

A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO OCCULTISM

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1. What is Occultism?

1.1 Why that Name?

- Properly defined, something occult is "secret, hidden, except for those with more than ordinary knowledge."
- The word is also used, though, as a convenient label for anything not understood and feared. Many things formerly classed as occult are now ordinary: herbalism, hypnotism, water divining and more...
- People are trained to react with hostility to what society may reject. Only decades ago, the "reds under the bed" syndrome gripped America during the Cold War.
- What society fears, it paints in monstrous colours. This should give you pause for thought when you read lurid tales of 'the Occult', witchcraft and magicians!

1.2 How is it Occult?

- People hide what they wish to protect, and this is as true for spiritual beliefs as for more material things. When the Christian Church began to militantly expand through Western Europe, the early peoples may have *had* to protect their precious beliefs.
- This same Christianity could condone war and social inequality, as well as a brutal intolerance to other religions: the consequence was mutual enmity. The Old Religion went underground to protect itself against the dominant new creed of society: it went occult.
- This is why it can be difficult to study old texts: the authors were often as concerned to hide their 'true' meaning as to communicate it!
- Some modern books may *seem* occult just because of their mysterious, cryptic language; but some ancient books - even the Holy Bible! - really do contain secret meanings which can't be understood without a 'key'.

1.3 Why the Modern Revival?

- Modern interest dates back to the mid-nineteenth century: an age of tremendous change - colonial expansion, industrial growth and social upheaval. These changes fomented tremendous intellectual excitement in a new climate of spiritual doubt and uncertainty. People searched for new 'meaning'.
- These pressures expressed themselves in symptomatic outpourings of 'feeling' in culture. This was the time of Romanticism and Victorian sentimentalism, Pre-Raphaelite art, the Nature poets and the Gothic revival.
- This same period also saw the birth of the class system, socialism, Marxist philosophy. The new urban society could be dreary and soul-destroying: it spawned gin palaces, music hall, melodrama and a desire for – escapism.

1.4 Gullibility

- The poor saw the Anglican Church as a Gentlemen's Club where they felt patronised and uncomfortable. They did not feel understood and their interests were not catered for. Many new sects started in the slums.
- At the same time, newspapers and books published fascinating accounts about the half-understood discoveries being made in such faraway places as Egypt, Tibet and South America. There was a large audience for anything that was out-of-the-ordinary or exotic.
- Spiritualism and all its trappings arrived from the USA. People experimented at home and the Ouija Board became a popular parlour-game. Audiences flocked to see mediums, magicians, hypnotists, mind-readers and clairvoyants.
- Shops sold miracle medicines in this age of supreme gullibility and need.

1.5 Recent Developments

- The modern revival of interest was rooted in post-war disillusion - a whole generation without a "raison d'etre". The economy was improving, and there was great change in society ... but there was also a psychic vacuum.
- The future seemed bleak, and youth looked to the recent past. There was a vogue for Aubrey Beardsley and Art Nouveau, the Golden Dawn and Aleister Crowley.
- The Hippies were the epitome of political disenchantment, pacifism, and sexual permissiveness. It was the nineteenth century all over again.

1.6 The Present Time

- Age-old myths (Atlantis, Mu, etc.) have been revived and exaggerated by Erich Von Daniken and others.
 - These myths answer to a kind of ancestral dream in the collective unconscious mind: about a perfect world, a Utopia ... a Golden Age. This idealism is channelled in many ways: in CND, the Animal Rights movement, Green Peace and many more movements.
 - Modern civilisation is the child of military conquest and elitist materialism - twin forces making life good for a select few, and miserable for the hoi polloi.
 - Established Religion has been used to justify this system and render its values sacred. The pot-pourri of 'New Age' beliefs may not be a real alternative; they may just be brightly coloured distractions.
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2. Is the time ripe?

2.1 Phoney Wars

- Orthodox Christianity and Marxist Communism are apparently opposed but in fact have much in common, and both reject occultism.
- Established religion is the religion of the status quo: things as they are now and the way they should stay. Communism produced the same system inverted. The two sides never argue about the *fact* of power, only about its prerogatives.
- Established religion favours aristocratic plutocracy; Marxism favours bureaucratic oligarchy. Occultism believes in supernatural democracy.

2.2 Priestly Powers

- Writing was not needed by tribal groups because personal speech promoted mutual identification. Priests were the only literate class in primitive society: they guarded traditions, financial accounts, law and history - often written in 'secret' script, e.g. runes, ogham, hieroglyphs, Inca knots and Aztec pictogram.
- The power of literacy gave priests a hold over illiterate kings. This happened throughout history: Nathan and King David, Thomas a Becket and Henry II ... even Merlin and King Arthur.

