

# INITIATION OF PLATO



Manly P. Hall



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by Manly P. Hall

## **INITIATION OF PLATO**

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# INITIATION OF PLATO

## INTRODUCTION

The Greeks were the greatest of Western philosophers and Plato was the greatest of the Greeks. The intellect of Plato has merited universal admiration for he combined extraordinary mental capacity with a lofty idealism.

Plato was an initiate of the State Mysteries. He had intended to follow in the footsteps of Pythagoras by journeying into Asia to study with the Brahmins. But the wars of the time made such a trip impractical, so Plato turned to the Egyptians, and, according to the ancient accounts, was initiated at Sais by the priests of the Osirian rites.

Having concluded his journeys, Plato established in Athens a school which he called the Lyceum. This school has been referred to as the first university and the archetype of all the great institutions of learning that now flourish in human society. The Lyceum was unhealthily located, being surrounded by swampy ground. Plato was taken ill but refused to leave the place, declaring that wisdom could adjust itself to any environment. He proved his point, regained his vigor, and continued to teach until his eighty-first year when he died in his sleep with the books of Sophron for a pillow.

To Plato, philosophy and theology were one body of learning. He taught that the physical world was the shadow or reflection of the divine world; that all forms were suspended from principles; and that all extensions of energy bore witness to a

sovereign unity, the splendid source of life and the nurse of all living things.

As we look about us in modern society, we find among the contemporary learned no mind even comparable to that of Plato. We ask ourselves why ancient Greece was able to produce over five hundred immortal philosophers and mathematicians, and the greater privileges of our day result in only an occasionally outstanding figure.

Some advance the opinion that all men today possess so much knowledge that greatness is not the contrast that it used to be. It seems to me, however, that such an explanation is insufficient. The truth is that the type of civilization under which we live is not conducive to true greatness. The materialist cannot be great. The Babbit cannot be great.

Small attitudes cannot produce broad minds, and the adoration of wealth and power is so evidently false that nothing very fine can be expected to rise therefrom.

The greatness of the ancients is directly traceable to their religio-philosophical institutions now called the Mysteries. The Greek Mysteries were the foundation of the State and protectors of communal security. The temples of the Mysteries represented the finest achievements in architecture and art, and housed the literature and learning of many earlier generations. The temples of initiation were often buildings of great size; the great shrine of Eleusis in Attica, according to the old records, could hold 25,000 persons at one time.

The Mystery Schools were more than cultural forces; they were *the culture* and civilization of the time.

The Greek educational system included initiation into the State Mysteries. The Lesser Mysteries were given quarterly and were conferred upon any person of good character who applied for initiation. At certain times women were initiated, and children above the sixth year were admitted.

The rituals of the Lesser Mysteries were in the form of dramatic pageantry. In the Eleusinian system, the first degree included the abduction of Persephone by Pluto as its principal theme.

From among those who excelled in the Lesser Mysteries, the priests chose such as they considered worthy to compete for the Greater Mysteries. Those who passed successfully the tests of the higher degree formed a group apart. They were the heroes, the race that dwelt between gods and men, and they were honored by all society. The door of every house was open to them. Even princes had to show them due reverence. The initiate was above even the king unless the sovereign also was, as in Egypt, the high priest of the temple.

The initiates gave allegiance only to the temple that initiated them. The Mysteries were truly the high spot of the State.

The rituals of the Greater Mysteries involved mortal hazards. The candidate must face bodily danger, emotional danger, and mental danger. Only a person of sound body, normal emotions, and balanced mind could possibly succeed in passing the tests. In addition, the candidate had to reveal to his initiators a profound knowledge of the arts and sciences and universal learning. From the scanty records available it appears that only a few hundred people passed successfully the Greater Mysteries and achieved the divine estate.

At the end of the initiations, the successful candidate received the secrets of personal development and the arcane of the temple; that is, the key to the interpretation of the religious fables. The Mysteries bestowed upon their initiates some peculiar internal dignity which they had not previously possessed. It is said of Pythagoras that perfect strangers meeting him upon the road fell upon their knees before him, overcome by some mysterious force which he emanated. The same is told

of Apollonius of Tyana who quelled a riot by merely standing before the contending persons without speaking.

So complete were the vows and obligations of secrecy that the inner mysteries of the initiatory rites have never been exposed, divulged, or desecrated. Only an occasional hint enables us to trace even a part of the old rites. Fertile sources of these hints are the comedies of Aristophanes and the books of Plato.

