

TRANSCENDENTAL MAGIC

ITS DOCTRINE AND RITUAL



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Transcendental Magic: Its Doctrine and Ritual

A Comprehensive Treatise

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Part I: The Doctrine of Transcendental Magic

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INTRODUCTION

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BEHIND the veil of all the hieratic and mystical allegories of ancient doctrines, behind the darkness and strange ordeals of all initiations, under the seal of all sacred writings, in the ruins of Nineveh or Thebes, on the crumbling stones of old temples and on the blackened visage of the Assyrian or Egyptian sphinx, in the monstrous or marvellous paintings which interpret to the faithful of India the inspired pages of the Vedas, in the cryptic emblems of our old books on alchemy, in the ceremonies practised at reception by all secret societies, there are found indications of a doctrine which is everywhere the same and everywhere carefully concealed. Occult philosophy seems to have been the nurse or god-mother of all intellectual forces, the key of all divine obscurities and the absolute queen of society in those ages – when it was reserved exclusively for the education of priests and of kings. It reigned in Persia with the Magi, who perished in the end, as perish all masters of the world, because they abused their power; it endowed India with the most wonderful traditions and with an incredible wealth of poesy, grace and terror in its emblems; it civilized Greece to the music of the lyre of Orpheus; it concealed the principles of all sciences, all progress of the human mind, in the daring

calculations of Pythagoras; fable abounded in its miracles, and history, attempting to estimate this unknown power, became confused with fable; it undermined or consolidated empires by its oracles, caused tyrants to tremble on their thrones and governed all minds, either by curiosity or by fear. For this science, said the crowd, there is nothing impossible, it commands the elements, knows the language of the stars and directs the planetary courses; when it speaks, the moon falls blood-red from heaven; the dead rise in their graves and mutter ominous words, as the night wind blows through their skulls. Mistress of love or of hate, occult science can dispense paradise or hell at its pleasure to human hearts; it disposes of all forms and confers beauty or ugliness; with the wand of Circe it changes men into brutes and animals alternately into men; it disposes even of life and death, can confer wealth on its adepts by the transmutation of metals and immortality by its quintessence or elixir, compounded of gold and light.

Such was Magic from Zoroaster to Manes, from Orpheus to Apollonius of Tyana, when positive Christianity, victorious at length over the brilliant dreams and titanic aspirations of the Alexandrian school, dared to launch its anathemas publicly against this philosophy, and thus forced it to become more occult and mysterious than ever. Moreover, strange and alarming rumours began to circulate concerning initiates or adepts; they were surrounded every where by an ominous influence, and they destroyed or distracted those who allowed themselves to be beguiled by their honeyed eloquence or by the sorcery of their learning. The women whom they loved became Stryges and their children

vanished at nocturnal meetings, while men whispered shudderingly and in secret of bloodstained orgies and abominable banquets. Bones had been found in the crypts of ancient temples, shrieks had been heard in the night, harvests withered and herds sickened when the magician passed by. Diseases which defied medical skill appeared at times in the world, and always, it was said, beneath the envenomed glance of the adepts.

At length a universal cry of execration went up against Magic, the mere name became a crime and the common hatred was formulated in this sentence: "Magicians to the flames!" – as it was shouted some centuries earlier: "To the lions with the Christians!" Now the multitude never conspires except against real powers; it does not know what is true, but it has the instinct of what is strong. It remained for the eighteenth century to deride both Christians and Magic, while infatuated with the disquisitions of Rousseau and the illusions of Cagliostro.

Science, notwithstanding, is at the basis of Magic, as at the root of Christianity there is love, and in the Gospel symbols we find the Word Incarnate adored in His cradle by Three Magi, led thither by a star – the triad and the sign of the microcosm – and receiving their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh, a second mysterious triplicity, under which emblem the highest secrets of the Kabbalah are allegorically contained. Christianity owes therefore no hatred to Magic, but human ignorance has ever stood in fear of the unknown. The science was driven into hiding to escape the impassioned assaults of blind desire: it clothed itself with new hieroglyphics, falsified its intentions, denied

its hopes. Then it was that the jargon of alchemy was created, an impenetrable illusion for the vulgar in their greed of gold, a living language only for the true disciple of Hermes.