- The system finally undermined by the invention of printing which made universal literacy possible and "Clerks in Holy Orders" redundant. Books robbed religion of mystery and awe. The impact has been so great, the technology may also have been used as a tool of evil.

2.3 Guardians

- Ancient truth was protected by a brotherhood of Guardians who had no connection at all with the new rulers and their militaristic system.
- During an interim period, however, they held a "watching brief" by keeping on the thrones of Europe sacred persons who were members of the Old Religion, for example William II and Edward III of England.
- The Guardians finally lost all influence in the ensuing power struggles.
- Old beliefs survive most strongly in rural areas furthest from metropolitan influence. One sees traces of them still in farming superstitions, gypsy culture, and in the gothic cathedrals of provincial towns that scarcely grow.

2.4 Masters and Students

- Masters today are part of the contemporary scene, with up-to-date knowledge. They will use all modern aids whenever this is wise - but will aim to beat technology at its own game!
- Masters taught students much as master tradesmen taught their apprentices. However, this time honoured relationship has almost disappeared. People turning to Occultism find it difficult to appreciate the Master-Student bond.
- The rules can prove an insurmountable obstacle when candidates fail to see that liberty is not freedom from discipline.

2.5 Fairy-tales

- From a superstitious concern for children's survival, parents propagate a "nursery version" of old beliefs. Though diluted and prettified, they have a direct link with truly ancient traditions.
- But story-book magic (imps, elves, fairies, witches, etc.) stands in relation to real magic as storks do to sex and babies!
- Periodically, Man's intellect must reconcile itself to wide gaps in its knowledge. Fantasising helps the stumbling ego retrieve its balance.

3. The Doctrines of Magic

3.1 Root Meanings

- Magic was the origin of all theatre - it dramatises other realities. Note the connection between these words: magic, image, Magi, magician and imagination.
- An 'Imago' an idealised mental picture, an inner reality representing an external potential! A Magus is an image-maker who communicates by means of encoded drama.

3.2 Different terms

- *Sympathetic Magic* is magic at its most primitive and simple: seeking to influence people and events by imitation or mimicry. Concerned with individual skill and power, it is peripheral to mainstream magic and has little spiritual significance..
- *Ritual, Ceremonial* or *High Magic* concerns power superior and external to the individual magician.
- *White* and *Black Magic* are different in the same way that a good citizen differs from a criminal: their goals may look similar to begin with, but not their means. The former observes the law while the latter flouts it.
- What determines the law? Whether the magician acknowledges the primacy of the Life Force.

3.3 Induction

- The magician's path is esoteric - each step dependent on the assimilation of preceding lessons.
- This knowledge is not self-evident and can not be obtained by "Do-It-Yourself" study. But far from being secret taboo, the truth is available to all. Induction and Initiation facilitate understanding and authorise growth.
- Aspirants may study alone but with unnecessary difficulty, whereas most problems are eased by group study. The Way of Magic is based on communal effort, and since group power is stronger, society is hostile.
- Begin at the beginning, but someone with the key must open the door and invite you in.

4. Aims and Objectives

4.1 Understanding

- Scientists seek "to know" in order "to influence", so view Magic as a kind of primitive science.
- Mystic religion seeks to knowing God - but where religion subjugates self and nature, Occultism collaborates with both.
- Men have forgotten their heritage, so prospective candidates undergo various kinds of preparation.

4.2 Will

- "Free Will" taxes religious philosophy, but where Descartes said "Cogito ergo sum", the occultist says "Vollo ergo sum" - "I *will*, therefore I am".
 - The ultimate goal is the blending of all wills and the emergence of a perfect world community - i.e. the true Golden Age. This is the *occult* meaning of the Law of Thelema. 'Do What Thou Wilt' never meant 'let it all hang out, man'!
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5. The Way Ahead

5.1 Splits

- Providence has not abandoned man to his havoc; throughout the ages, truth and wisdom have been protected by Guardians.
- With the passage of time, different Masters favoured different approaches and made different emphases. These are not schisms, but are sufficient to bewilder.
- There are many routes up the Sacred Mountain ... but only one mountain.

5.2 Training

- Donkeys are trained by stick and carrot, children by slaps and smiles, i.e. it is a matter of reward and punishment.
- A proper regime of praise and criticism maximises a student's potential.
- Any chagrin stems from wrong ideas about occult power. A student must reinstate his Original Self, the essential person he has the potential to become.

5.3 Hostility

- Hostile resistance can be anticipated from family and friends. The more religious the background, the greater the risk of being ostracised.
- Declaring oneself a Child of Light, one thereby becomes a potential threat to the Children of Darkness. Evil would not hesitate to use the distress of family feuds or broken friendships.
- It is not essential, but it may be wise to detach oneself from the heavy influence of other people's negative reactions.