The best evidence of the significance of the Mysteries is to be found in the lives and writings of those who received the initiations. Among the most famous are the names of Plato, Pythagoras, and Aristotle. These men were among the wisest of mortals, yet they acknowledged that in comparison to the wisdom contained in the adytum of the Mysteries, everything they knew and taught was as nothing. Incredible as this may seem it bears out the thoughts of Porphyry, who wrote that the initiates during their trials participated in a divine splendor and the gods themselves attended the initiators.

The Greek Mysteries gradually retired into obscurity after the rise of the Roman Empire. By the twelfth century of the Christian Era they had entirely disappeared from public view. Fragments of them survived in the early Christian mystical sects.

The initiation of Plato as here reproduced was translated by John Yarker from the French of Charles and Auguste Beaumont. The rite forms the prologue to a Masonic comedy in three acts entitled *The Freemason* which was printed in Paris in 1867. There is every evidence that the work is a modern production, but its value lies in its splendid summary of the early mystery rituals compiled from various Greek and Egyptian authors.

There is a record in the British Museum that Plato received the Egyptian rites of Isis and Osiris in Egypt when he was



forty-seven years old. It is my opinion that the compilers of this Initiation of Plato digested a great amount of ancient lore in the preparation of their pageant, and that the result is worthy of profound study. Our copy has been made from the scarce and curious masonic publication, *The Kneph*.

## INITIATION OF PLATO

### PERSONAGES

The King of Egypt

The Demiurgos

The Aged Patriarch

Three Priest Patriarchs

The Ceryce

Plato

Zais and Azema—*Two daughters of the King of Egypt.*

An Almee

Women of the Priests, *composing the ballet.*

### The Scene is in Egypt

#### COSTUMES

THE DEMIURGOS—*White robe with sky-blue tunic, mixed with silver, which reaches to the knees; the sleeves of the robe are narrow, and closed at the wrists; those of the tunic are open, and reach to the elbow. Worn in saltire is a broad violet ribbon, on which is embroidered the words SCIENCE, WISDOM, TRUTH. He also wears a chain of gold from which is suspended a brilliant sun. A key of ivory and gold, the emblem of mystery, is suspended at his right shoulder.*

AGED PATRIARCH—*Robe of celestiad blue, waistband of violet silk fringed with gold; a silver chain from which is suspended a delta surrounded with a glory.*

THE KING—*Costume of red.*

THREE PATRIARCHS—*Robes of white; one with a black girdle, another with poppy-red, and the third of violet.*

ALTAR—*Cover of green fringed with gold, a chandelier of seven branches, and the Book of Revelation.*

CERYCE—*Robe black, with blue girdle.*

ETANGI—*Robe white.*

## FIRST TABLEAU

A grand subterranean hall with pillars. To the right a vertical well whose shaft projects from the floor, and of which the top is not openly seen. an airhole debouches upon a landing place, descended by some steps near a grating situated on the third plane, at the middle of the scene. There are some mummies, the dead bodies lying in open coffins are ranged near the water abutting on the edge of this grating. Another grating on the second plane to the left. A lamp suspended from the ceiling which is not visible. Scarcely half daylight, and the ground is obscure.

### Scene First

#### THREE PRIESTS

FIRST PRIEST: It appears, my Brothers, that the Initiation of this most eminent disciple of Socrates will be very brilliant; they say that the King will assist.

SECOND PRIEST: They say, in effect, and they add that our Sages are marvelling at the great intelligence of the Neophyte, the illustrious Plato.

THIRD PRIEST: He has made amongst them, in a single year, most extraordinary progress. (He goes to open a peep-hole in the wall, looks out and returns.)

SECOND PRIEST: But this swan of the Academy, as his Master calls him, is above everything a man of imagination; will he have sufficient strength of soul to support the rude trials which commence from this moment?

FIRST PRIEST: It would be a great injury if so valuable a man were to succumb; he would be condemned to pass his days in these somber galleries and employed in decorating the coffins and the bandages of the mummies.

SECOND PRIEST: Without such condemnation, cruel without doubt, but necessary, our secrets would be divulged by those presumptuous ones, who would come from afar to solicit those trials, which they would be incapable of sustaining.

FIRST PRIEST: Yes, such captivity is still necessary; but a time will come when our treasures of science will be the heritage of all men. Then mankind, freed from the errors which divide them and the evils which devour them, will live long and happily. They will bless our memories.

THIRD PRIEST: My Brother, the Neophyte, if he has escaped the abyss, is almost ready to penetrate here. *(He returns to open the peephole, and after looking out closes it discreetly.)*

FIRST PRIEST: I believe that he is one of those rare men who will be spoken of in the world for long ages.

THIRD PRIEST: Behold him!

