

# *Mystics Magazine*

*Egyptian Mystical Theology*

Conversations with W. Marsham Adams

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

*The Out-of-Body Travel Foundation!*

[www.outofbodytravel.org](http://www.outofbodytravel.org)





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*By W. Marsham Adams*

# *Mystics Magazine*

*Egyptian Mystical Theology*  
 Conversations with W. Marsham Adams  
 By Marilyn Hughes

*Mystics Magazine ventures to take on the issues of Mystical Theology in Different Faiths and World Religions in a new and unique way. It is the purpose of each issue of the magazine to embrace the personal dialogue and teachings of a great Master of the Mystical Path within that religion and allow them to speak of their personal experience and conclusions based on their years of inquiry into the supersensual world.*

*We've utilized many texts which involve actual dialogue between the Great Mystics and others wherein they explain important aspects and understanding of the mystical theology (and sometimes moral theology) of their own unique religious path.*

*The Author does not necessarily agree with all views presented, but wishes to present the similarities and differences between some of the Great Mystics the world over. In doing so, we can see better where we agree and where we disagree. We can also pick up points from other paths that may enhance our own.*

*Look upon this journey into Mystics Magazine as an opportunity to discern for yourself as to how these things may be able to help you in your own spiritual journey.*

*This is an opportunity to have a conversation with some of the greatest mystical minds in history. So consider listening in . . .*

# The House of the Hidden Places

*By W. Marsham Adams, 1895*

## CHAPTER I.

### THE PYRAMID OF LIGHT.

CLOSE to the verge of the immense desert which stretches its arid wastes across the whole breadth of the continent to the shore of the Western Ocean, just at the apex of the famous delta which marks the meeting point of Upper and Lower Egypt, at the very spot where the busy life of the earliest civilization on record was bordered by the vast and barren solitude, stands the most majestic and most mysterious monument ever erected by the hand of man. Of all the other structures which made the marvels of the ancient world, scarcely a vestige is left. Where are the hanging gardens, the boast of the monarch of Babylon? Where is the far-famed Pharos of Alexandria? Centuries have passed since earthquake laid low the Colossus which bestrode the harbour of Rhodes; and a madman's hand reduced to ashes the temple of Artemis, the pride of Ephesus. But the Grand Pyramid of Ghizeh still remains undestroyed and indestructible, ages after the lesser marvels have passed away, as it stood ages before ever they came into being. Certainly more than fifty, it may be more than sixty, centuries have gone by since that building,


which never since has needed the care of man, first concealed from view its hidden places, those secret chambers of which no other building on the globe contains the like. Upwards of two million times has the sun risen and set upon its mighty walls, since first the pure and unbroken surface of polished casing-stones flashed back the rays like a veil of dazzling lustre, and vindicated its ancient title of The Light.


What the concealed significance may be of that secret masonry; by whom, and for what purpose, the complex plan was designed; at what epoch the huge structure was erected, are questions which have perplexed many minds in many lands, and have resulted in a discord more akin to Babel, than to the grandeur of its silent majesty. It was built by the Jews in the days of their captivity, says, or rather said, one school of theorists. It was built by Chemmis, but attributed by Egyptians in hatred of him to the Shepherd Philiton, is the account given by Herodotus. It was built by Ibn Salluk, say the Arabs, just before the Flood, to preserve the royal treasures from the predicted inundation. It was built by Melchisedec—or somebody—vehemently asserts the Scottish professor of astronomy, who seems always to write in a whirlwind of miscellaneous indignation. It was indisputably intended by the founder for his tomb, one party stoutly maintains,—a tomb in which he left especial instructions that he should not be buried, and in which nobody could possibly have been buried, replies another. It was an observatory, maintains a third,—where every place for observation

was carefully closed up, retorts a fourth. It is the "prophetic floor-roll of human history," screams Professor Smyth,—with all the dates gone wrong, softly sneers Mr. Flinders Petrie.

Side by side with that masonic mystery, well nigh as impenetrable at the present moment as when the Hir Sheshta, or "Master of the Secret," was an officer of Pharaoh's household, has come down to us another enigma, the strange collections of sacred writings, or Ritual \* of Ancient Egypt, which modern writers have called the "Book of the Dead," but which claims for itself the title of the "Book of the Master of the Hidden Places." Vivid as is the interest now awakened in those writings, little progress has been made in elucidating their meaning. The doctrines inculcated by their religion, the relations of the worshipper to the object or objects worshipped, the signification of the particular symbol under which those relations were at once veiled and expressed, are but little better understood at the present time, notwithstanding our greatly increased knowledge of the sacred writings, than when the hieroglyphs themselves were undeciphered. Yet, strange to say, prominently as these mysteries stand out in every matter that relates to ancient Egypt, no one has hitherto thought of collating the masonic secret of the monument with the doctrinal secret contained in the mysterious books of Thoth, to whom the origin of Egyptian wisdom is attributed. \* Such an omission is the more singular, because indications are not wanting on either side to hint at the connection. That Khufu (miscalled by the

Greeks, Cheops) should have adopted the pyramidal form in the hieroglyph of his name is not surprising, as he was the monarch under whom the building was erected. But it is not perhaps unworthy of notice, that the form of the Pyramid enters into the hieroglyph of the star Sothis, or Sirius. For the Grand Orient, or position of that star when its rising forms the immediate harbinger of dawn on midsummer morning, was, as is well known, the great starting-point for the age-long cycles of the Egyptian reckoning. And whereas the figure usually employed to denote the Pyramid embraces both the edifice and

the rocky platform on which it is built , the form used in the hieroglyph of Sothis consists of the

masonic portion alone , that is to say, the structure which represented to the Egyptian mind the Eternal Light, apart from its earthly support; while a Papyrus dating from the time of Khufu, the founder of the building, speaks of Isis as the ruler of the Pyramid; and a later inscription, that of Syene, calls her also the "Mother of God," and identifies her with "The Divine Sothis, the Star, the Queen of the Heaven."

On the other hand, the sacred writings, or Ritual of ancient Egypt, are full of allusions which become vocal only when applied to the Pyramid of Light. Such are the festivals of the "Northern Passage" and of the "Southern Passage," that of the "Hidden Lintel," that of "Osiris, who dwells in the roofed house" and in the "Pool of the Great House." So in the Kalendar of


Esne, we read of the "Festival of the Sockets," and again of the "Opening of the Doors," which is closely connected in the Ritual with the "Chapter of the Orientation," and the raising of Osiris from the Open Tomb. The whole progress of the Departed seems, in fact, to take place in some kind of building. The Ritual is full of references to his "Going in" and "Coming out," to "Going in after coming out," to passing gates and gateways, and doors and staircases. Nay, the very titles employed, whether in the written or the masonic record, point directly, though secretly, to each other. Where else, if not in these chambers, so jealously concealed, the like of which not even the later pyramids contain, shall we look for the Hidden Places, the master of which is claimed for its own master by the "Book of the Dead"? Again, hundreds of years before the date of the principal papyrus containing those writings, as early as the twelfth dynasty, the inscription on the coffin of Amamu, buried in the sacred city of Abydos, makes a similar allusion, and shows that the secret places determine the order of the Ritual. "Thou hast not gone dying, thou hast gone living to Osiris. Now thou hast found the *words of order, the mystery of the secret places.*"

What a sudden significance, then, attaches to the title "Ta Khut," "The Light," whereby the Grand Pyramid, that monument of flame, was known to the Pharaohs, when, turning to the sacred papyri, we find the title of the opening chapter to be the Pir M Hru, or Entrance on Light—that is, not the light of common day, which the deceased was quitting, but, as is shown by the

image of the setting sun, wherewith the descent of the tomb was always associated, of the invisible Light of the Unseen World, renewed for ever in the splendour of Osiris. For the doctrine contained in those mystic writings was nothing else than an account of the path pursued by the just, when the bonds of the flesh being loosed, he passed through stage after stage of spiritual growth, until initiated in the new birth and illumined in the hidden life, he became indissolubly united with him whose name, says the Egyptian Ritual, "is Light, Great Creator." And that path which the Ritual gives in writing, the grand Pyramid of Light materializes in the masonry.

In the double symbolism of Pyramid and Ritual lie both the chief difficulties of decipherment and the strongest evidence of their correspondence. For as the departed in his progress was to become united in the fulness of intimacy with his Creator, so it was necessary that he should progress in the knowledge of the mysteries which envelop alike the spiritual and the material creation. To know Osiris in his forms of manifestation was the secret of power, to "understand Osiris in all his names, Osiris in all his places," conferred the crown of illumination. But in the attainment of that infinite knowledge there were many stages which must be traversed by the finite mortal, many grades which must be achieved by the holy departed, when the mouth of the tomb, the portal of Eternal Day, had been opened for him, and the Catechumen of the Divine Wisdom had been admitted as the Postulant of Immortality. The "inner



man" or "person" of the deceased, the "Ka" (or postulant with the upraised arms, ) must be re-created in incorruption, the soul must be born anew, before that postulant could be initiated into things divine; the Initiate must pass the fiery ordeal, and become approved as Adept; the Adept must be justified in the Tribunal of Truth, before he could emerge from the shadow of the Halls of Death into the immediate presence of the Source of Light. The Justified must become the Illuminate, the Illuminate must be consummated as Master, before he could attain the innermost mansion in the divine house of Osiris. For each of such grades, according to the creed of Egypt, the Creator has assigned a distinct locality in the great exterior manifestation of Himself, the universe of space; and each of these localities is described symbolically in the books of the mystical Ritual, and inscribed masonically in the features and the dimensions of the Hidden Places of the Pyramid.