5.4 Supernatural Danger

- Evil is only interested in one's potential for spiritual good. There should be no call for alarm, but it would be stupid to be complacent. Since the main danger is being caught by surprise, students should plan for every eventuality.
- Let there be no exaggerated fear of evil - there is balance and justice in the cosmos.
- If evil worries about your potential - that same potential can be used.

5.5 Weirdoes

- If potential students of Occultism are special at all, it is probably because they must be social misfits of one sort or another.
- The vast majority of people have been successfully brainwashed by their upbringing into accepting society's principal values. But the potential Occultist questions some or all of these values otherwise he would not be searching for alternative answers.
- Since there are other kinds of misfit too, not just honest seekers, an Occult Master must take appropriate precautions. He vets potential students quite carefully.
- Each human being will have an encounter with a Master. It is just possible that there may be a few such meetings, but since only one of these is guaranteed, so to speak, it is only to be expected that the prospective student will proceed with a certain amount of caution. To put it bluntly, he does not want to blow it!
- Equally, of course, neither he nor the Master wish to waste time on a kind of chariness that is quite unnecessary. It is easy for these things to get out of hand. So after a reasonable period of time, if there is no sign of a decision being reached - the Master will probably withdraw from the scene. The moral of this story is.. don't rush, but don't dawdle either.

6. Strange Powers

6.1 What Impresses Us?

- Sacred books abound with tales of people working wonders because, like sugar-coating on a pill, it helps readers to swallow the message. Dry doctrine gets accepted and believed while the eyes are beguiled by colourful ideas.
- These psychological quirks are still in use to persuade the public to buy goods or think certain thoughts.
- Miracles range widely - angelic visitations, levitation, bilocation, transportations and transformations ... but pride of place always goes to healing the sick and raising the dead. Which confirms that human beings are truly self-centred creatures primarily concerned about their own welfare and mortality!

6.2 Exceptional Men

- Compare the life of the Old Testament prophet, Elijah, with that of Jesus in the New Testament. Tabulate their attributes, their wonder-workings, and all other significant factors.
- Then you might understand why his apostles told Jesus that he was the prophet Elijah come to earth again.
- Evidently, men touched by God display characteristic features.

6.3 The Good Book?

- Sex features prominently in the lives of many characters in the Bible. If you tabulate the sexual attitudes and experiences of prophets, patriarchs and princes it becomes quite an eye-opener.
- Wonders were worked by ... laying on hands, lying upon clients' bodies, breathing into mouths, daubing them with spittle and dust, etc.
- If you didn't know better, it could be a book on witchcraft!

7. Central Figures

7.1 Sacred Persons

- Throughout world mythology, young males who represent their tribe do somehow acquire strange magical gifts. In relatively recent British history, kings were reputed to have the power to heal scrofula - by their touch alone.
- Young gods sacrificed their lives for the people: Adonis, Attis, Osiris, Mithras ... and Jesus.
- The god-king personifies fertility, and his sexuality is the life force bringing fruitful harvest and survival.

7.2 Other Symbols

- There are many biblical references to holy trees, sacred groves, burning bushes, enchanted arrows, powerful spears, magic mushrooms, etc.
- Reconsider for example the accounts of:- Noah's ark, the destruction of Jericho, Lot's wife and the pillar of salt, the Temple of Solomon, etc.
- Suspend former attitudes for there is more to these tales than meets the eye.

7.3 Hands

- Seek the link between common references to hands ... raised in greeting, lifted against an enemy, laid upon the sick, clasped in love, etc.
 - When we say "Let me see", we reach out. Does part of the psyche reside in our hands; are they an extension of the brain or soul?
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8. Parapsychology

8.1 Research

- Dr. Rhine of Duke University in America conducted the most famous 20th century research into ESP. However, other countries - including Russia and the U.K. - have engaged in similar investigations.

- But Arthur Koestler's legacy, to fund research in Britain, has been ignored. For all the superstitions and New Age trivia that has become fashionable, the subject is still not *publicly* respectable.

8.2 Elusive Phenomena

- Although rational, scientific technique can be invoked, the phenomena may fail to respond under artificial laboratory conditions.
- Modern economies can fund only that research which offers profit or advantage.
- Both Russia and the USA have probed the strategic potential of psychokinesis for offensive and defensive purposes.
- The outcome of World War II may have been changed by the allies' insight into Hitler's reliance on 'occult' guidance. His downfall stems from the misinformation fed to him during the last three years of his regime.