*(The three Priests hide in the shade.)*

## **Scene Second**

PLATO: *(Alone. He puts his lamp across the airhole, and passes through head first. Rising, he looks around.)* Into what place have I descended so painfully? *(He advances to the grating and opens it, after he has passed it closes with an extraordinary noise.)* How can this door, closing of itself, produce so great a noise?

## **Scene Third**

FIRST PRIEST, PLATO

FIRST PRIEST (appearing): What dost thou seek here?

PLATO: Wisdom.

FIRST PRIEST: It is impossible, without much science, for man to interpret the grand hieroglyphics of the universe. What is science?

PLATO: It is the comprehension of causes and their effects, when the spirit of God descends into the bosom of man.

FIRST PRIEST: And wisdom?

PLATO: The knowledge of good and evil, justice and injustice; it is the love of the one and the hatred of the other.

FIRST PRIEST: In order to reach it, know thou thyself.

*(He goes out and a flame rises behind him.)*

### **Scene Fourth**

PLATO: I aspire to comprehend, O Sage! Why disappear thus? Know thou thyself! This profound sentence of the King Sesostris is graven upon the Temple of Delphos, I am charged not to forget it, the divine Socrates incessantly recalled it to us.

*(Some extraordinary monsters leap or pass near him, uttering savage and frightful cries. Thunder is heard, then great noise of chains rattling in the distance; some lights pass on the scene; suddenly there is absolute silence.)*

The horrors of this place; these noises and the profound silence which succeed them, may well cause the flesh to creep, but they can neither affright nor trouble my spirit.

A VOICE: Doth thy heart fail thee; hast thou need of assistance ?

PLATO: No!

*(The place is enlivened by the rays of the moon; it represents a palace in ruins, portions of columns, and others thrown down, lie about; some tombs. Plato places his lantern upon a coffin.)*

Ruins, tombs, sublime dust, shades of my kind; is it you, then, who will reveal to me the secret of life? Is it you, O ye dead! Who will teach me to live?

**Scene Fifth**

SECOND PRIEST, PLATO

SECOND PRIEST: Perhaps! Is not the past the lesson of the future?

PLATO: I know that in the physical order and in the moral order, all that which has been accomplished can be done again, notwithstanding those differences which the incessant labors of matter introduce, and the progress of conscience, or rather of the human spirit.

SECOND PRIEST (*indicating the ruined palace*): If they do not practice justice, the sole providence of empires, what remains of the most powerful kings of the earth? A handful of ashes and the scorn of posterity.

PLATO: The benevolent and modest man leaves at least a respectful remembrance, sympathetic regrets, a noble example. It is consoling, also, that man by his labors may prolong his existence through the centuries, and speak, so to say, from the foot of his tomb, to all generations that may come after him.

SECOND PRIEST: It is beautiful, without doubt, to live honored in the memory of men, and it is the noble ambition of great hearts. But know that life and death succeed each other, as do night and day. Everything changes, transforms itself unceasingly; the ephemera in an hour; man in a century, more or less; the stars in millions of years. Even the innumerable suns, which roll over our heads, have had also, as we, their birthdays. Each instant which passes sees some extinguished and others setting out anew at incalculable distances! But it is given to man alone to contribute understanding to the universal harmony by doing good.

PLATO: The sentiments of such grandeur ought to be proudly impressed on all man's most beautiful works.

SECOND PRIEST: It ought to render him jealous of his

self-respect, and lead him to harbor in his heart the love of his kind, as the Parakist tends this lamp of which it is the symbol. What means the chain with which thou art yet confined?

PLATO: It symbolizes the ignorance and prejudice which still oppress me, and of which I labor to despoil myself. (*After some violent efforts he releases himself of the fevers.*)

Thus I liberate myself from foolish passions, and from foolish beliefs, based only on hypothesis!

SECOND PRIEST: Thou has but in effect liberated thy body, if thy spirit still remains accessible to suggestions of intolerance and error. Know thou, that perseverance is the secret of perfection. Inspire thyself amongst these illustrious dead, read their inscriptions, or rather their sentiments, and pursue thy route. It is strewn with stones, and the way is yet long; but the knowledge of important truths will be the price of thy efforts. Demand nothing of the coffins of this gallery, as they contain only the ashes of traitors put to death for having betrayed our sublime institution. Adieu! (*He sets out.*)