Not to every one therefore did that house lie open, nor could there be a more unpardonable offence than the profanation of its secrets. "This Book," says the final chapter of the Ritual, "is the greatest of mysteries. Do not let the eye of any one see it; that were abomination." So, too, the secrecy enjoined by the Ritual was enforced by the structure of the building; nor was it ever violated so long as Egypt remained Egyptian. And as it was the characteristic of that religion to be concealed, and as the manifestation of the Creator is deeper and more secret yet than the

knowledge of His works, so it was essential that the symbols relating to Him, and to the connection of man with Him, should not betray their deepest mysteries even to the Initiate; but should reserve their more secret meaning for the Illuminate after full probation. Here, then, was the problem which lay before the first Hir Shesta, the "Master of the Secret," the originator of the "wisdom of the Egyptians;" to express, but in expressing to conceal, to veil, but with a veil of light, the mysteries of the Deity; to choose such symbols as would without betraying their nature convey their living energy, their illuminative power, and, above all, their illimitable endurance. No ordinary image, it is clear, no mineral, no animal, no plant, no man, could suffice for an expression such as this. Only the orbs of heaven, obeying in their lustrous course the laws that know no change, could fulfil the required conditions. Alike in the pictured and the masonic record the path of the just is traced amid the shining worlds, and his progress measured in the terms of celestial motion.

A remarkable instance is that of the orbit of the earth, involving a knowledge of the rotation of the earth on its axis, and its revolution around the sun, on which rested the ancient kalendar of Egypt. The "Lord of the Orbit" (Neb Sennen) was a title of the Egyptian monarch. And in the Pyramid we find the orbit, together with many other phenomena masonically expressed on the walls of the magnificent and unique upper Chamber of Ascent. Similarly, another great astronomical conception, viz. the horizon, runs not

only through the "Book of the Dead," but through all the funereal imagery of the country, as in the "Sai-an-Sinsin," or "Book of the Migration of the Soul;" and in that of Queen Anchnes-ra-neferab and other papyri. What horizon then is the "horizon of heaven," to which such mystery attaches, and what is its apex, the Grand Zenith of the celestial dome? We have no such general conception, and consequently our ideas of the celestial mechanism lack something of simplicity. But suppose that on the day of Equinox, the equal division of light and darkness, we are standing on the Equator, the equal divider of the earth into the hemispheres of North and South, and that we take up our position, say at the point where it is cut by the meridian of Memphis, close to the lake from whence flow the waters of the life-giving river. At our feet is spread the great plane, passing through the celestial poles, and bounded by the Purple Arch which encircles the floor of the starry dome. From the midst of our Horizon on that day rises the sun right upwards, \* and at the summit of his course, where day by day he equally divides the heaven East and West, on that day alone he equally divides also the Grand Arch, or Grand Meridian, which rises transverse from the same horizon, and stretches from pole to pole of the azure depths. Then we shall



The "Horizon of Heaven"

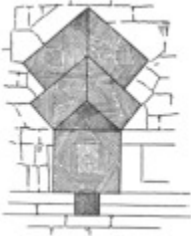
have marked out the four Cardinal Points of the universal sphere—the four points whereby the sides of the Pyramid of Light were defined; the fiery seats, according to the Egyptian theosophy, of the four "Sons of Light," whereof the most famous was Hapi, the presiding Spirit of the Nile. Into that Grand Horizon too, when the equal day is done, the sun passes beneath the Western waters. And out of it, the whole host of stars, from pole to pole, in serried array, each preserving his appointed distance from the solar path, follow him through the silent night—the "night of reckoning the spirits;" one-half springing into light as their leader disappears, the rest completing their numbers, just in time to herald his return from the Eastern point of the same Grand Horizon. "The road is of fire," says the Ritual;"they whirl in fire behind him."

Now this horizon seems strikingly indicated by the entrance passage of the Grand Pyramid, which, as is well known, may be defined by reference to the position of the pole-star. For, taking as the date of the IV<sup>th</sup> dynasty that given by Dr. Brugsch (about B.C. 3700), \* we find that about two hundred and sixty years later (B.C. 3440), the pole-star of the period (Alpha-Draconis) occupied, as Professor Smyth has pointed out, just that position; so that it would shine right down the passage. And thus the disciples of the Master of the Secret, who in successive generations must have watched for more than two centuries the approach of the star, would receive in its final co-ordination the most convincing proof of the truth of

those astronomical relations, wherein their mystical religion was embodied. Hence when we read in the Ritual, of the "Good Paddle of the North the Opener of the Disc," we recall at once the narrow paddle-shaped passage widened at the entrance towards the North, which opens the sacred interior to the outer universe; the pointer of the dial which sweeps through space, indicating perennially the position occupied by each successive star, which for a brief period of centuries keeps watch before the pole.

Taking in our hands now, the sacred writings of the Pir M Hru, let us approach the masonic Light; and opening the book at the first chapter, where Thoth the Eternal Wisdom commences to instruct the catechumen freed from the corruption of the body, let us with him penetrate the interior of the building, and take such a preliminary view of its secret places and their analogues in the Ritual, as may enable us to study more deeply the twofold expression of that masonic mystery. Reciting chapter by chapter as we mount, grade by grade along with the Catechumen of Light, we approach at the fifteenth step a gateway two courses yet above us, just as the catechumen in the fifteenth chapter approaches the "double gate of the horizon," the double-arched gate which points towards the pole-star; when he invokes "Haroeris the great guide of the world, the guide of the souls in their secret places, the light dwelling in the horizon." From this point the first veil of secrecy begins. For so effectually was the opening concealed from the uninstructed eyes by a revolving stone, that the

position, once lost, was impossible to recover; and for two hundred years after passing under the barbarous Omar, the building remained impenetrable, until Caliph Al Mamoon, in the ninth century of our era, forced an opening at random through the solid masonry, and hit accidentally upon the entrance passage. Entering by the low gateway, thus built in the Northern side, at a considerable height above the ground, we have before us the passage of the horizon of the point of Equinox, which, while descending Southwards into the depths of darkness, points Northwards towards the star of the Purple Arch. As we cross the gate on the seventeenth course we



Gate of the Ascent. Northern Face: Course xvii.

course we recognize the point where, in the seventeenth chapter, the catechumen is admitted as a postulant, and exclaims, "I go from the Gate of Taser (the Ascent). What is the gate of Taser? It is the gate where the god Shu (the Light) lifts the disc of heaven. The Gate of the North is the Gate of the Great God: "he continues, speaking evidently of the same gate; exactly as in the Pyramid the only entrance is the Gate of the Ascent in the seventeenth course of Northern face. Bidding now with him farewell to the light of earthly day, and treading the descending passage, we

pass, some little way down, a very fine and beautifully ruled double line, scored perpendicularly on the slanting wall so as to point downwards to the foundation, and separating the upper section of the passage where the Departed in the Ritual is bereft of every faculty except that of motion, from the more advanced portion where his mental faculties are gradually restored to him. Continuing the long descent, we arrive at an aperture in the western wall, and passing through the opening thus disclosed mount gently into a kind of grotto at the bottom of the Well, a square perpendicular shaft, with footholds cut in the precipitous sides. Into that chamber of the Deep Waters the postulant descends on the Western side, as the sun at the close of day goes down into the Western waters, and bursts forth in splendour on the hidden world. From the top of the shaft a level passage runs to the place of the divine birth mentioned in the Ritual, the Chamber of the Moon, where, according to Egyptian teaching, Osiris each month renewed his birth. In that chamber, once rigidly blocked up, the liberated soul was born anew; and thence it came forth to descend the ladder of the shaft, as we see in the papyrus of Ani, and to become re-united with the postulant awaiting it in the Well of Life. Then, when the soul is restored, initiation takes place and strength is given to endure the ordeal.

Returning from the bottom of the well to the Passage of the Horizon, and pursuing our course still further downwards, we come, after a short level continuation, to the subterranean chamber or the

Place of the Central Fire, where the initiate undergoes his ordeal; a chamber hewn out of the solid rock, and having an inaccessible floor covered with huge blocks of varying height resembling a pool of petrified flame, or the masses of the mountain chains formed by the action of the earth's central fire; while beyond that terrible chamber a small passage leads to nothingness. Resuming our exploration of the edifice, and coming forth from the place of ordeal, as the Initiate, now become the Adept, turns back and avoids the place of annihilation; we remount the Passage of the Horizon until, at a little distance below the scored line, we come to a granite gate, or portcullis, built in the roof. This great gate, which originally was totally hidden by masonry and was only discovered by the falling of a stone when Al Mamoon was forcing his entrance into the pyramid, stands at the threshold of the Secret Places. Not only was the whole gate carefully hidden, but the lower portion of the passage within was blocked with enormous stones, still unremoved, and perhaps irremovable. So even now the Lintel is still hidden, and admission is only effected through a hole forced by violence in the wall of the passage above the blocks; while a precisely similar difficulty is experienced by the adept in passing the Lintel of Justice before entering the Double Hall of Truth. Creeping with difficulty through the hole, we find ourselves in a small low corridor about one hundred and twenty-nine feet long, inclined upwards at an elevation slightly less than that of the depression of the Entrance Passage, and corresponding to the lower portion of the Hall of Truth where the adept justifies



himself before the forty-two judges of the unseen world, "The Gods of the Horizon, and the Gods of the Orbit." Then, stooping beneath the low gateway, by which it is terminated (but not obstructed) at the top, "The Gateway of the Festival," we stand upon a kind of landing-place, from which the whole system of the interior passages opens out. On every side, is "the crossing of the pure roads of life" of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. On the Western side, is the mouth of the well, "The gate of Anruhf" leading down to the "roads of darkness." Before us lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the justified executes the works, which he is privileged to perform for Osiris. "I have digged in Anruhf," he says later on, "I have drilled the holes," the holes, that is, for the good seed, the corn which grew seven cubits high, the holes which are drilled in the ramps of the Southern Ascending Passage, but to which no signification has yet been attached.