8.3 Prophets

- The gift of prophecy may go with certain personality factors and may be linked to the nature of time.
 - In his natural state man possesses more than five senses and babies are very probably born with these "extra" senses intact.
 - In most children they atrophy through neglect. When deliberately or accidentally stimulated, they flourish and the person becomes "psychic".
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9. Faith

9.1 Ghosts

- There is probably a link between Extra-Sensory Perception and the universal phenomena of ghosts and hauntings.
- Both types of phenomena depend upon the inner convictions of the subjects involved. This is not to suggest that they are in any way deceiving themselves; it is rather the case that scepticism shuts off certain circuits in the brain.

- Hypnosis augments an individual's natural level of credulity - his faith, if you like - by removing or reducing his scepticism and giving him once again the outlook of an honest child. This can be of value in restoring psychic powers.

9.2 Progress

- Our own grandparents would have considered supernatural many of the things which we today accept as perfectly natural. Our own children feel perfectly "at home" with even newer inventions which we ourselves find disturbing.
 - These giant strides forward in technological know-how tend to give people a sturdy belief in their own self-sufficiency, and it undermines or displaces people's respect and need for religion.
 - Parapsychology is a branch of science and its subject matter is no longer regarded as supernatural. But the phenomena it studies are "unusual" or else "neglected".
 - These same phenomena are accepted as normal by almost all of the primitive tribes that survive in remoter parts of the modern world. They treat such matters casually, because they have never discounted or doubted them.
 - Such people feel no need to explain these phenomena by reference to gods, spirits or supernaturalism. These things are normal to them. It is civilized know-alls who make the fuss.
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10. Sex and Magic

10.1 Current Attitudes

- Shortly after its foundation, Christianity adopted attitudes calculated to mark it off from other religions. Eventually, the Protestant churches fostered Puritanism. Moral hypocrisy peaked in the Victorian age when women's role was ultra-feminine.
- They attached great importance to appearances. Public behaviour and comportment mattered more than anything else - hence the concern for "honour", "virtue" and "reputation".
- Complex rules of behaviour and elaborate social etiquette marked off the gentry, i.e. those who accepted personal restrictions (cf. the Brahmins in India).

Self-restraint and mortification led ultimately to concealment and shame. The medical profession believed that sex bred disease.

- Distorted thinking still lingers - e.g. the widespread view that only "straight" sex is proper.

10.2 Repression

- Sexual repression and ignorance helps cause widespread psychological ills of anxiety and depression.
- Many people are unable to obtain the profound gratification necessary for total well-being.
- The consequences of this have been more widespread and far more costly in terms of human misery: stress, crime, drug addiction, compensatory eating, inferiority, marriage breakdown, cruelty, violence, crisis of identity and suicide.

10.3 Anarchic Power

- Stemming sexual potency is like ordering the tide to stand still - it can't be done!
 - When pent-up energies reach danger-point, outlets have to be found.
 - Most common form of self-purging is violent fantasizing which leads to a diminished involvement with reality: alienation, loss of elan vitale, spiritual aimlessness and extreme mental detachment.
 - Technically this condition is called: anomia.
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11. Modern Theories

11.1 Reproduction

- Common-sense says sex has but one function - making babies. But since women can be impregnated against their will, what then is the natural purpose of the pleasure they can obtain?
- After Hitler's defeat, the true nature of Nazi atrocities was found to have debased sexual overtones. It was realized that a whole society could be sick.

- Somehow, the malady linked the sexual urge with a particular political stance which was extremely authoritarian.
- Sexuality is a power, and its gratification is crucial to stability of personality.

11.2 Orgasm

- Research proves energy is not lost during orgasm. On the contrary, there is a spectacular gain. Wilhelm Reich, who fled from Hitler's Germany, proposed that orgasmic energy was of divine origin.
 - This is an ancient theory that has slumbered in folk-memory, with frequent allusion in customs and fertility rites. It is this to which the symbolism of May Day, Morris Dancing and Midsummer bear eloquent testimony.
 - Upon deeper consideration, things taken for granted assume new significance. Living traces of Nature Worship abound.
 - The message is clear: Man must cooperate with nature - even that part of nature that lies within his own breast.
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12. Occult Sexuality

12.1 Communion

- Turning its back on sex, Christianity chose the food appetite to symbolize its central message. This helps to explain its associated network of elaborate symbols - the Lamb of God, the Last Supper, the Bread of Life, etc.
- To represent "the power of creation" sex was far more apt and involving. The act of eating had connotations of hunger and suffering for too many.
- Sex invokes the life force into the loins of men and women; nutrition merely sustains that which had already begun.
- This branches to several doctrines - the body as a sacred instrument, sex as a ritual gesture, and orgasm as magical communion.