### **Scene Sixth**

PLATO (*alone*): Ah! continue still thy discourse! (*He takes up a lamp, approaches a coffin, and reads.*) "I was a secret guardian, I suffered injuries, and I employed my time well." Is it thee, then, O Chilon, who speaks to me here? Whoever thou art, O dead! I thank thee, and salute thee. (*Passes to another coffin and reads.*) "I often repented of having spoken, rarely of being silent." Yes, speech is silver, but silence is gold. (*Reads upon another coffin.*) "Make war only upon three things: sickness, ignorance, and injustice." Ah! without doubt, but blood will yet be spilt before the arrival of the sovereign reign of justice and truth. (*Passes to another and reads.*) "Render to thy kind, who is thy brother, the assistance which thou wouldst receive from



him; and do not to him that which thou wouldst not he do unto thee." It is thou, O great Confucius, who has transmitted to us these maxims so simple and so salutary. They merit thee the eternal remembrance of mankind. *(Passes to another coffin.)* And thou, glorious shade, what is thy secret? "O mortal, who seeketh truth! Learn that there exists but one sole Architect of the Temple called the Universe. He hath created all things, the good and the evil, the wheat and the poison; but to thee he hath given a discerning intelligence, and the liberty to labor for thy own glory and thy happiness." It is true, O Sages! O immortal dead! I am unable to remain longer with you; I honor you, and bid you adieu! *(He advances towards the second grating but the avenue thereto becomes suddenly illuminated. The crackling of flames is heard, bombs explode, thunder growls, some lightning is produced.)*

### **Scene Seventh**

THIRD PRIEST, PLATO

THIRD PRIEST (at the grating): Thou may'st yet retrace thy steps and renounce thy enterprise, but an instant more and that will be impossible. Hast thou the courage to advance, whatever may be the perils which await thee?

PLATO: Yes, I am resolved.

*(Slow music.)*

THIRD PRIEST: Ah well! behold this narrow avenue with the trees in flames, the interlacing branches forming a vault of fire!

PLATO: I see it.

THIRD PRIEST: It is the way thou must take without looking back. If thou should succeed in traversing this vast fire, thou wilt then find before thee a cavern in which is the

monster of darkness, the genie of evil. He would close to thee the passage onward, take this glaive and this buckler of Minerva; combat this enemy, strike off the head and bear it to the King; he will give thee his orders. But the conflagration (*they hear crackling*) becomes general; haste thee, run! Adieu!

PLATO (*throws away his lamp and takes the glaive and buckler*): I will free this furnace or I will perish; if I traverse it thou shalt be obeyed. (*He runs down the avenue while the third Priest considers him.*)

## SECOND TABLEAU

On the floor some rocks, below winds a river. A ladder is reared abutting upon the door of a pavilion placed at the right. A large ring is fixed in the door. Another ladder leads from the pavilion to the scene. Magnificent gardens, statues, tripods, tables, a collation. Day a little gloomy.

### Scene First

FIRST AND SECOND PRIEST, ZAIS

FIRST PRIEST: (*concealed near a tree considers Plato*): He swims vigorously.

SECOND PRIEST: (*having also considered Plato*): He comports himself marvelously. He will reach the ladder.

ZAIS: (*ascends to the pavilion bearing the linen and the tunic for investing Plato*): You will cause him to perish.

FIRST PRIEST: It is very necessary that he be purified by the four elements. (*The priests penetrate to the ground floor of the pavilion.*)

### Scene Second

ZAIS, PLATO

PLATO *in the water, reaches the ladder, but as he puts foot on it each step falls to the level of the water. Reaches the door and seizes the ring with both hands; finds himself suspended; the ladder sinks from under him.*

ZAIS (*descending from the pavilion*): I am inspired with such tender interest for this Greek philosopher, that I tremble, and offer up my prayers for him.

SECOND PRIEST (*from the interior of the pavilion*): Dost thou feel thy strength failing?

PLATO: Not yet, but—(*The door opens and admits Plato. Full light of day. Distant music.*)

### **Scene Third**

ZAIS, AZEMA

ZAIS: Azema, wilt thou offer our services to this valiant Neophyte. Hold! pray of him to empty this cup, that he may comfort himself therewith.

AZEMA (*lighting the tripods*): Yes, my sister. The tripods shall fill the air with the most sweet perfume, and the melodious chants shall be full of harmony; dances, the most lascivious and enervating, shall prepare the fall of this proud philosopher—he shall not rebel against love. (*She takes the cup and enters the pavilion, after having knocked at the door, which Plato opens.*)

### **Scene Fourth**

ZAIS, AN ALMEE

ZAIS: Dear Almee, observe carefully the signs that I will give you. Enter there and display your most seducing and irresistible graces. The women of our Priests will bear a crown of laurel; add the myrtle and the amaranth to yours; as also to that of Azema.

THE ALMEE: Princess, the crowns are ready.