Beyond the fields, the road leads direct to the Queen's Chamber, the Place of the New Birth, where the soul received her second life; and here on the Eastern wall, within a staircase of five ascents, is a kind of niche or image, the "type," to use the expression of the Ritual, into which the soul is new born with the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses. From the same point also, at the head of the well, diverge the interior ladders on the coffin already spoken of. Sheer down, "the ladder which has been made for Osiris," descends into the well. Northwards, "the ladder of Earth," slopes downward to the Hidden Lintel, the

entrance of the upward path. Upwards to the South, but with a very slightly different inclination, runs the ascending passage, called by some writers "the Grand Gallery," forming the upper portion of the Hall of Truth, the Grand Lodge, or Luminous Chamber of the Orbit. This remarkable structure, consists of a corridor, about one hundred and fifty-seven feet long, and twenty feet high, built entirely on a slope, floor, walls, and roof, except a small portion at the Southern or upper end. On either side of the sloping floor, are twenty-eight ramps, each with a hole in it, a reference to which in the Ritual has been already noticed. And at the upper end the slope of the floor-line is closed abruptly, just above the Queen's Chamber by a block three feet high, forming a dais, or throne of judgment. From hence along the top of the block, or seat of the throne, the passage runs level for about sixty-one inches, the wall at the side being not quite vertical, but impending very slightly towards the slope. At the back of the throne the gallery is brought to a termination, by the Southern wall closing down in seven over-lappings within forty-two inches of the seat and leaving as an exit further South, a narrow and grave-like tunnel. In the sloping roof of the gallery, running downwards from South to North at a somewhat greater inclination than the floor, are thirty-six overlappings, like the waves of a river of light, and corresponding to the number of decades in the orbit of the Egyptian year. And on the side wall of the dais at the upper end of the gallery are also seven overlappings, one above another, arching over to the summit; while in the position corresponding to that

occupied by our own globe among the planets, runs a deep groove or orbit along its entire length. Thus we are confronted with a vivid connection between the Orbit and "the Passage of the Sun" in the Double Hall of Truth, the Lower Hall of Truth in Darkness, and the Upper Hall of Truth in Splendour, with the Throne of Radiance at the higher end. And above that throne rises the habitation of the seven great spirits in the service of their Lord, the Creator, who, the Sacred Books tell us, "protect the coffin of Osiris."

Now comes the most mysterious portion of the building. Stripped of its noble proportions, and reduced to an altitude so low, that a man must creep on hand and knee to pass, the passage pierces the southern wall of the Grand Gallery, and runs straight on, first into the Ante-chamber, or "Place of Preparation," and then into the splendid hall called the King's Chamber, in the most secluded portion of the building. In each of these halls is one and only one object. In the antechamber is a kind of masonic veil, which no one can pass without bowing the head. In the King's Chamber is a sarkophagus, not closed, but open; while the air channels wherewith this deeply buried room is amply ventilated proclaim that it is not a chamber of the dead, but of the living, the place of "the Orient," where, in the Ritual, Osiris is awakened from his slumbers. In this portion of the building the structure changes its material for granite, forming, as it were, a house by itself within the Pyramid, an inner House yet within the House of Osiris, entered by the low and grave-like passage

leading from behind the throne. This is the House of Glory described on the coffin of Amamu already quoted, the house to which the Illuminate approaches after passing the tribunal of Osiris. Here is the "Gate of the pure spirits," which they alone can enter who are washed in the waters of Life and radiant with the splendours of the Orbit. And here, too, it would seem, takes place the solemn address described in the Sai-an-Sinsin, "of the Gods in the House of Osiris," followed by the response of the "Gods in the House of Glory;" the joyous song of the holy departed who stand victorious before the judgment seat, echoed triumphantly by the inner chorus of their beloved who have gone before them into the fulness of light. Above is the "Empyrean Gate" ("the opening of Athor," as the Ritual calls it), which leads to the "Secret Places of Heaven;" the ascending spaces above the King's chamber, once completely closed, and constituting the innermost, the loftiest, and the most secret of the Hidden Places. And the whole is dominated and crowned by a gigantic triangle of granite, masonically expressing the divine Trinity of Egypt.

Such is the complex and hitherto unexplained system of gateways and passages, shafts, channels, and chambers; some leading upwards, some downwards, some level; some rough in the last degree, others exquisitely polished; some magnificent in their proportions, some so low that a man must creep, so narrow that he can with difficulty pass, to be found within the Pyramid of Light. It is absolutely unique;

no other building, it may be safely averred (not even the later Pyramids), having contained any structure bearing the least resemblance to the higher chambers. Striking as it is in every feature, the most remarkable circumstance of all is the evident intention of the architect to preserve that secrecy which lends a majesty to the strange theosophy of Egypt. What then was the design, the secret and jealously guarded design, with which this wondrous edifice was constructed? That its various features are meaningless, or the mere result of caprice, is a suggestion to which the forethought and lavishness of calculation displayed in every detail unmistakably give the lie. Nor again can we maintain that they are necessary for the purposes of an ordinary tomb. For, in the first place, they are not to be found in the other Pyramids, which were used for that purpose; and, secondly, if there be any intention which the architect has openly manifested, it is to create such a series of obstructions, that no human body could be buried therein.

In truth, the Grand Pyramid is the House of a Tomb; but it is not a closed, but an open tomb. It is the tomb not of a man, but a god; not of the dead, but of the risen. It is the tomb of the divine Osiris, whose birth on earth, descent into the under-world, victory over the serpent Apep, resurrection and judgment of the dead, were the most prominent features in the creed of Egypt, and in union with whom the holy departed achieved the path of illumination, and passed in safety the divine tribunal.

Viewed in this light, the practical value of the structure begins to become clear. On that doctrine rested the whole organization of social life amongst the ancient Egyptians. The kalendar, the festivals, the duties of the monarch, the rights of the priesthood, the relations of the provinces to their paramount temples, all were illustrated in the Path of Light. Endless confusion therefore in the State would result, no less than injury to the religion, from any misconstruction, or misrepresentation of doctrine (such as seems to have taken place under Khu en Aten); a circumstance all the more likely to occur, on account of the obscurity of the symbols employed.

Now the masonic symbolism of the Grand Pyramid affords a simple and practically indestructible means for perpetuating without betraying the doctrine of Egyptian wisdom. That expression, once formulated, was never repeated; the other tombs and Pyramids of Egypt claiming kinship only by subordinate and particular features with the work of the Grand Master. While then the written records of the Ritual, none of which now extant probably possess a higher date than that of Khufu, were liable to change and error, no lapse of time could impair, no variation could affect in the secret places, the masonry of the Pyramid of Light. This embodiment, at once secret and unalterable, forming literally a Masonic Ritual of the whole doctrine of Light, accounts for the singularly piecemeal fashion in which the sacred words were committed to writing. During the first three dynasties one chapter alone has a dim

traditional claim to have been written, while one other is said to have been revealed to Men Kau Ra, the grandson of the builder of the Grand Pyramid. And though on the later Pyramids sacred inscriptions begin to appear, it is not until the XI<sup>th</sup> dynasty that they become at all common. Of the various chapters so published (that is, used as inscriptions or written on papyri) at different times, there have been, as Mr. Budge mentions in his "Treatise on the Mummy," four principal recensions. The first is that of the Ancient Empire, written in hieroglyphics, to which the important inscription on the coffin of Amamu belongs. Then comes the Theban recension, also in hieroglyphics, of which the papyri have been with great labour collated and published by M. Naville; followed during the succeeding dynasty (XX<sup>th</sup>) by another written in the Hieratic (or priestly) characters. And last of all, we have the recension of the XXVI<sup>th</sup> or Saite dynasty, to which is due the great papyrus now preserved at Turin, of which Lepsius published a facsimile in 1846, consisting of upwards of one hundred and sixty original, with three supplementary chapters. Now it was during that recension that the order of the chapters is said to have been fixed for the first time. What canon then, or standard of order, did the revisers employ? It certainly was not the relative antiquity of the chapters, for the only one which claims to remount to the I<sup>st</sup> dynasty stands one hundred and thirtieth in the papyrus, while that which is attributed in it to the IV<sup>th</sup> dynasty—and which is entitled "The Entrance on Light in one Chapter," as though it had once been the single

chapter in use — comes sixty-fourth. But the answer to the question appears to be contained in the last of the supplementary chapters; for the papyrus proclaims the key to be within the reach of all who understand in full the masonic secrets. "This Book," it says, "is the Book of the Master of the Hidden Places." And in those Hidden Places therefore the Secret of the Master of the Hidden Places, the "Mystery of the words of order," as the coffin of Amamu says, is to be found. This is the version, therefore, which we shall compare with the Ritual in stone, its predecessor by more than three thousand years; the very magnitude of the intervening period serving to exhibit in a more striking light the closeness of the correspondence. Nobly indeed does that stupendous monument respond to the mystic title which it bore. Surrounded by darkness as profound as that which the Almighty has made His secret place; in the midst of scenery invisible to the eye, but faithfully portraying the glories of the celestial expanse, the Grand Architect has set up the throne which the lapse of ages has had no power to impair, and has immutably inscribed in its secret places the immutable path of the just in characters of light, embodied in the immutable motions of the heavenly orbs.