12.2 Guilt

- Magical sex is not mere gratification but an offering of self in a kind of immolation.

- This has nothing to do with lust as such. This is not demanding and taking but submission to love. But people are products of their society, and their sexual attitudes are entwined with shame and guilt.
- Prospective students are no exception, and may need help in adjusting to their own true nature.
- Doing things with greater abandon is not self-discovery. To undo the bad habits and fixations you may have accumulated, you may need to go back to sex's first awakening: masturbation.

12.3 Sacrificial Virgins

- To effete society, Occultism means Black Magic. But a large part of their image of black magic is a projected fantasy containing all that they would find most naughty.
 - It tickles their fancy to believe that Occultists wallow in debauchery of the most dangerous, deranged and damaging kind.
 - The most heinous horror they could conceive was the violation of virgins (always female) in public! And lest you relished the thought - the eating of newborn babes was thrown in.
 - This is how they perceive the corruption of innocence. Black Magic *does* exist and is the corruption of nature. However, White Magic also exists and is the emulation of nature.
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13. Theories of the Psyche

13.1 Trauma and Love

- To put healthy minds back in healthy bodies, holistic psychologists aim to purge guilt and foster self-esteem.
- But society is jealous of power. Therefore, since sex is power, sexual attitudes are heavily enforced and delicate souls get hurt.
- It is the power of sex that draws souls towards total union. Jesus said: "When two or three are gathered in my name, I am there" - and the words have an inner meaning. The soul that loves becomes selfless. If whole communities were built on love - the world would be a far happier place.

13.2 Sacred and Profane

- Sexual repression weakens our resistance to social indoctrination. By purging sexual fears, Magic strengthens personal stability. Thus: early training *is* a therapeutic process.
 - Like contemporary primitives, our ancestors were not crippled by self-consciousness. There was no precise distinction between profane sex and sacred sex, but there was no confusion either.
 - Puritans see "a devil within" but magicians see "a god within". The human body is natural and decorous - its functions a source of joy, its proper care a celebration of life. Only *Will* can be shameful. To change is not easy and the way ahead must be lit by self-knowledge.
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14. The Supernatural

14.1 The Inexplicable

- Unable to tolerate the unknown, the human brain is driven to generate explanations; hoping for certainty, accepting probability, but making do with possibility. Science (Latin: *scientia*, knowledge) is merely the current state of play.
- Did man's primitive mind invent God merely to make sense of what he could not "understand"? If so, did God inspire the notion?
- Some religions were not concocted but revealed, and within religions miracles do occur, when natural laws are suspended. Scientific logic should always prefer the most economic explanation, but sceptics are often pushed to offer elaborate refutations of the supernatural.

14.2 The Unknown at Our Elbows

- We all have contact with the unknown in death, sleep and the idea of tomorrow. Three things that fascinate and provoke curiosity are
 - (a) ghosts and seances,
 - (b) the interpretation of dreams, and
 - (c) astrology, prophecy and fortune-telling.

- The early shamans, like witch doctors today, were obliged to cater for this interest, which is why shamanism is linked with healing, dreaming and prophecy.
 - The shaman's job is to help the community find prosperity and avoid calamity, and the kinds of community most aware of his value are those whose livelihood depends on unknown natural factors - i.e. farmers, fishers, builders, invalids, sportsmen, artists, etc.
 - In modern Europe religious worship has declined enormously and it is mainly the poor who still attend church services or make religious observances. When we look at things on a global scale the story is much the same - the backward countries are the ones that exhibit the highest levels of religiosity.
 - Communism concludes that the one (religion) causes the other (poverty); common sense simply tells us that one makes the other bearable. These poor communities are also the most exposed to natural uncertainties and misfortune, and the least bound up in a world of their own making.
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15. Orders and Societies

15.1 Human Groups

- Human beings have a natural tendency to form themselves into groups, being descended from a species which, like monkeys, huddled together at night.
- Their groups are based on both intellectual and emotional considerations - (1) common aims, and (2) shared beliefs.
- Imagine a small, nomadic tribe herding its small flocks of animals, and appreciate what changes must occur if that tribe starts to barter or trade.
- Greater changes still are needed if tribes join together to offer concerted resistance to some common enemy.
- The search for aims and belief is a powerful force. Properly focussed, it becomes a quest for meaning.

15.2 Community

- It may help to analyze the structure and function of exclusive religious communities - Franciscan monasteries, Jesuit houses, and the huge Tibetan monasteries.