### **Scene Fifth**

ZAIS, AZEMA, PLATO

PLATO: O hospitable women! Whoever you be, nymphs or goddesses, Plato renders you a thousand thanks, and salutes you.

AZEMA: It is but gallantry, that you seem to suppose we are goddesses; we are simple mortals, princesses it is true,

but without pride, and very happy to see you, and welcome you.

ZAIS Yes, we are delighted to receive you, and your triumphs fills us with joy. Deign to seat yourself and accept this nourishment, which we are charmed at having prepared for you.

AZEMA (*taking the cup*): Drink and gain new strength, for the trials will be still long. You have shown to admirable advantage, which, besides, we only expected of you, my sister and me.

PLATO: Which you expected?

ZAIS Yes, the relation of your rare talents had advanced you amongst us; the reports which we have received since you came here have but confirmed the high opinion which we had before of your great merit.

PLATO: If you were less flattering, charming princesses, after the rude emotions which I have resisted, I should consider myself, whilst near you, as the most fortunate of mortals.

ZAIS You are at least the most eloquent and most amiable of men.

PLATO: In mercy spare me, you are both so beautiful.

### Scene Sixth

ZAIS, AZEMA, CORPS-DE-BALLET *composed of the women of the Priests.*

AZEMA *rises and takes part in the ballet. The dancers in retiring place their crowns at the feet of Plato: ZAIS places that of the Almee upon his head, notwithstanding that he forbids it. AZEMA places hers upon his knees.*

**Scene Seventh**

ZAIS, PLATO

ZAIS: Keep this crown of amaranth and laurel, if not to please me, at least to be agreeable to me; I see in it the symbol of your glory, which will traverse centuries.

PLATO: Ah! this is to forget the regard which is due to your prisoner.

ZAIS: No! it is I who am the captive.

PLATO (*puts the crown of Azema on the head of Zais*): Let us then be both of us immortals!

ZAIS (*placing herself amorously near Plato*): Thanks, I will look upon this crown, which you have placed on my head, as the most precious, the most dear of my remembrances.

PLATO: Princess! (*They hear a prelude.*)

ZAIS: Listen to this harmonious chant, will you—wilt thou?

*(The choir behind the serene gives the following)*

*Isis! O fruitful nature!*

*Thou veileth night and day*

*Happy in giving the world*

*Health, joy, and love.*

*Let us celebrate the magnificence*

*Of the most radiant star,*

*To which man oweth existence*

*And the most precious gifts*

*Of other suns also,*

*And other inhabited globes,*

*Rejoicing in the dawn,  
Surrounding us with pleasures.*

*Isis! etc. etc.*

*Love is the source of life,  
The principle of the Universe!  
The grand law of harmony,  
Whence divers things are born.  
To remain to it faithful,  
Let us guard us with oaths,  
For love causeth the beautiful  
To desire new loves.*

*Isis! etc. etc.*

*(Music which touches the feelings is heard at a distance during the remainder of the scene.)*

ZAIS: Now, dear Plato, tell me what could best please thy heart? Whatever it be thy desires are already granted, for I love thee, and my power is unbounded in this place.

PLATO: I would respond to these cares, so delicate, so charming!

ZAIS (*rises and admiringly embraces Plato with her arms*): I love thee! let us go to those discreet shades! let us hasten!

PLATO: You seek to seduce me, O Princess, from my duty, and this is not the least formidable of my trials.

ZAIS: Ah, well! I defend not myself! But I am taken in the snare which I laid! I know thy genius, thy great works, thy

glory, and I love thee; I desire thee to prove it. Fear not! there is absolute secrecy; a favorable spot. Come, come, I say to thee! (*She embraces him and takes a few steps.*)

PLATO: Enchantress! you are adorable; but at this moment I can only admire you—you know that well.

ZAIS: I love thee with all my heart, and thou hast nothing to doubt. After having supplicated thee, wilt thou betray me, dishonor me!

PLATO: If your sympathy was real you would not abuse your advantages; you would cease to try my honor. I will regard you with the greatest consideration, and the most tender remembrance.

ZAIS: A distant friendship, a love without tribute, would perhaps console a woman of Greece; to me, Plato, this refusal is an outrage which might cost thee thy life. We are still free and I would not appear to command. Come! I love thee, and implore thee for the last time! Come!

PLATO: Would that I were either Mercury or Apollo; I would espouse you this hour, and transport you to Olympus, where you would be the admiration of the gods. But humble and pitiful mortal, submitting to an innocent temptation, which I know that I ought to resist, I think of the symbol of the tranquil lion in a stormy sky, and that example reassures me.