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## CHAPTER VI

### THE INITIATION OF THE POSTULANT.

As the created light is the primary force manifested in the system of creation, so also is the Uncreate, or Self-Begotten Light (Kheper-Ra), the prime mover and creator whether of the visible or of the unseen universe. "Light Great Creator is his Name;" we read in one of the chapters added to the Egyptian Ritual at the Saite recension. And again in another ancient papyrus: "The God of the Universe is in the light above the firmament; and His symbols are upon the earth." Now it was with that divine Light, immortal, invisible, intolerable to mortal eye, the Light which none may look upon in the flesh and live, that in the ancient creed of Egypt, as in that of Christendom, the holy dead was to be at last united, person with person, and indissoluble bond. No language less universal than that of faith can enable us to express this sublime belief. For in no other creed do we find that man never loses his individuality which is yet united personally with the Deity in so intimate an unity, that in the Ritual the Osiris-soul can with difficulty be distinguished from the Osiris-Godhead. "The sun is worshipping thy face;" says Osiris in the Ritual, to the soul new born into the divine existence; that is to say, the very splendour of creation, the source of light and life to the visible world, bows down in worship before him who has become a participator in the divinity of its creator. "He is I, I am he;" the soul responds, almost in the actual words of the Gospel.

Long and manifold was the process whereby, in the teaching of Egypt, the human nature became united with the divine—an union effected, through the God-Man Osiris, not as in the gross and distorted myths of the classic nations, by the conversion of the Godhead into flesh, but by the interior taking of the manhood into God. Without and within, the transfiguration was complete. The soul, instantly illumined by the fulness of the Godhead, became forthwith capable of corresponding with the divine Energy. The senses, restored to incorruption, were gradually fashioned into instruments capable of expressing the soul's assimilation to that infinite power, for which the bounds of space and time exist not, but past and future alike stand open in an endless present; that transcendent freedom, wherein Act is coincident with Will, and Will commensurate with Thought. In order then that the senses may be so quickened and irradiated as to perceive the action of the Creative Mind in the exterior universe, that progress must be made by the departed in person, which, while still unreleased from subjection to the senses, the student of science makes dimly through the intellect. For whoever would understand the framework of the heavens, the structure of man's sacred dwelling place, must commence with the polestar, and tracing out the horizon of the point of Equinox, which equally divides the light from the darkness, must apprehend how the axis of the earth is for man the prime measure of space, and the standard rule of the Depths. If he would learn the secret of living form, the ocean will be his teacher, as he passes from shore to

profoundest depths and fathoms the secret places of the teeming waters. The measure of the celestial orbits will be revealed to him by the moon, as from that companion orb he watches the rotation and the revolution of our planet. To understand not merely the motion but the evolution of our globe, he must dare the place of the earth's central fire, undismayed by the cavernous glooms of the lurid abysses. And there, gazing backwards for uncounted ages, he will trace amid convulsions and cataclysms inconceivable the "Lord of Law" and the "Words of Order;" as the huge mountain chains rise higher and higher from the chaos, to prepare the surface of the globe for the dwelling-place of man. Before him next stretches the shadow of the earth, that dim and vast expanse; where the majesty of the open heaven is enshrouded in night; and he perceives how the conjunctions of eclipse are due to the same power as the orbits of illumination, and the hour of darkness is measured by the Giver of Light. That shadow traversed, a yet more awful vision, the terrible splendour of the solar fount in all its fulness, bursts upon his sight; and as he mounts the sevenfold ascent of the planetary spheres, he gazes undazzled on the stupendous jets and sprays of flame that dart on a sudden thousands and myriads of miles on high. Then far beyond in the infinite depths of space, his eyes, now radiant "as the eyes of Athor," seek out the well-loved Sothis, the harbinger of the new dawn, the portal of the illimitable heavens, "that land of a million fortresses." And in anticipation of each successive stage of this amazing progress, this reconquest of the senses to the

dominion of the reason, we may watch the course of the masonic postulant accepted by the "Master of the Secret," as he is inducted, chamber by chamber, into the Hidden Places in the Pyramid of Light.

Yet though a man understand the material forces of the universe, though he know all the phenomena of the heavens, and the composition of the most distant suns; nay, though he wield with so masterly a grasp the wand of science as to evolve at will an organic world from the atoms of the abysmal depths, all this, in the mind of Egypt, was not sufficient, even for initiation into the inner mysteries of divine realities. No mere expansion of the intellect, however pure and lofty; not even the scientific definition of absolute truth, could suffice to open the secret things of God, any more than the most exact acquaintance with the features and the proportions of the Pyramid would disclose their interior signification without the teaching of the hidden Wisdom. And hence, at the commencement of the Ritual, in the heading of the first chapter, before a word of doctrine has been revealed, we are told how it proceeds from Thoth, "The Mind and Will of God," as the inscription of Hermopolis entitles him.

Now there are three modes in which such knowledge may be communicated to those prepared to receive it; namely, by simple instruction, by distant vision, or by personal participation. Each of these modes is, it is evident, an advance upon that which precedes, a preparation for that which follows it. No man can

become a participator in the Divine Nature who has never been illuminated by its contemplation. No man can contemplate the Deity who has not been instructed in Truth; nor can any receive that initiation until he be dead to the flesh. As, therefore, in the masonic induction the catechumen could ascend but a few steps in the light of common day, and passed, when the disc of the starry heaven was opened by the Master of the Secret, into the profound darkness of the Descending Passage; so too, when the great preparation of Death had been accomplished, when soul and spirit had been released from the dominion of the senses, when, by the sacred purification of embalment, the corruptible body had put on incorruption, then "On the day of the funeral," we read, the Unseen Master commenced to instruct the catechumen in the stages which must be undergone preparatory to his initiation. And so closely does the masonic path in the Pyramid correspond with the path of the departed in the Ritual, that the traveller to-day who penetrates the recesses of the mysterious building may follow, well-nigh step by step, the mystical progress of the departed through the unseen world. For to the Egyptian of old, to have mastered the secret of the House of the Hidden Places was to have mastered the secret of the tomb. For him the grave had no darkness, death held no terror; for he knew beforehand the starry path, wherein each step brought him nearer to the Creator-Light.

Ritual in hand, let us now take up our position once more at the foot of the exterior ascent, beneath the

entrance of the star, along with the catechumen of the Secret; and with him let us forecast the time when, bereft of sense, of will, of life, he will go forth, dumb and helpless, to the mouth of the tomb, and commence "The entrance on Light" (chap. i.) while "borne to the land of the holy dead." Then, reciting chapter by chapter, as we mount step by step, we become informed, in the course of that brief but steep ascent, of the preparation which awaits him when the last glimpse of earth is hidden from his sight. Thus we learn how (ii., iii.) after death, the departed comes forth into the light of immortality, even as the sun when he sets, bursts forth in radiance on the world which is hidden from our view. Then, since the departed cannot yet bear the judgment of interior justice, he is warned beforehand (iv.) that when he has commenced the descent, he must "pass the Road above the Earth," the ascending passage concealed by the Hidden Portcullis behind the fourth exterior course. And behind that secret portal in the vignette illustrating the chapter, we descry the face of the Unseen Teacher, that countenance of which the holy dead, when initiation has begun, shall presently be strengthened to bear the distant but unveiled vision. Before that lintel can be passed, and the road above the earth be traversed, many trials, he now learns, are waiting for him. There are tasks of justice to be fulfilled, if he omitted those good works on earth, the memorials of which may be his sponsors ("Ushabti") (v., vi.). Apep, too, the dark serpent that devours the hidden Light, as the winding darkness of the autumnal equinox devours the light of the year, lies in

wait (vii.) to crush him in its multitudinous folds, while he treads the path where Light and Darkness balance. Still mounting upward, and at each step approaching nearer the grave, the catechumen is instructed how, when that serpent shall be passed, the Gate of the West (viii., ix.), the aperture of the western wall, will conduct him into the Well, or Chamber of the deep Waters, as the setting sun goes down into the deep waters of the western ocean and comes forth thence in triumph (x., xi.). Passing in silence over that which shall happen to him in the Well, since that knowledge cannot yet be imparted, the Divine Teacher directs him, when the mystery of new life is accomplished, to retrace his steps to the Passage of the Heavenly Horizon; and, after entering and coming forth from (xii., xiii.) the Chamber of Ordeal, to approach once more the Lintel of Justice. For then, and then only, can he set foot upon the threshold of justification, when "the stains have been burnt from his heart" by the raging fire (xiv.).

On the fifteenth course now high above the horizon of the earth, our eyes (two courses higher than our feet) already face the double-arched gateway defined by the pole-star, the outer entrance of the secret places revealing the path of the Horizon of Heaven. And similarly in chapter xv. the departed comes towards the land of Eternity. "May I proceed," he continues, "as thou dost, without halt, like thy holiness, Ra, thou who hast no master, great traverser of waters, with whom millions of years are but a moment." Then, as he bends his head towards the entrance of the

Pyramid and gazes on the dark passage now open within, "I proceed to heaven," he says; "I kneel among the stars." And at the conclusion of the chapter he learns the words to recite when his sun is setting, and he kneels with his hands towards the land (of the unseen), "O height of Love, thou openest the double Gate of the Horizon."