- Human groups can range in size from dyads (two persons), to complex villages. Psychology proves that the best size for being task efficient is five.
- Meaningful personal relations can be sustained with up to 200 individuals, which is the maximum effective size for a community. Intellectual think-tanks (and witches' covens) should number 12 or 13.
- The functions of social groups are:- mutual comfort, emotional support, sharing of work, pooling resources, love, companionship, and fellowship of purpose in life. These are the seeds of stability and growth resown by the Great Work.

15.3 Outsiders

- Formal religion enforced orthodoxy. Heresy was persecuted and protest was evidence of The Antichrist.
- As during war, the populace were hyped with zeal and informed on "spies" and "traitors". But like a Resistance movement, nonconformers formed groups and developed secret codes, recognition signals and security precautions. Publications were disguised as something other - e.g. the Tarot. Occultism went underground.

15.4 Snobs

- For centuries, Occultism was cloaked in secrecy and shrouded in mystery, and sometimes the game and "thrill of derring-do" was the attraction rather than the teachings it protected.
- Even today, this "cloak and dagger" fantasy appeals to a certain kind of personality. Some "orders" set out to exploit this trait and are all secrecy and no substance.
- Like quack doctors hawking patent medicines in the 19th Century, spurious bodies lay claim to great antiquity and very high-class membership.
- This emphasis on age and pedigree shows contempt for the new and the lower classes. Secret Societies are typically elitist and aristocratic - consider the Comte de St. Germaine, King Solomon, Knights Templar, and such sonorous titles as "The Ancient and Grand Order of Imperial Freemasonry".

15.5 Organisational Structure

- Men need to join large groups or teams, whereas women prefer intimate groups of two or three. So clubs, orders and societies are predominantly male preserves.

- The male sexual identity is more complicated and more difficult to learn. He is more prone to suffer from psychological insecurity.
- For men to be seed-producers and yet childless is an enigma. Their creative urges are not satisfied, as a woman's might be, by reproduction. Which is why men are capable of intense task-oriented motivation.

15.6 Witches

- Witches bear the same relation to magicians as lay-preachers to priests, or midwives to doctors. They are essentially a localised, do-it-yourself phenomenon.
- There are innumerable phoney witchcraft groups motivated by childish naughtiness or its exploitation.

15.7 Fraternities

- With their officers, rule books and high levels of structure, one forgets that "fraternity" means "brotherhood". At base, it should be a familial grouping, members acknowledging each other as children of the same mother and father.
 - The Most Noble Order of the Garter is the oldest order of chivalry in the world, but the oldest fraternity in the world is that brotherhood of light whose members follow the way and the will of God. Its only functionaries were the wandering Shamans.
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16. Secret Orders

16.1 The Order of the Garter

- The Order was founded by Edward III c.1348, supposedly when Joan, Countess of Salisbury, accidentally dropped a garter while dancing. The King picked it up and said: "Honi soit qui mal y pense" (Evil be to him who evil thinks)!
- This was no frisky quip. The Old Religion though practised was condemned and, because they wore little else, witches wore a garter as a sign of rank.
- The King's quick action concealed the design and nature of the garter, not just avoiding scandal but possibly saving her life. By so openly putting her under

his protection, the King warned off any accusation. He was also indicating his own involvement.

16.2 Mystic Numbers

- Curiously, the King founded an order of chivalry restricted to "25 knights plus the sovereign" - a fact which still applies today, and Queen Elizabeth II may not admit any new member until a vacancy arises through the death of an older one.
- Thus the total membership of the Order is 26 persons in all. This is twice thirteen ... a royal coven being twice the size of an ordinary witches' coven.
- The official regalia of the sovereign as head of the Order includes a mantle embroidered with exactly one hundred and sixty-eight (168) symbolic "garters". These, together with the one that the king wore on his leg, makes a grand total of one hundred and sixty-nine (169) which is thirteen squared! (i.e. 13×13).
- Thirteen is a magic number - 13 needles are pushed into a poppet to make a curse, the Tarot Trump No. 13 is Death, and the 13th member of a coven represents The Devil.
- Colloquially, "a baker's dozen" means a piece of salesmanship - bakers encouraged the purchase of bread and cakes by offering "one extra" with every twelve that were bought. But additionally, and more to the point, the tradition goes back still further to a time when people hesitated to speak certain thoughts aloud in case the utterance triggered the event! Compare the universal avoidance of uttering the name of God. In this case, "baker's dozen" is a corruption of "boucca's dozen" ... a Celtic expression meaning - "the devil's thirteen".

16.3 The Order of the Temple

- The Knights Templar founded 1188 A.D. by Hugh de Payens - a fraternity dedicated to the liberation and defence of the sacred places of the Holy Land.
- The Order was both military and religious - its members were noblemen under monastic vows.
- Probably for military reasons, their activities were surrounded by absolute secrecy, and more sinister explanations were suspected. Rumour made them devil-worshippers, members of the Old Religion and homosexuals.
- Knights were forbidden all female contact and might not kiss their mothers. The dowry that each brought on joining made the order fabulously wealthy - and enemies suggested they had found Solomon's treasure while protecting the Temple.