ZAIS: Ah! well, cruel one, it is not thy life which is endangered but mine! Be generous, Plato, the daughter of the King of Egypt is at thy feet.

PLATO: Whether you be or be not sincere it is my duty to resist.

ZAIS: Go! thy philosophic insensibility is a small merit, moreover, it causes my death.

*(She goes out.)*



**Scene Eighth**

THE CERYCE, PLATO

CERYCE: Plato! throw away that crown and take this golden branch, and deign to follow me. Knowest thou who is the most happy of men?

PLATO (*a little troubled, regards the place where Zais disappeared, throws away his crown, and takes the golden branch*): The most—the most happy of men. According to Socrates, the most just; according to me the most liberal.

CERYCE (*near the scenes*): And the most modest?

PLATO (*stopping to answer*): It is he who understands himself the best. (*He goes out last and regards the place where Zais disappeared.*)

### THIRD TABLEAU

Room closed, door to right on the first plane, curtains sky-blue, the sun above the floor of the center of the stage surrounded with the signs of the zodiac, stars. On the wall to the right two spheres, above which, without touching, are two men, the one at the helm of a vessel, the other, beardless, holding in one hand a rod, and in the other a thunderbolt and an ear of corn. Two obelisks terminated by a ball are figured upon the wall to the left; at each side is a canopy of red damask figured with gold, which rises above the seats of a cabinet in the form of an altar terminated at the side. Triangle of fire near the wall above the center seat, two other seats before the altar. At the bottom, or upon the first plane to the left, a veiled statue of Isis; to right a sphinx. At the rise of the curtain the PATRIARCHS and CERYCE occupy their seats, so that the priests of the dais are vis-a-vis of the altar.

#### Scene First

THREE PATRIARCHES, THE CERYCE, AUDIENCE OF PRIESTS

*(One strikes four violent blows on the door.)*

FIRST PATRIARCH Who is this foolish mortal who comes thus to trouble our mysteries?

THE CERYCE *(having opened the door)*: Sublime Patriarch, it is the Neophyte, Plato of Athens; he bears the golden branch.

FIRST PATRIARCH: Let him enter if his conscience is pure.

**Scene Second**

THREE PATRIARCHS, THE CERYCE, AUDIENCE OF PRIESTS,  
PLATO

FIRST PATRIARCH (*to Plato, who led by the Ceryce has made some steps*): Stop! What dost thou demand?

PLATO: The revelation of the mysteries.

FIRST PATRIARCH: What hast thou done to merit this brilliant favor?

PLATO: I have never knowingly done wrong to any person; nor forgot the respect which I owe to my kind; nor even to myself without profound repentance. I have followed the lessons of the Stoic Socrates, and overrun the world in my exertions to acquire more wisdom. After having assiduously listened to the Priests of this land of Egypt, I descended to the gloomy empire of the dead, and interrogated the illustrious shades, or otherwise collected their luminous sentiments; then I traversed the flames, combated and slew in his cavern the monster of darkness—the genie of evil. Then having ascended the course of a river by swimming, after climbing a ladder which sank under me, I arrived at a delicious place where beautiful women with naked breasts tendered me pledges of love. From thence I was conducted hither.

FIRST PATRIARCH: Approach without fear. (*The Ceryce seats Plato before the Altar.*) Which is the most beautiful and noble study to which man can devote himself in passing through the world?

PLATO: That which has for its object the knowledge of what he is, whence he comes, and whither he goes; that which leads to a search for the laws of nature within and without him.

FIRST PATRIARCH: Isis and Osiris, the moon and the sun, both symbolize nature; when they represent it by Isis a veil covers her. What is its sense?

PLATO: That of the inscription upon her statue in the Temple of Sais: "I am all that which has been, all that which is, all that which will be, and no mortal man has yet raised the veil which covers me."

PLATO: I think that it is false. (*Movement of surprise amongst the Patriarchs and the audience.*)

FIRST PATRIARCH: False! and how doth thy pride look upon this?

PLATO: At each absolute truth; at each law of nature that he discovers, doth not man raise this veil?

FIRST PATRIARCH: No, the difficulty is not removed! Thou canst calculate the weight of the stars, their velocity, their distance, and the paths which they overrun; thou canst investigate the laws of light and electricity, and make the thunderbolt thy auxilliary; plane down or pierce the mountain, cruise in the abyss. Thou canst transform the earth and loose the waves, but the great Unknown, T. S. A. O. T. U., is none the less incomprehensible, and beyond the laws of nature! Learn that this triangle, the symbol of our cult, is an emblem of the unity of God, as the sun symbolizes to us the soul of the world. Behold how the vulgar has been led to adore animals. Deprived of a calendar, the laborer called those stars of the Bull which arose in affinity with the sun at the period of their labor; stars of the Virgin those which arose at the epoch of harvest, and so of the others. Then forgetting the reason why their fathers had thus denominated the stars, the people began to believe that the Virgin, the Bull, the Lion, actually existed in the heavens whence they favored their labors and the productions of the earth; they made of them gods! Believest thou that the sphinx is one of them?

