neither day or night holds rest. Upon their shoulders rest the heaviest of responsibilities and eternally the souls of men come knocking at their doors seeking help and guidance. All throug the ages not a moment is their own and they are endlessly laboring, but the true reason for their joy and power is the fact that they have learned to love their labors. They work for the joy of the work and when man reaches that point in this world where he labors for the love of it, he has reached a position where mastery in some line is very close. The cheerful workman is closer to God than the howling hypocrit who seeks union with Him.

The Schools of the Mysteries are divided into three general groupings consisting of: the student, the accepted pupil, and the teacher. In various doctrines these grades differ but spiritually all humanity is divided into three parts: the ones who do not know, the ones who are learning, and the ones who have learned. Those who are learning inspire those who do not know, while those who know teach those who are learning. In the various schools we have a number of words used to symbolize the grades. In an encyclopedia which we hope to prepare a little later we will go into detail concerning these grades, but for the benefit of the student at this time, let us generally consider them. There are fine points of distinction which we cannot go into here, but grouped together briefly, the following definitions may be of service:

First, a Student.

This is the first step and is generally used to designate one who is aspiring to the occult path. Such are also known as aspirants, candidates and the lowest grade of lay brethern. A student is one of twelve who are spiritually appointed to study at the feet of a Disciple. A student is one who is mastering the exoteric side of occultism and the requisites of a student are the requisites of self- purification, preparation and consecration.

A Disciple.

This name is given to an accepted candidate who has prepared himself according to the law and who has been given the second step in occult illumination. There are many grades of disciples as there are in all the other divisions, the lesser disciples studying at the feet of higher disciples and the higher disciples learning their wisdom from the varying grades of Masters. In India the disciples are called Chelas and are of the second step of lay brethern. The key to discipleship is continuity and the ability to stick at a thing. The student is appointed the task but as a disciple he must wait a varying number of years, from two to thirty, fulfilling honestly and sincerely the duties of a disciple. The higher disciples pierce the veil and go with their teachers on to the astral plane where a great part of their education goes on.

The Guru.

This is an Eastern word for teacher and is generally the title given by a young disciple to an older one but is not synonymous with master or initiate. The Guru is usually a lay teacher, educated in the temple and sent out for the purpose of instructing the lower orders. He gathers his Lanoos about him and to them he is a great soul but to the higher he is still one of the world.

The Adept.

An adept is one who has completed the study of the lesser mysteries, that is the worldly side, and has prepared himself for the greater

initiations of the higher grade. An adept and all who are below in stage are subject to the laws of physical birth and death, while those who are above the stage of an adept are capable of building bodies at will.

A Mahatma.

The word Mahatma means "great soul" and is a title given by the Oriental to the illuminated one and covers quite a gamut of degrees. Under its general heading are listed nearly all of those who have secured spiritual illumination and it is often erroneously given to those less in grade than adepts and is used synonymously in some schools with the word Adept.

The Arhat.

The Arhat is one of the higher grades of the Eastern path, being above an adept, consequently is one capable of manipulating the laws of nature from behind the veil. The Arhats seldom go into the world but remain almost continually with their spiritual work which is in the cause all worlds or behind the veil of matter.

An Initiate.

This title should only in truth be given to those who have taken the first step in the School of the Great Mysteries, which in some is the fifth, in others the ninth, and in still another group the seventh initiation. In Masonry it would be the thirty-third degree taken in the spiritual temple. Of late years the word Initiate has got into bad company and is now often given to those who are only of the first grade of lay Chelas. But none are privileged to carry the name Initiate in the East save those who have reached self-conscious communication with the higher powers. In the West none are privileged to use this word save one of the Twelve Brothers of the inner temple. All others must use the word Disciple or Candidate.

Master.

This word is generally used in all the grades to symbolize the next grade superior to its own. The Chela calls the Disciple master, while the student calls the Chela master, and the Disciple calls the Adept master and the Adept refers to the Initiate as master.

Elder Brothers.

This is the title given to Adepts and Initiates by the lower grades of the Western school but is really the title to which only the Twelve Initiates are entitled.

Buddhas.

The Buddhas are those having consciousness upon the Buddhic plane while the MahaBuddhas are those having consciousness upon the Nirvanic plane or the fifth world. From these are drawn those we commonly know as World Saviours.

(To be continued in Part IV.)

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