16.4 Downfall of the Temple

- Long association with the orient gave the Templars many strange beliefs and practices - it was said they worshipped a god called Baphomet.
- Philip IV of France was covetous of the Templars' treasure and persuaded the Pope to issue a Bull of suppression that allowed him to persecute them. Many countries disobeyed, and a special edict was sent c.1310 to make Edward II of England comply. (The Order of the Garter was founded about 25 years later!)
- At his public burning, the Prior of the Templars commanded both the Pope and the King of France to meet him at God's throne within the year! Their subsequent death enhanced the Templars' reputation as magicians.

16.5 The Rosicrucians

- In the late 19th century, Madame Blavatsky announced contact with Christian Rosenkreutz and Baron von Hund - secret chiefs who had founded the Rosicrucian Order in about 1720! Earlier references exist, but the real start was an anonymous book of 1614 that spoke of a mysterious order of knighthood. End of story! Nothing more substantial than that.
- However, to gain favour among the Christian churches, Freemasonry borrowed some of the supposed traditions of "Rosicrucianism". S.L. MacGregor Mathers resurrected it again to give his Order of the Golden Dawn a gloss of antiquity.

16.6 The Order of the Golden Dawn

- Launched in 1887 by three "Rosicrucians", the Golden Dawn was meant for probationers aspiring to:- "The Order of the Rose of Ruby and the Cross of Gold".
- Sometimes called "Stella Matutina" (The Star of the Morning), The Golden Dawn was the in-thing for a certain clique ... W.B. Yeats, Arthur Machen, Algernon Blackwood, and others. After several clashes of temperament, Aleister Crowley split off and formed: "Ordo Argenteum Astrum" (The Order of the Silver Star).
- All in all, the Golden Dawn lasted 15 years and in no way merits the reputation it has since acquired. It was a naughty escapade for effete intellectuals.

16.7 Freemasonry

- Strictly speaking, Freemasonry is not an order but a very exclusive club. Its proceedings are heavily veiled under obscure symbolism. Supported by protestants, it is forbidden to both Catholics and communists.

- It originates with the mediaeval Guilds when it protected the interests and welfare of masons. Building permanent structures was a costly and dangerous enterprise steeped in ancient superstition.
- Many books have exposed the secrets of Freemasonry but the empty rituals amuse the members of what is really a club for establishment worthies.

16.8 The Germanen Order

- A battleground for centuries, Germany achieved nationhood late in European history. Numerous mystic groups articulated the people's yearning for stability and identity. The Germanen Order (1912 to 1922) invented the term "herrenvolk" - the Master Race - and influenced the Nazis.
- There are vague hints about the order's clandestine survival and, as with the Druids, someone will eventually restart it all and claim "direct continuity".

16.9 Britain Today

- Modern Britain boasts hundreds of occult groups, mostly non-descript things with grandiose titles where nobodies act out their fantasies.
- Nevertheless, it shows there is a hunger for spiritual uplift among certain kinds of people. Given the right help, they might look at truth.

17. An Appointment with Truth

17.1 Genuine Orders

- A genuine order is both valid and sincere. It is what it says it is, and not just an elaborate scenario dramatizing members' own fantasies.
- A genuine order needs no publicity and does not seek a huge membership. It is sufficient to exist and it gets on with its work. False orders recruit keenly and measure success by numbers and by income ... so they are not too choosy about whom they take.
- Genuine orders are often selective though social status is never one of the criteria. To be eligible one must be ready - and must possess the qualities that would make an ideal member.

17.2 After Acceptance

- A new student has ample opportunity to train and develop further though it must all be undertaken voluntarily because his levels of motivation must be sustained by him and not by the spiritual equivalent of P.T. Instructors or Sergeant Majors. Free Will is so important, Masters are reluctant to apply any pressure.
- In contrast, false orders have structured programmes and high-powered training. But truth prefers quietude, dialogue and reflection, so beware hurried indoctrination and inducements.
- In false orders, new recruits are frequently allocated to newly promoted members for their initial training - so that their progress in learning becomes a kind of test for someone else's advancement.
- Moreover, the matter taught seems organised and routine, almost as if each soul were being put through a mechanical process. In almost any body of knowledge there have to be simple basics that can be handled in a fairly routine manner ... but spurious groups tend to reduce things to the level of correspondence courses.
- A true Master accepts his disciples only after personal interview and takes responsibility for their spiritual progress. Certainly, he may be assisted on the way by his more senior students and Initiates - his 'graduates' - but this is in the same way that older children help a parent to cope with younger ones ... relieving them of the burden when and where this is feasible. The key emphasis throughout is on the Master-Student relationship itself.