PLATO: No, it is the double symbol of the harvest Virgin and the Lion, recalling the fruitful inundation of the Nile.

SECOND PATRIARCH: The Sun is in the center of the universe. Mercury, Venus, the Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, turn at the same time upon themselves and round the sun. The fixed stars have a movement inverse to that of the earth, and gravitate afar, very far from the planets, several of which rejoice in a favorable atmosphere, and are inhabited.

Knowest thou the signification of the red cross traced upon the banner of Egypt?

PLATO: It is the symbol of the renewal of the seasons, or of immortality. The horizontal line represents the equator, its extremities the equinox, or spring and autumn; the vertical line figures the meridian, and its extremities the solstices, or summer and winter.

*(The second Patriarch makes a sign of approbation.)*

THIRD PATRIARCH: What is morality?

PLATO: It is the rule of right, and the duties which the conscience imposes, and which man cannot violate without shame and disgrace.

THIRD PATRIARCH: And justice?

PLATO: It is the practical application of the law of rendering to all that which is his due.

THIRD PATRIARCH: Dost thou believe that the authority of the judges would be lessened by the admission of their mistakes ?

PLATO: No, it is, on the contrary, the maintenance of the condemnation of an innocent man, were he to die, that would lessen their authority.

THIRD PATRIARCH: Where doth justice and morality take their source?

PLATO: In the very conscience of humanity.

THIRD PATRIARCH: How dost thou distinguish good and evil?

PLATO: All that which wounds the dignity or restrains the rights of man is evil; all that which is favorable to them is good.

THIRD PATRIARCH: Thy replies are sufficiently precise. Dost thou think that woman is inferior to man?

PLATO: No, I believe that she is his equal and his best friend.

THIRD PATRIARCH: And what sayest thou to corporeal punishment and the penalty of death?

PLATO: I say that they are the signs of a still barbarous civilization.

THIRD PATRIARCH: Then, what will be to thy mind the signs of a civilization superior to our epoch?

PLATO: The absence of priests.

*(Explosion of murmurs amongst the audience.)*

A PRIEST *(rising)*: We are then useless? So the observance of thy pretended rule of good and evil suffices to render man happy? Plato, thou art ungrateful!

SECOND PRIEST *(rising)*: Thou slanderest the first want of society!

THIRD PATRIARCH: Calm yourselves, my brothers, it were better to praise the frankness of the Neophyte than throw stones at him. *(To Plato)* In what dost thou make true happiness to consist?

PLATO: In the approbation of the conscience.

THIRD PATRIARCH: Yes, it is in the depth of the heart that infallible justice dwells to console the victim, chastise the criminal, and rejoice the good name.

*(The Ceryce presents to Plato a cup to empty, and the Etangi.)*

FIRST PATRIARCH: It is the beverage of the lotus; drink and forget all sentiments of hatred, envy, and intolerance; and put on this robe in sign of devotion to science and virtue.

*(Plato empties the cup, and assisted by the Ceryce puts on the Etangi. The audience goes out.)* Thou goest to be initiated into the last mysteries.

### Scene Third

THREE PATRIARCHS, THE CERYCE, AUDIENCE OF PRIESTS,  
PLATO, AN AGED PATRIARCH

*(The aged Patriarch rises from the floor, and is preceded and followed by a flame.)*

FIRST PATRIARCH: In the presence of this triangle of fire, swear to obey our sacred laws, to submit thy passions to the empire of reason, and to labor incessantly for the good of humanity.

*(The Ceryce dips a reed pen in ink and presents it to Plato before whom the aged Patriarch holds open the golden book. Having signed the book, Plato receives from the aged Patriarch the decoration which he carries.)*

AGED PATRIARCH: This decoration is that of Minerva or Isis, it represents an owl; symbol of a child which is blind at birth, and only becomes a man by experience and the light of philosophy. May Minerva always inspire thee!

*(He retakes the golden book which he had laid down to decorate Plato and disappears in the floor, and a flame rises behind him. The Patriarchs descend from their seats, surround and congratulate Plato. The First Patriarch moves aside; the others place themselves in procession and advance. A gust of wind; the floor is raised.)*

## FOURTH TABLEAU

The floor of the theater, which alone is changed, represents the face of a temple. of which the steps are terminated by two lions; an obelisk to right and left; avenues of green trees; rays of light.