With these sublime words of thanksgiving, the instruction of the catechumen comes to a close; sufficient knowledge having been imparted to direct his course as postulant to the places of Initiation and Ordeal, until which point be passed he can look no further into the mysteries. In the following chapter (xvi.), as we ascend the last course before quitting the outer light, the divine voice is for a season hushed; and the Ritual silently offers three pictures for our contemplation. On one of these the sole object presented is the sacred Scarab, a symbol of the Eternal One, the Self-Created Being who knows no beginning and no end. On the second is the figure of the departed standing before Amen, the Hidden Deity. The third contains simply a blank stele or Egyptian form of tombstone. And that stele, as we learn from the very ancient papyrus of Unas, the "prophet of the Pyramid," was fashioned in the form of a false door for the pyramidal entrance, the entrance, that is to say, which lies on the seventeenth course of the northward face, and which is oriented by the northern star.



In that moment of silence, the departed is alone. The friends have left him. The sun of earth, which from his earliest years has greeted him, is for ever hidden. The "Gate of the Earth" is passed (xvii.); and the Catechumen of Wisdom has been accepted as the Postulant of Immortality. Dense, utter darkness is before him; but under the direction of Anup, the guide of souls, he passes on beyond that Gate of the Ascent, where the divine Light lifts the disc of the tomb. "It is the region of his father Shu" (the Light), the Ritual continues: "he effaces his sins, he destroys his stains." Then as the departed advances through the darkness, and fearlessly commences the Descending Path, the inner Light, unseen by mortal eye, reveals itself in vision. He beholds the lower world (xvii.), the territory of Initiation, the entry of the Hidden Places, concerning which the divine Wisdom has instructed him, the place "wherein he must enter and from whence he must come forth," the transformations which he must desire to make, that he may be transformed into the likeness of God, the good works which he must do, the "throne" of the regenerate soul, and the blessed company of Osiris after the body has been laid to rest. In that same vision too he sees the whole lower world, the "Angle of Fire;" and "the Pool" or Well of Life, with its summit opening into the Double Hall of Truth (xvii.).

With the eighteenth chapter begins the "Book of Performing the Days," that is, the period of preparation for Initiation and Ordeal, the due performance of which entitles him to pass "the road

above the earth" (xviii.), there to receive the Crown of Justification (xix., xx.), when his victory is assured. As he pursues the descending Passage of the Heavenly Horizon, the reconstruction of the inner man, the new creation to life immortal, slowly commences (xxi.). One by one his faculties are reawakened to spiritual life; his mouth (xxii.) is opened, that he may respond to the teaching of the divine voice; his mind and his name are restored (xxiv., xxv.); his heart (xxvi.) is given back to him, and he knows no more the icy numbness of the paralyzed affections. Gradually the new-formed body gathers force and substance; that is to say, not the natural body, which never bursts its sacred swaddling-bands till wakened in the last chapter of the Ritual and the last chamber of the building by the Grand Orient of the open tomb, but the spiritual or astral body wherewith the man, already raised in incorruption yet still awaiting the open manifestation of Osiris's resurrection, converses with the "Starry Spirits," the intelligences of the transcendent spheres. With the new life commences the attack of his spiritual enemies, now rendered palpable to his sight (xxvii.-xxxii.), the dread inhabitants of the under world, that wage in man the great battle of contending light and darkness. Sloth, the tortoise, strives to delay his steps; the asps put forth their venom; crawling reptiles infest his path. From every side the raging passions, the devouring crocodiles which inhabit the waters of life, rush furiously to the attack; but he repels all those creatures of darkness by the astral brightness of his starry nature. "Back, Crocodile of the South," he

exclaims; "I am Sothis" – the star of the Eternal Dawn. His foes, defeated by the divine protection (xxxiii.-xli.), the body raised in in-corruption (xlii.) acquires in every limb and every feature the seal of God. His hair, from which the light glows forth in streams, is as "the hair of Nu," the sacred Nile glowing with the streams of life; his countenance, shining as the sun, is radiant as the face of Ra; his eyes, glorious as are eyes of Athor, gleaming with immortal beauty; his fingers are as the Uri, the insignia of the royal power; his feet burn with the fire of the Creator-Spirit Ptah; his humanity is as the humanity of Osiris, the incarnate God. "There is not a member of him," says the Ritual, "which is not divine."

Resplendently beautiful as is the astral body assumed by the new being, he is not yet prepared for initiation; but fresh trials still await him as he approaches the granite block which obstructs the descending passage. His self-dominion, the head of his glory, may be taken from him; he may incur the second death of defilement from the creatures of darkness (xliii.-li.). But still, by the same guidance avoiding all these dangers, he comes forth as the day through the Gate of the West, to the passage which conducts him to the Well of Life; and as he passes that threshold, he is fed with the celestial food which they may not eat who are partakers of defilement (li.-lii.). "The enemies do not eat of my body," says Osiris, in another part of the Ritual. Avoiding defilement through the strength of that food (lii., liii.) he receives the breath of Ptah (liv.-lviii.), and drawing near to the Well of Life, is granted

a first draught of its refreshing streams (lix.-lxiii.). In the depths of that well, wherein, as the Sai-an-Sinsin tells us, approach is made to Osiris, shall presently take place the regeneration of the renewed man (or "Ka"), by reunion with the new-born soul amid the living waters. "I give the waters of life to every mummy," says the Goddess Nout, who presides over the waters, in the inscription on the vase of Osur-Ur (given in "Records of the Past"), "to reunite it with the soul, that it may henceforth be separated from it no more forever. The Resident of the West has established thy person amid the sages of the divine Lower Region. He giveth stability to thy body, and causeth thy soul not to distance itself from thee. He keepeth remembrance of thy person, and saveth thy body now and forever."

During this arduous preparation, while the departed passes from earth in absolute weakness to wage the prolonged conflict of light and darkness, the imperishable soul, restored to her native element, is born a second time in the Chamber of the Queen of the Pyramid, wherein was born the divine Osiris, at once her Son, her Maker, and her Spouse. "I am Yesterday," says Osiris, in the sixty-fourth chapter, said to be almost coeval with the Pyramid of Light; that is, "I am He who was before time began," since, however far back in time a day may be, yesterday was always before it. "I am the Dawn," he continues, "the Light of the Second Birth, the Mystery of the Soul, Maker of the gods, by whom are fed the hidden ones of heaven." So in the inscription on the coffin of

Anches-Ra-Neferab—that is, of her "whose life was the Sacred Heart of Ra"—we read concerning Isis, that is, she "who opens for thee the secret places by those mighty names of thine. Thy name is Infant and Old Man, Germ and Growth, Son of Heaven, who makes the road for thee according to his word. Thy name is Everlasting, Self-Begotten, the Dawn, the Day, the Evening, the Night, the Darkness. Thy name is the Moon, the Heart of Silence, the Lord of the Unseen World." And on another part of the coffin of the same holy queen, the spirits of Annu, called in the Ritual the "secret birthplace of the gods," are invoked as those "who preside over the sacred birth."

With the new birth of the soul comes also the restoration of power in its original divine image. For as in the condition which is subject to decay the corruptible senses dominate and inform the soul, so according to the theosophy of Egypt, in the condition of immortality, does the illuminate spirit inform and dominate the regenerate senses. While we are subject to the flesh, the external universe impresses itself continually upon the mind, dimming and imprisoning the original "type" or image of the Deity, which feebly struggles to express itself in the masterpieces of poet or artist. But when the soul is born into new life, it regains that Creative Image, and is endowed with the power of co-operating with the divine Energy. For, as we learn from an exquisite chapter in the Ritual, it is the fragrance of Innocence, which perfumes the breath of the Creative Beauty. Hence, in the masonry on the eastern wall of that

most secret Chamber of New Birth, we find expressed the fivefold dominion informed by the soul, new-born in the sacred type of the image of the Queen. Now thus the senses themselves become so essentially divine, that the departed pays worship to his own faculties. "I have adored Touch and Taste," he says later on; for touch and taste are the channels whereby is communicated to man the food of immortality. From that Secret Chamber, the regenerate soul comes forth glorious as the day (lxv., lxvi.), and "opening the door" (lxvii.), once so carefully concealed, comes forth in full radiance to the fields of Aahlu (lxviii.-lxxii.), the territory of illumination: to take its seat (lxxv.) upon the lower throne above the head of the Well, between the Chamber of the Orbit and the Chamber of the Shadow. "The gates of heaven open to me," he says; "the gates of earth open to me."

That solemn enthronization being witnessed by the postulant in the depths below; he remembers that the time of ordeal draws near, and after praying, as instructed beforehand, that his sin may be rubbed out, he celebrates the "festival of the soul passing to his body." But not immediately may that passage be accomplished. Raised though he be in incorruption, glowing as he is in every member with the immortal light, he cannot yet bear unveiled the overwhelming glory of the soul. Therefore, in the teaching of Egypt, around the radiant being which in its regenerate life could assimilate itself to the glory of the Godhead, was formed the "Khaibit" or luminous atmosphere, consisting of a series of ethereal envelopes, at once

shading and diffusing its flaming lustre, as the earth's atmosphere shades and diffuses the solar rays. And at each successive transformation (lxxvii.-lxxxvii.) it descended nearer to the moral conditions of humanity. From the form of the golden hawk, the semblance of the absolute divine substance, the One Eternal, Self-Existent Being, it passes to the "Lord of Time," the image of the Creator, since with the Creation time began. Presently it assumes the form of a lily, the vignette in the Ritual representing the head of Osiris enshrined in that flower; the Godhead manifested in the flesh, coming forth from immaculate purity. "I am the pure lily," we read, "coming forth from the lily of light. I am the source of illumination (the nostril of the sun) and the channel of the breath of immortal beauty (Athor). I bring the messages (of heaven), Horus (the Eternal Son) accomplishes them." Later the soul passes into the form of the Uroëus, "the soul of the earth;" the serpentine path traced upon the earth irradiated by the vertical sun, as the senses are irradiated by the supreme illumination of the soul.