17.3 Master-Student Bond

- The Master-Student relationship is unique, and may dismay those considering taking the plunge since the word Master has connotations of dominance or slavery.
- In ancient guilds one began as an apprentice: one qualified and practised for a few years; and finally, when one had gained respect and authority, one taught. A Master professes mastery of his subject.
- A student swears obedience, though the oath is never casually invoked, because its purpose is to help the student fight the battle within himself. Without obedience, no Master dare rely on the student's own motivation.
- The student may abandon the relationship whenever he wishes, but he may never find another Teacher. The supernatural must not be troubled too frequently by individual whim.

17.4 Knowledge

- We do not let children play with dangerous weapons. Neither does a Master give knowledge blindly to a student.
- A Master does not comply with a student's wishes unless he judges him able to cope with the knowledge.
- Students often assume that time alone will gain them qualification. But there is a specific curriculum: the student is taught what the Master decides.
- The world outside, with its love of sensationalism, likes to categorize occultism either as "black" magic or "white". It is a distinction they find it hard to define, and they have a vested interest in not being too conscientious in pursuing precision.
- The Masters I am talking about are truly on the side of Light and may therefore be referred to as "White Magicians". Remember though that the title is a recent invention.
- The real distinction is between the Left Hand Path of supreme egoism and the Right Hand Path of total altruism ... or as one student put it: "infernal paranoia" and "divine schizophrenia".

17.5 Via Media

- A worthy religion seeks balance in all things and points toward a middle way. It abominates all extremes and offers humanity goals that are realistic.
- In this respect, the religion called "Occultism" is sane and rational, doing all it can to help its followers achieve that natural degree of interior harmony that is their birthright. It is this, and this alone, which will make it possible for students to climb to higher levels of the Sacred Mountain.
- However enthusiastic or single-minded they may be – and this applies especially to newcomers who have not yet learned how to be patient or inwardly still – students must eschew fanaticism.

18. Self-fulfilment

18.1 The Myth of an Elect

- Legends speak of a superior race of men, who knew things we have forgotten and possessed skills we have lost. Atlantis was to our ancestors what "life on Mars" is to us.
- Like angels, these superior beings are an ideal exemplar. Don not waste time looking for the sites of Atlantis or Avalon but look for truth in what our forebears chose to tell us. We are their posterity.
- Look for significance beneath the superficial meaning of words. Rabelais gave us "Thelema" and Crowley "The Law", but supremacy of will is a concept as old as time. Therefore speak not of a chosen people ... but of people who have made a choice.

18.2 The Way of the Neophyte

- A neophyte must gauge his distance from the fountain of truth. He must abandon everything that misled him and set out on the quest for self-fulfilment.
- Self-fulfilment is neither wish-fulfilment nor the achievement of ambition. Both could occur as it happens, but the real goal is precise and special:- the actualisation of the original blueprint .. the realisation of one's potential. The term is - *Entelechy!*
- Each student must turn back the clock and undo the influence put upon his soul in childhood. Since society emphasises the male role, but provides no outlets for the aggressivity it stimulates, male students in particular may have struggles rethinking their identity.

18.3 Elimination of Fault

- God is not looking for perfect men. Teachers may speak of the process of perfection but they are encouraging students to put aside all induced or implanted imperfections.
- The ancients spoke of four elements - earth, air, fire and water - referring to the four aspects of man's being - physical, emotional, intellectual and spiritual. The tetrahedron is a symbol for this.
- Note the possible connection between this *Tetrahedron* and the all-powerful name of God - the *Tetragrammaton*; both are interpenetrating explanations.

- Authoritarian religion and Occultism differ in that the former emphasises "acquisition of virtue and suppression of self" where the latter stresses "elimination of faults and revelation of true self".

18.4 Apotheosis

- The doctrine of Apotheosis expresses the idea that man can become part of God, an extension of God, and one with God.
- The notion is not exclusive to Occultism, but it takes the idea one stage further: that "God" would be revealed if we were all capable of dropping the egoistic aspect of our individuality, and merging the various units into a cohesive whole.
- This is the principle upheld by the complexities of the Kabbala and by the story of the Holy Grail. It lies at the esoteric heart of many of the world's myths, legends and doctrines.

Like Gods, men must work for the reinstatement of the Golden Age of peace and love throughout the world.

Like Gods, they must see beyond the narrow circle of selfish concern taught them by their parents and their society.

Like Gods, they must embrace the whole of life and affirm it.