### Scene First

THE PATRIARCHS, THE CERYCE, PLATO, THE DEMIURGOS,  
THE KING, PRIESTS, SOLDIERS.

*(The soldiers are ranged before the temple, and the priests and patriarchs to right and left of the scene. In the midst and at the back of the plane is the Demiurgos and the King. The First Patriarch and Plato occupy the front of the scene to the left. Music a little lively, then slow.)*

FIRST PATRIARCH (*low to Plato*): Yes, dear Plato, these are our last, our grand mysteries.

PLATO (*low to the First Patriarch*): Yes, I foresee it! They cannot for a long time yet be revealed to the people!

FIRST PATRIARCH (*low to Plato*): Who knows? In two thousand years perhaps! But listen! The usual procession in honor of the Initiate is composed thus: First, the Chanter, bearing the symbol of music; next the Aurispice or observer of times; the Sacred Scribe marches after him bearing a book, an inkhorn, and a reed pen; he is followed by the Standard Bearer, who carries the cubit of justice; he who bears upon his breast a cruse, symbol of the thirst for science, is the Prophet. The others who follow the Loaf Bearer, precious gift of Isis, are the Aspirants for initiation; they follow the various classes of medicine, mathematics, architecture, painting, and so forth. But advance and lend thine ear to the Demiurgos.

DEMIURGOS: Plato, ever remember that all men hold from nature equal and sacred rights. Error and truth divide



the world between them, therefore neither slander nor blame the faith of others; all differences will one day dissolve in the supreme and conciliating councils of reason. Honor and serve well thy country, but in fighting for it forget not that all people are thy brothers! Exercise and develop thy faculties constantly; let temperance and moderation preserve thy prosperous health. In thy pleasures taste not those which may give pain to any one; and remember that mankind is only happy and great by justice. (He takes the glaive from the glaive-bearer and in placing the blade upon the shoulder and head of Plato says:) In the presence of the King of Egypt, Initiate, just and beneficent, I the Demiurgos, humble representative of T. S. A. O. T. U., constitute and proclaim thee a Patriarch of our immortal institution. Go, spread upon earth the sublime truths which thou comest to learn; but accord this signal favor only to those chosen souls, who have been slowly prepared as worthy of receiving them; build not upon sand; write not upon snow!

THE KING: Plato, by thy long labors, by thy constancy under great trials, by thy ardent love of truth, thou deservest this decoration, which symbolizes these qualities, and I am happy in bestowing it upon thee. (*He puts round the neck of Plato his decoration, the Alidee.*) Now follow us. Let us show to a people, simple but enthusiastic admirers of the good and the beautiful, the triumph of perseverance and virtue. Although they are unable to appreciate the extended science of the Initiates, yet they know that by their lights, their courage, and their labors, they aim at intellectual enfranchisement, and the general happiness of the human race; they love to feast the Initiates, and to applaud them.

*(Brilliant music, departure by the floor to right, Bengal lights.)*

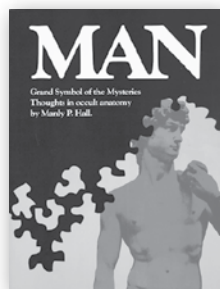
END OF THE INITIATION OF ANTIQUITY

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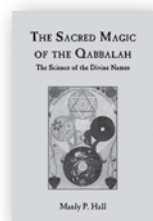
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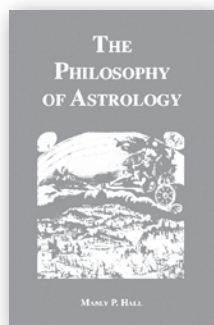
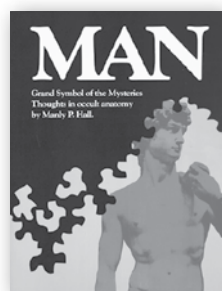
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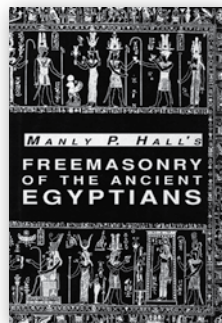
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Manly P. Hall founded the Philosophical Research Society, Inc., a non-profit organization in 1934, dedicated to the dissemination of useful knowledge in the fields of philosophy, comparative religion, and psychology. In his long career, spanning more than seventy years of dynamic public activity, Mr. Hall delivered over 8000 lectures in the United States and abroad, authored over 150 books and essays, and wrote countless magazine articles.

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