And finally it assumes the semblance of a crocodile; becoming subject, that is, to the passions of humanity. For the human passions, being part of the nature wherein man was originally created, are not intrinsically evil, but only become evil when insubordinate to the soul. And thus the crocodile, which attacked the departed before new birth, is rendered divine in the regenerate form.. Therefore it was that the crocodile was held in high reverence by

the Egyptians, for it spoke to them of the time when man should regain the mastery of his passions, and when the last barrier between himself and his glorious soul should be removed for ever.

Immeasurable as is the distance which thus separates the two beings which make up the perfect manhood, there is no hesitation or delay on the part of the soul. That radiant creature in its glory has not forgotten the frail companion in union with whom it dwelt during the days of its humiliation. Restored to its native purity, welcomed by the Almighty to a participation in his own energy, throned on its seat of absolute dominion, yet such is the ardour with which that soul returns the love of man, that like the Creator Himself it cannot rest satisfied with its own inexhaustible bliss; but hastens to come down from its seat of power, that it may raise and glorify expectant humanity. And thus the vignette shows us the winged creature flying towards the postulant. Meanwhile the latter, from below watching its flight, prays in an ecstasy for the reunion. "O bringer," he cries, "O runner in his hall!" — the Hall of Truth, where the throne of the soul is erected. "Great God, let my soul go where it desires (lxxxix.). O conductors of the bark of millions of years, led through the gateway, clearing the path of heaven and earth, accompany ye the souls to the holy dead."

The prayer is granted. Leaving its throne on high, and passing through its various transformations, the soul descends the ladder of the well, as in the papyrus of



Ani. Then the divine protection is obtained (xci.); and, amid the living waters in the pool of the Persea, the Tree of Immortality (as the Ritual elsewhere calls it), the earnest desire of the postulant is fulfilled, and he is re-united with his living soul (xciii.); "My soul is front the beginning," he says, "from the commencement of time (reckoning of years). The eye of Horus "(the Divine Son) made for me my soul, preparing its substance. The darkness is before them; the arms of Osiris hold them. Open the path to my soul and my shadow (Khaibit) and my spirit, to see the great God within his sepulchre the day of making up the souls." If that knowledge is possessed, the Ritual adds, he enters on Light; he is not detained in the lower world.

That priceless gift conceded, the postulant, though he cannot yet participate in the divine splendour until his ordeal be passed, yet can he behold it openly from afar, and enter on his initiation into the sacred mysteries. Ascending, in the strength imparted to him by his soul, the ladder of the well, he offers a prayer to the Divine Teacher (xciv.), and, "holding in his hand the Sacred Mysteries," he turns his opened eyes successively in the three directions which we saw indicated by the hieroglyph of the divine Initiator Thoth. First he gazes down "the opening where Thoth is," the Chamber of the Shadow, now no longer closed to his view, though not yet accessible to his person; and he beholds the secret Wisdom which gives to Truth its splendour (xcv., xcvi.), the countenance of the Divine Teacher, whose voice instructed the

catechumen, and whose power protected the postulant. Then, as his eyes grow clearer, he offers a prayer to Anup (xcvii.), the starry guide, who has led him thus far towards his heart's desire; and, turning towards the Chamber of the New Birth, he discerns the Bark of Ra (xcviii.-cii.), the vessel of God, foretold to him before his entry on the path by the Divine Teacher—the vessel which shall bear him safely across the Deep Waters. Even while he looks, the whole interior of the building is lit with a sudden glow; and the masonry, portraying each portion of the sacred vessel, reveals their mystical significance, which the Initiate must know before permission can be granted to embark. Within the Inner House the vast granite Triangle dominating the secret heights assumes for him the form of an "Anchor," with its central axis indicated, but not delineated, by the equality of the members: as we saw the central mystery of the Supreme Secret, the Unity of the divine Substance to be indicated but not defined by the equality of the Persons in the Egyptian Trinity. And that "anchor" firmly fixed, not in the depths below, but in the heights above the open sarkophagus, speaks to him of Osiris, "the



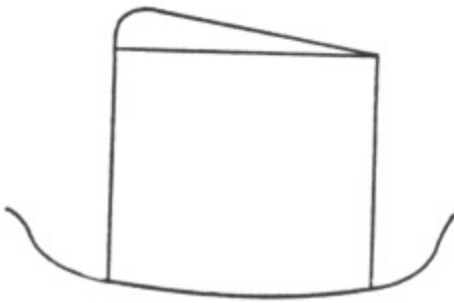
The Anchor and the Coffin of the Lord of Earth.  
(Sarkophagus and highest chamber.)

Lord of the earth in his coffin;" the vision which awhile ago he prayed that he might behold on the Great Day of Reckoning. At the head of the Grand Gallery is the "seat" of the "Dweller in Space:" the radiant throne at the top of the long incline to which the Initiate now lifts his eyes. Right through the midst of the throne rises unseen the Axis of the Great House, the Central Ray of the Grand Light of Egypt, like a huge but impalpable mast towering from foundation to summit of the vessel of Light. That axis passes through the Chamber of New Birth below, and separates the Outer from the Inner House which lies beyond the throne, as the central but impalpable truth of Death separates the glory which now is from the glory which lies beyond. And in the truth of Death, to the Egyptian the "Completion-Beginning" of the New Birth, the Initiate discerns "the great bringer and taker away," as the Ritual calls the mast of the vessel of Ra. Aloft upon the same axis, above the solar throne, the roof of the lustrous chamber, with its starry rays, images to him whose eyes are opened, the "Sail of the Firmament," which, by its starry grandeur,



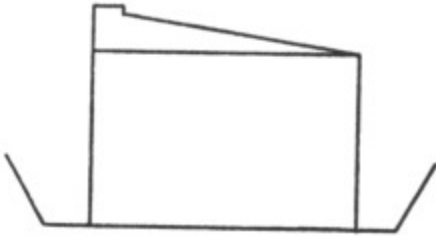
The Sail of the Firmament.

draws the soul irresistibly to God. The Well reflects to him the "Paddle" shining in the invisible waters, as the image of the Creator shines invisibly in the Waters of Life: the "Planks," the rungs of the ladder whereby the soul came down to visit him, each guarded by a spirit of celestial intelligence. In the subterranean chamber he discerns the "hold" of "darkness," and in the Chamber of New Birth the Cabin, or Secret Place of the Divine Vessel. A remarkable instance of pyramidal allusion is supplied by the form of the cabin. For the roof proper was surmounted by another roof of the singular and apparently unmeaning shape given in the text. But if above the Chamber of New Birth we indicate the throne of Ra, which immediately surmounts it, we shall have



The Cabin.

the shape in question; so that the form implies the enthronization of the Uncreated Light upon the Mystery of the Divine Mother, Isis.



Chamber of New Birth, surmounted by Throne.

Upon that bark of safety take place both his present Initiation and the Illumination which is to come; and each of these ascents finds its appropriate expression in the masonry, the one in the place of New Birth, the other in the Chamber of the Splendour. And in the vignettes of the Ritual, we see the vessel bearing upon it at one time a fivefold, at another a sevenfold staircase; the fivefold dominion of the regenerate senses, and the sevenfold elevation of the illuminate intellect.

Yet one more vision opens out to the Initiate. As he raises his eyes more upward yet to the extreme height of the Chamber of the Splendour, far removed from the head of the well, yet forming part of the same divine structure, he discerns the "opening where Athor is" (ciii.), the azure depths of ethereal loveliness leading to the secret heights above the Chamber of Grand Orient. For a moment he gazes in silent rapture on the far-off opening of the unimaginable vision, and then calls to his aid "the Opener of the Great Sanctuary" (cv., cvi.). "Oh, assistant—oh, assistant!" he exclaims; "I am among the servants of Immortal Beauty!"

Fortified then by that enduring remembrance, he turns from the scene of future illumination, and descends towards the place of impending trial. Around him stand revealed the "Gods of the Western Gate" (cvii.), the Western opening to the Well of Life, where dwell the spirits who came unseen to his assistance at the hour when the sun of earthly life went down into the West. From the "Chamber of the Waters of Heaven" flows down the torrent of the "Celestial Nile" (cx.), and mingles at his side with the stream from the "Chamber of the Birthplace of the Gods" – that stream which waters the fields of Aahlu, the home of the regenerate. And high above, far as his quickened eyes can pierce, are assembled the bright companies of starry spirits from every quarter (cxi.–cxiv.) to assist at his victory, his judgment, and his coronation. In the memory of that unfading vision, and the strength of those protecting spirits, the Initiate enters and comes forth (cxvi.) from the subterranean Chamber of the Fiery Ordeal.