Extraordinary fact! Among the sacred records of the Christians there are two texts which the infallible Church makes no claim to understand and has never attempted to expound: these are the Prophecy of Ezekiel and the Apocalypse, two Kabalistic Keys reserved assuredly in heaven for the commentaries of Magian Kings, books sealed as with seven seals for faithful believers, yet perfectly plain to an initiated infidel of the occult sciences. There is also another work, but, although it is popular in a sense and may be found everywhere, this is of all most occult and unknown, because it is the key of the rest. It is in public evidence without being known to the public; no one suspects its existence and no one dreams of seeking it where it actually is. This book, which may be older than that of Enoch, actually has never been translated, but is still preserved unmutated in primeval characters, on detached leaves, like the tablets of the ancients. The fact has eluded notice, though a distinguished scholar has revealed, not indeed its secret, but its antiquity and singular preservation. Another scholar, but of a mind more fantastic than judicious, passed years in the study of this masterpiece, and has merely suspected its plenary importance. It is, in truth, a monumental and extraordinary work, strong and simple as the architecture of the pyramids, and consequently enduring like those – a book which is the summary of all sciences, which can resolve all problems by its infinite

combinations, which speaks by evoking thought, is the inspirer and moderator of all possible conceptions, and the masterpiece perhaps of the human mind. It is to be counted unquestionably among the very great gifts bequeathed to us by antiquity; it is a universal key, the name of which has been explained and comprehended only by the learned William Postel; it is a unique test, whereof the initial characters alone plunged into ecstasy the devout spirit of Saint-Martin, and might have restored reason to the sublime and unfortunate Swedenborg. We shall recur to this book later on, for its mathematical and precise explanation will be the complement and crown of our conscientious undertaking.

The original alliance between Christianity and the Science of the Magi, once demonstrated fully, will be a discovery of no second-rate importance, and we do not doubt that the serious study of Magic and the Kabbalah will lead earnest minds to a reconciliation of science and dogma, of reason and faith, heretofore regarded as impossible.

We have said that the Church, whose special office is the custody of the Keys, does not pretend to possess those of the Apocalypse or of Ezekiel. In the opinion of Christians the scientific and magical Clavicles of Solomon are lost, which notwithstanding, it is certain that, in the domain of intelligence, ruled by the Word nothing that has been written can perish. Whatsoever men cease to understand exists for them no longer, at least in the order of the Word, and it passes then into the domain of enigma and mystery. Furthermore, the antipathy and even open war of the

Official Church against all that belongs to the realm of Magic, which is a kind of personal and emancipated priesthood, is allied with necessary and even with inherent causes in the social and hierarchic constitution of Christian sacerdotal-ism. The Church ignores Magic – for she must either ignore it or perish, as we shall prove later on; yet she does not recognize the less that her mysterious Founder was saluted in His cradle by Three Magi – that is to say, by the hieratic ambassadors of the three parts of the known world and the three analogical worlds of occult philosophy. In the School of Alexandria, Magic and Christianity almost joined hands under the auspices of Ammonius Saccas and of Plato; the doctrine of Hermes is found almost in its entirety in the writings attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite; Synesius outlined the plan of a treatise on dreams, which was annotated subsequently by Cardan, and composed hymns that might have served for the liturgy of the Church of Swedenborg, could a church of the illuminated possess a liturgy. With this period of fiery abstractions and impassioned warfare of words there must be connected also the philosophic reign of Julian, called the Apostate because in his youth he made unwilling profession of Christianity. Everyone is aware that Julian had the misfortune to be a hero out of season of Plutarch, and that he was, if one may say so, the Don Quixote of roman Chivalry; but what most people do not know is that he was one of the illuminated and an initiate of the first order: that he believed in the unity of God and in the universal doctrine of the Trinity; that, in a word, he regretted nothing of the old world but its magnificent symbols and its too gracious images. Julian was

not a pagan; he was a Gnostic allured by the allegories of Greek polytheism, who had the misfortune to find the name of Jesus Christ less sonorous than that of Orpheus. The Emperor paid in his person for the academical tastes of the philosopher and rhetorician, and after affording himself the spectacle and satisfaction of expiring like Epaminondas with the periods of Cato, he had in public opinion, by this time fully Christianized, but anathemas for his funeral oration and a scornful epithet for his ultimate memorial.

Let us pass over the petty minds and small matters of the Bas-Empire, and proceed to the Middle Ages Stay, take this book! Glance at the seventh page, then seat yourself on the mantle which I am spreading, and let each of us cover our eyes with one of its corners Your head swims, does it not, and the earth seems to fly beneath your feet? Hold tightly, and do not look right or left

The vertigo ceases: we are here. Stand up and open your eyes, but take care before all things to make no Christian sign and to pronounce no Christian words.