## **CHAPTER VII.**

### **THE ILLUMINATION OF THE ADEPT.**

INITIATION achieved, and Ordeal undergone, the character both of building and of Ritual seem to undergo a transformation. Not that the air of mystery is in any way lessened, rather it deepens if possible, as we penetrate into the more secret parts. But the period of weakness and of expectancy once passed, a sense of power and triumph grows more and more distinctly perceptible as we enter the secret places of

absolute "Truth." Turning back with the Initiate, now become the Adept from the "Meskwa" or Place of Ordeal, we retrace our steps upwards, under the direction of the celestial guide, who conducts us to the "Gate on the Hill" (cxvii.); the lintel hidden in the roof far up along the Passage of the Star. In remounting the ascent the adept once more "enters and comes forth" (cxx.) from the Gateway of the Well, that he may again receive strength for the coming judgment. And as he approaches the hidden portcullis, which now he is called upon to pass, where sits in person the Eternal Wisdom, he recites for himself (cxxi.) the unforgotten words wherein the Divine Teacher warned him of the hour now drawing near of entering into (xiii.) judgment and of issuing from thence. Arrived at the hidden portcullis (cxxii., cxxiii.), carefully concealed within the roof, that arduous "Gateway reserved for the Gods," the divine Osiris-souls, the gateway which none can enter, except "after coming out" from the place of initiation, obstruction meets him at every step. Alike in the Ritual, and in the building, each portion of that most mysterious gateway, the secret of whose masonry still remains undisclosed, refuses entrance to the upward path except to the adept. "I will not let thee go over me," says the sill, "unless you tell me my name." "The weight in the right place is thy name," is the profound reply of the adept. For, as the raising of the portcullis depends upon the true adjustment of the weight, so also is justice the virtue without which the path on high remains for ever closed. "I will not let thee pass me," says the Left Lintel—so continues this

strange dialogue—"unless you tell me my name.' 'Return of the true is thy name.' 'I will not let thee pass me,'" says the Right Lintel, "unless you tell me my name.' 'Return of judged hearts is thy name.'" For without truth, and without self-judgment, no step can be taken of progress in the Path of Truth (cxxv.). With that doctrine we may compare the "Golden Words" of Pythagoras, himself a pupil of the priests of Egypt—

"Do innocence; take heed before thou act;  
 Nor let soft sleep upon thy eyelids fall,  
 E'er the day's actions thou hast three times  
 scanned,  
 What have I done, where erred, what left  
 unwrought?  
 Go through the whole account, and if the sum  
 Be evil, chide thee; but if good, rejoice.  
 This do, this meditate, this ever love,  
 And it shall guide thee into virtue's path."

But to him who has learned of wisdom, however long, however arduous the search, the entrance into Truth cannot finally be denied. The Hidden Lintel is crossed; and the memory of that passage is forever kept sacred by the grateful departed. "I have come through the Hidden Lintel," he cries triumphantly, later on, "I have come like the sun through the gate of the festival." The lintel crossed, the Person of the Divine Teacher is disclosed, having before him the true Balance of Light and Darkness (cxxv.). The "secret faces at the gate" unveil themselves; and the adept stands within the Double Hall of Truth—of



Truth in Death and Truth in Life, of Truth in Justice and Truth in Mercy, of Truth in Darkness and Truth in Splendour. Then, as he surmounts each obstacle besetting the entrance to the path which leads on high, and achieves the triumph over Death, he beholds the long array of the Judges of the Dead, the celestial powers who take account of the moral actions of mankind, each supreme in his own province of the holy land; and to each in turn the adept, whose stains have been washed from his heart in the furnace of the ordeal, pleads his innocence of the sin of which that power is the special avenger. Very terrible are the images under which those heart-searching spirits are presented—terrible as the moral effects of our own transgression, when viewed by the inner light of Truth. "The Eyes of Fire," the passion which shrivels the intellect; the "Face of Smoke," the pride that clouds the judgment; the "Crackler of Bones," the sin which corrodes the entire manhood, these and such as these are the fearful insignia of the supernal powers. Most terrible of all is the spirit "whose mouth is twisted when he speaks, because his face is behind him," the spirit of conscience, which keeps its dread eyes inexorably on our past, and speaks to us with mouth contorted in the agony of self-condemnation—like the cry of the penitent, which echoes as bitterly now as when uttered three thousand years ago, "My sin is ever before me."

Undeterred by that august tribunal, which as we learn at the threshold, none can endure but he who has truly judged himself, the departed, protected by the

Divine Guardian, ascends the Passage of the Shadow where the light is eclipsed, and achieves through Truth his victory over Death. Gradually, as he draws near the low but unobstructed gateway, the glow of the splendour begins to appear; and he sees before him the Sacred Orbit of the circling earth defined by the four burning points of Solstice and Equinox, like a basin of fire surrounded by four jets of flame (cxxvi.). In front of each of those cardinal points of the heaven, are seated four divine spirits having the assemblance of an ape, the form nearest akin to humanity. To those four universal guardians and heralds of truth, the justified prays, that he may be purified yet further from his transgressions. "O ye," he says, "who send forth truth to the universal Lord, nurtured without fraud, who abominate wickedness, extract all the evil from me. Obliterate my faults and annihilate my sins." "Thou mayest go," is the gracious reply of the four heavenly teachers; "we obliterate all thy faults, we annihilate all thy sins." In this manner, as the Ritual declares, is separation of his sins effected "after he has seen the faces of the Gods." From henceforth death has no more power over him, and in rapture he returns thanksgiving to the supreme judges, the Gods of the Orbit, towards whom he now advances, and to Osiris on his throne (cxxvii., cxxviii.).

As he stands at the entrance of the upper chamber, where the slight projection of the lower floor bears witness to the passage from death to life, the divine voice, which has been silent till its first lesson is exhausted, recommences his illumination, and he is

"instructed" (cxxix.) how "to stand at the Bark of Ra" —no longer in the lower portion of the vessel, but free of every part. Obedient to the divine command, he passes the "Gate of the Gateway" (cxxx.), and celebrates the Birthday of Osiris, the Opening of the Eternal Year. Then, as he advances a step and stands within the hall upon the slight projection, he beholds the whole building before him, the vast universe of space, in its immeasurable grandeur, now free to his immaculate spirit. And as at the Lintel of Justice all is barred, so here every part lies open. "The heaven opens," we read (cxxx.)—the Chamber of the Splendour with its seven-fold rays around the solar throne; "the earth opens," the Chamber of the Shadow; "the North opens" to the Chamber of the Pole-star;" the South opens" to the Chamber of Grand Orient; "the West opens" to the Entrance of the Well; "the East opens" to the Chamber of New Birth, with its Eastern ascent of the regenerate senses;" the Northern and Southern Chapels open," the Antechamber and the Place of Grand Orient, the Northern and Southern chapels of the inner house. Here, too, is the "crossing of the pure roads of life," of which the coffin of Amamu speaks. Behind are "the roads of darkness," which the departed in the Ritual once prayed so earnestly that he might pass. In front lie the fields of Aahlu, the blessed country where the justified executes the works which he is privileged to do for Osiris.

A burst of triumph greets the justified, when having accomplished the Passage of the Sun, he enters the

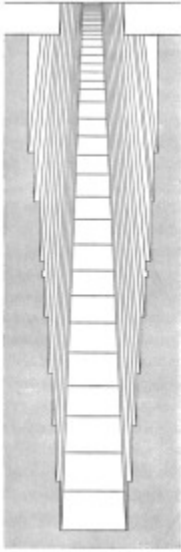
Chamber of the Orbit, the Hall of Illumination. "The deceased," we read, "passes through the Gate of the Gateway. Prepare ye his hall when he comes. Justify his words against the accusers. There is given to him the food of the gods of the Gate. There has been made for him the crown which belongs to him as the dweller in the Secret Place." In another place the justified himself exclaims, "I have opened the gate of heaven and earth" (at the junction of the Halls of the Orbit and of the Shadow). "The soul of Osiris rests there. I cross through the halls. No defect or evil is found in me." And once more the deceased prays that he may pass this hall. "Place me before thee, O Lord of Eternity. Hail, Dweller of the West, good Being, Lord of Abydos. Let me pass the roads of darkness; let me follow thy servants in the gate."

A similar note of exultation marks the passage in the Sai-an-Sinsin, where we read of the great tribunal and the House of Light. "Thou comest into the House of God with much purity," exclaim the mourners, addressing the departed. "The gods have abundantly purified thee in the great tribunal. Thou art not shut out of heaven; thy body is renewed in the presence of Osiris. Thou hast not been shut out from the House of Glory. Thou seest the Path of Beauty, completing every transformation which thou desirest." And the ancient coffin of Amamu bore on the outside this inscription, full of desire and hope: "An act of homage to Anup, who passes the deceased over the distant paths, the fairest of the Karneter" — that is, the land of the holy dead. "Thine eyes," say our own sacred

writings, "shall see the King in his beauty; they shall behold the land that is very far off."

The gateway passed (cxxx.), the divine voice resumes its instruction; and teaches him of "going to the heaven where Osiris is;" of being "received into the Sacred Heart of Ra," the fount of life (cxxxii.-cxxxiii.), of "the adoration which he must render," of the vessel of eternity in which the holy souls for ever move, of the rejoicings of heaven (cxxxiv.-cxxxvi.) in the manifestations of the Godhead to man, and of the names and places wherein those manifestations are made (cxli.-cxliii.).

And now the justified stands within the full glory of the orbit, and looks forth, not with the vision of mortal seer, but as the deathless spirits who encircle the throne. While he stands gazing, splendour after splendour, revelation beyond revelation, bursts upon his sight. Down from the radiant throne, along the floor, along the walls, along the roof, streams, floods, rivers of light come sweeping on like the torrent of the summer rays, like the inundation of the overwhelming Nile. But the justified breathes freely the air of opened heaven. His senses "for ever vivified," pierce through the utmost bounds of space; his quickened intellect grasps each starry law and harmony; his purified spirit, undazzled by the blinding radiance, discerns the Hidden Love that occupies the throne. No longer as a stranger, or at a distance, but as a prince



The Gate of the Burning Crown.

admitted to the highest honour of the court, the justified takes his place in the very line of direct approach; while around and above him, the measureless expanse is filled with rank beyond rank of spirit-ministers. "He has passed his billions," we read, "the circle of flaming ministers is around him. His blessings follow him. 'Come,' says Truth; and he approaches her Lord."