We are in a landscape of Salvator Rosa, a troubled wilderness which seems resting after a storm. There is no moon in the sky, but you can distinguish little stars gleaming in the brushwood, and may hear about you the slow flight of great birds, which seem to whisper strange oracles as they pass. Let us approach silently that crossroad among the rocks. A harsh, funereal trumpet winds suddenly, and black torches flare up on every side. A tumultuous throng is surging round a vacant throne: all watch and wait. Suddenly they cast themselves on the ground. A goat-headed prince bounds forward among them; he ascends the

throne, turns, and assuming a stooping posture, presents to the assembly a human face, which everyone comes forward to salute and to kiss, their black taper in their hands. With a hoarse laugh he recovers an upright position, and then distributes gold, secret instructions, occult medicines and poisons to his faithful bondsmen. Meanwhile, fires are lighted of fern and alder, piled up with human bones and the fat of executed criminals. Druidesses, crowned with wild parsley and vervain, immolate unbaptized children with golden knives and prepare horrible love-feasts. Tables are spread, masked men seat themselves by half-nude females, and a Bacchanalian orgy begins; there is nothing wanting but salt, the symbol of wisdom and immortality. Wine flows in streams, leaving stains like blood; obscene advances and abandoned caresses begin. A little while, and the whole assembly is beside itself with drink and wantonness, with crimes and singing. They rise, a disordered throng, and form infernal dances Then come all legendary monsters, all phantoms of nightmare; enormous toads play inverted flutes and thump with paws on flanks; limping scarabaei mingle in the dance; crabs play the castanets; crocodiles beat time on their scales; elephants and mam-moths appear habited like Cupids and foot it in the ring: finally, the giddy circles break up and scatter on all sides Every yelling dancer drags away a dishevelled female Lamps and candles formed of human fat go out smoking in the darkness Cries are heard here and there, mingled with peals of laughter, blasphemies and rattlings in the throat. Come, rouse yourself: do not make the sign of the cross! See, I have brought you home. You are in your bed, not a

little worn out, possibly a trifle shattered, by your night's journey and its orgy; but you have beheld that of which everyone talks without knowledge; you have been initiated into secrets no less terrible than the grotto of Triphonius; you have been present at the Sabbath. It remains for you now to preserve your wits, to have a wholesome dread of the law, and to keep at a respectful distance from the Church and her faggots.

Would you care, as a change, to behold something less fantastic, more real and also more truly terrible? You shall assist at the execution of Jacques de Molay and his accomplices or his brethren in martyrdom Be not misled, however; confuse not the guilty and the innocent! Did the Templars really adore Baphomet?

Did they offer a shameful salutation to the buttocks of the goat of Mendes? What was actually this secret and potent association which imperilled Church and State, and was thus destroyed unheard? Judge nothing lightly; they are guilty of a great crime; they have exposed to profane eyes the sanctuary of antique initiation.

They have gathered again and have shared the fruits of the tree of knowledge, so that they might become masters of the world. The judgement pronounced against them is higher and far older than the tribunal of pope or king: "On the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die," said God Himself, as we read in the Book of Genesis.

What then is taking place in the world, and why do priests and potentates tremble? What secret power threatens tiaras and crowns? A few bedlamites are roaming from land to land, concealing, as they say, the Philosophical

Stone under their ragged vesture. They can change earth into gold, and they are without food or lodging! Their brows are encircled by an aureole of glory and by a shadow of ignominy! One has discovered the universal science and goes vainly seeking death to escape the agonies of his triumph: he is the Majorcan Raymond Lully. Another heals imaginary diseases by fantastic remedies, belying beforehand that proverb which enforces the futility of a cautery on a wooden leg: he is the marvellous Paracelsus, always drunk and always lucid, like the heroes of Rabelais. Here is William Postel writing naively to the fathers of the Council of Trent, proclaiming that he has discovered the absolute doctrine, hidden from the foundation of the world, and is longing to share it with them. The Council heeds not the maniac, does not vouchsafe to condemn him, but proceeds to examine the grave questions of efficacious grace and sufficing grace. He whom we behold perishing poor and abandoned is Cornelius Agrippa, less of a magician than any, though the vulgar persist in regarding him as a more potent sorcerer than all because he was sometimes a cynic and mystifier. What secret do these men bear with them to their tomb? Why are they wondered at without being understood? Why are they condemned unheard? Why are they initiates of those terrific secret sciences of which the Church and society are afraid? Why are they acquainted with things of which others know nothing? Why do they conceal what all men burn to know? Why are they invested with a dread and unknown power? The occult sciences! Magic! These words will reveal all and give food for further thought! *De omni re scribili et quibusdum aliis.*