At that gracious word of Truth, the abysses of mystery reveal their most secret depths. First, the Chamber of the Shadow is lit by the irradiating brightness; and the Illuminate discerns the nature of sin viewed in the light of truth. The Seven Halls of Death (cxliv.), each measured by its cycle of eclipse, lie open to him who has looked upon the face of God;

and each name of mystery betrays the form of darkness. "Babbling" Malice, that delights in "overthrow;" "Fire-faced" Anger, "leaping on a sudden to the front;" Envy, the "Eater of Dirt;" Hatred, silent and "vigilant;" Lust, "the consumer, the overthrower in a moment," that "lives off reptiles;" Pride, with its "face of stone;" Sloth, that hardens irretrievably the heart, the "final stopper of the rejected;" all these betray their nature to him over whom death has power no longer. And he discerns (as in the vignette) the seven avenging spirits, each armed with the two swords of physical and spiritual destruction.

Mounting then the steep ascent, he beholds the mystery of judgment disclose itself in successive stages as the twenty-one Gates of Aahlu—their spaces measured by the years of Light, as it speeds from Sothis, the gates which open only to "the meek-hearted" (cxlvi.) unfold before him. At each of the first ten portals flows a celestial stream of sparkling waters, which shed their undying lustre over the person of the Illuminate. Ascending still towards the throne of Ra, at the nineteenth portal he is clothed with robes of power; and at "the Gate of the Burning Crown," he stands beneath the Royal Arch of the Planetary Spheres. Immediately beyond is the "Stone of God," where he receives from the Divine Occupant a "Crown of Illumination," the "Atf"-crown of Egypt, fashioned after the zodiacal light of highest heaven. And behind the throne rises the final "Gate of Peace" with its seven crowns of joy.

But not as yet can the Illuminate attain the infinite serenity which lies beyond that gate. Death and judgment are not the only secrets to be disclosed when the eye of faith becomes the eye of sight. The place of the divine birth, the chamber in the "Fields of Aahlu," must be visited before the Illuminate become the Master of the secret. And as he passes portal after portal of the fields (cxlvii.), he recites the titles of her whose habitation he now approaches: the "Mistress of Holy Awe," the "Mistress of Heaven," the "Regent of the Earth," the "Help of the Meek-hearted," the "Mistress of Prayer," the "Light of the Secret River." Then, having learnt the majesty of its queen, he scans the sevenfold arch, the Mystery of the Transcendent Heaven (cxlviii.); to hold converse with the seven Supreme Intelligences who overarch the Splendour of Creation.

Yet once again must the Depths be sounded, and the Secret Places be traversed, before the Illuminate can pass as master through the Gate of Peace. One secret of death still remains, most terrible and most inscrutable of all. While we are yet imperfect, we can gain some knowledge of the effect of moral death upon ourselves, and even form a faint adumbration of its nature when viewed in the light of absolute truth. But the mystery of its divine permission who can penetrate? If the Omnipotent be all good, why did He ever allow of evil? If He be all-merciful, why does He permit His creatures to suffer? How can our actions be justly "balanced" (cli.) when the forces which produced them were not of our own creation? Why



are we to be made parties to the battle of light and darkness, when no choice was given whether we would exist or not? Why are the souls of just men secretly snared and overthrown? Whence comes the "foul flux" which is purged from man, and which causes all living creatures to shudder? Such questions as these we ask, and ask in vain. Yet if that darkest shadow, that horror which forms the depth of human agony, the enshrouding of the Eternal Justice in the blackness of utter eclipse, is still liable to arise and overpower the soul, how can man ever repose in safety; and what revelation or degree of glory will suffice to bring him peace? But that it too is destined to pass away in light, when the secrets are revealed, and illumination is transformed into union, who can doubt? So at least we read in the creed of Ancient Egypt; where, when the other mysteries of death and of judgment have been disclosed to the Illuminate; when he has entered into the secrets of the new birth, and conversed with the Supreme Intelligences who "watch before the tomb of Osiris;" when time exists for him no more, and he understands the design of the Eternal House, from foundation to consummation, he makes a final circuit of its Secret Places. Clothed in power, and crowned with light, he traverses the "Abodes" (cli.) or scenes of his former weakness; there to discern, by his own enlightened perception, how it is "Osiris who satisfies the balance of him who rules the heavens;" to exert in its supernal freedom his creative will, now the lord, not the slave, of the senses; and to rejoice in the just suffering which wrought his illumination and emancipation.

Finally, when that grand progress through the Habitations of Humanity has been completed, the Master returns in majesty to the

celestial company assembled in the Grand Lodge of the solar throne. Mounting beneath the Royal Arch of the Burning Crown, he treads the Stone of God itself, and passes through the Gate of Peace, with its seven crowns and titles of Victory. Then, outstripping in his flight the power of mortal thought, he passes beyond the shining orbit of the earth, beyond the vast expanse of solar glory, across the awful chasms of the unfathomable depths, to far-off Sothis, the land of Eternal Dawn, the ante-chamber of the infinite morning. He "has his star established to him in Sothis," says the Ritual. And here the Illuminate, now become a Master, is instructed in the last mysteries which precede the universal glory; the mysteries of the divine sorrow, the "tears of Isis" (clii.), whence comes the source of the celestial Nile, the fount of illumination to man. Here he passes within the triple veil, and is invested with the imperishable jewels of supernal lustre (cliii.-clxi).

One chapter and one chamber yet remain—the chapter of Orientation, and the Chamber of Grand Orient beneath the Secret Places of the Most High. "Awake, awake, Osiris?" so sing the mourners to the beloved departed, now glorious in the House of Light, and united indissolubly with the divine Being; "awake? see what thy son Horus hath done for thee. See what thy father Seb hath done for thee. Raised is

the Osiris." "I have opened the doors," replies the Osiris-soul, "I have opened the doors. . . . Well is the Great One who is in the Coffin. For all the dead shall have passages made to him through their embalming," when their body in the flesh shall be raised in incorruption. Again and again is celebrated the Mystery of the Open Tomb. As the eclipsing planet which moves nearest to the sun crawls like a tortoise across the face of that orb, defacing it for a moment by its own darkness, and then is swallowed in the radiance, so also death, that dark spot which crawls across the vision of the eternal splendour, is swallowed in the resurrection of Osiris-Ra, the Uncreated Light. Four times is that Gospel of ancient Egypt proclaimed in the chapter which bears the title of the Orient. "The tortoise dies; Ra lives!" Death is swallowed in Light; God lives for evermore. "O Amen, Amen," so continues that chapter of mystery, "Amen, who art in heaven, give thy face to the body of thy Son. Make him well in Hades. It is finished."

Thus ends the strange and solemn dirge of ancient Egypt. Once perceived, the intimate connection between the secret doctrine of Egypt's most venerated books and the secret significance of her most venerable monument seems impossible to dis sever, and each form illustrates and interpenetrates the other. As we peruse the dark utterances and recognize the mystic allusions of the Book, we seem to stand amid the profound darkness enwrapping the whole interior of the building. All around are assembled the spirits and the powers that make the

mystery of the unseen world: the "Secret Faces at the Gate," the "Gods of the Horizon and of the Orbit." And dimly before our eyes, age after age, the sacred procession of the Egyptian dead moves silently along, as they pass through the "Gate of the Hill" to the tribunal of Osiris. In vain do we attempt to trace their footsteps till we enter with them into the Hidden Places, and penetrate the secret of the House of Light. But no sooner do we approach the passage and tread the chambers of the mysterious Pyramid, than the teaching of the Sacred Books seems lit up as with a tongue of flame. The luminous veil itself melts slowly away, disclosing the Path of Illumination and the Splendours of the Orbit; the celestial Powers and Intelligences shine forth from beneath their enshrouding symbols; the spirits of the just grow lustrous with the rays that proceed from the tribunal. For though none may look upon these things unveiled till the Guardian of the Starry Gate has opened for him the Portal of the Light, yet for the adept, who has been mystically initiated in the deep waters, and illuminated by the sevenfold Beauty, the invisible things become manifest by the visible creation. And a Light which is not of earth reveals in its divine unity the full secret of the Hidden Places; the Entrance to the Path of Heaven; the Well of Life, the Place of New Birth, the Ordeal of Fire, the Lintel of Justice, the Victory over Death, the Judgment of Truth, the Splendour of Illumination, the Throne of Radiance, the Veil of Perfection, and the Grand Orient of the Open Tomb, beneath secret chambers of the

Height, crowned by the Grand Arch of the Supreme Trinity.

Thus only according to that primeval creed could man fulfil his marvellous destiny; and thus only can that destiny accomplish his heart's desire. No skill in the secrets of the material universe, no dominion over the forces of life and death, no power to pierce the veil which hangs before the unseen world and to hold communion with the spiritual intelligences, will satisfy his secret aspirations. For the soul of man—so every form of creed declares—can know no rest, nor can his spirit ever be satisfied, so long as the thinnest film remains to interrupt the unclouded vision of the Hidden Love; until he stand face to face, and eye to eye with "Him who knows the Depths."

We quit that solemn monument of primeval mystery; and as we turn a farewell glance upon the Gate of Heaven, the veil of the majestic masonry once more hides from view the interior splendour, and enwraps the Secret Places of the Hidden God.



# *Mystics Magazine*

*Egyptian Mystical Theology*

Conversations with W. Marsham Adams

Compiled by Marilyn Hughes

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Author, Marilyn Hughes, Photo by Harvey Kushner

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