But what, as a fact, was this Magic? What was the power of these men who were at once so proud and so persecuted? If they were really strong, why did they not overcome their enemies? But if they were impotent and foolish, why did people honour them by fearing them? Does Magic exist? Is there an occult knowledge which is in truth a power and works wonders comparable to the miracles of authorized religions? To these two palmary questions we make answer by an affirmation and a book. The book shall justify the affirmation, and the affirmation is this: There was and there still is a potent and real Magic; all that is said of it in legend is true after a certain manner, yet – contrary to the common course of popular exaggeration – it falls below the truth. There is indeed a formidable secret, the revelation of which has once already transformed the world, as testified in Egyptian religious tradition, summarized symbolically by Moses at the beginning of Genesis. This secret constitutes the fatal Science of Good and Evil, and the consequence of its revelation is death. Moses depicts it under the figure of a Tree which stands in the midst of the Terrestrial Paradise, is in proximity to the Tree of Life and is joined at the root thereto. At the foot of this tree is the source of the four mysterious rivers; it is guarded by the sword of fire and by the four symbolical forms of the Biblical sphinx, the Cherubim of Ezekiel Here I must pause, and I fear that already I have said too much. I testify in fine that there is one sole, universal and imperishable dogma, strong as supreme reason; simple, like all that is great; intelligible, like all that is universally and absolutely true; and this dogma is the parent of all others. There is also a science

which confers on man powers apparently superhuman. They are enumerated thus in a Hebrew manuscript of the sixteenth century:

“Hereinafter follow the powers and privileges of him who holds in his right hand the Clavicles of Solomon, and in his left the Branch of the Blossoming Almond. א ALEPH. – He beholds God face to face, without dying. and converses familiarly with the seven genii who command the entire celestial army. ב BETH. – He is above all griefs and all fears. ג GHIMEL. – He reigns with all heaven and is served by all hell. ד DALETH. – He rules his own health and life and can influence equally those of others. ה HE. – He can neither be surprised by misfortune nor overwhelmed by disasters, nor can he be conquered by his enemies. ו VAU. – He knows the reason of the past, present and future. ז ZAIN. – He possesses the secret of the resurrection of the dead and the key of immortality.

Such are the seven chief privileges, and those which rank next are these:








ח CHETH. – To find the Philosophical Stone. ט TETH. – To possess the Universal Medicine. י IOD. – To know the laws of perpetual motion and to prove the quadrature of the circle. כ CAPH. – To change into gold not only all metals but also the earth itself, and even the refuse of the earth.


ל LAMED. – To subdue the most ferocious animals and have power to pronounce those words which paralyse and charm serpents. מ MEM. – To have the

ARS NOTORIA which gives the Universal Science. 

NUN. – To speak learnedly on all subjects, without preparation and without study.

These, finally, are the seven least powers of the Magus:

 SAMECH. – To know at a glance the deep things of the souls of men and the mysteries of the heart s of women.  AYIN. – To force Nature to make him free at his pleasure.  PE. – To foresee all future events which do not depend on a superior free will, or on an undiscernible cause.  TSADE. – To give at once and to all the most efficacious consolations and the most wholesome counsels.  KOPH. – To triumph over adversities.  RESH. – To conquer love and hate.  SHIN. – To have the secret of wealth, to be always its master and never its slave. To enjoy even poverty and never become abject or miserable.

 TAU. – Let us add to these three septenaries that the wise man rules the elements, stills tempests, cures the diseased by his touch and raises the dead!

But certain things have been sealed by Solomon with his triple seal. It is enough that the initiates know; as for others, whether they deride, doubt or believe, whether they threaten or fear, what matters it to science or to us?”

Such actually are the issues of occult philosophy, and we are in a position to meet the charge of insanity or the

suspicion of imposture when we affirm that these privileges are real. To demonstrate this is the sole end of our work on occult philosophy. The Philosophical Stone, the Universal Medicine, the transmutation of metals, the quadrature of the circle and the secret of perpetual motion are neither mystifications of science nor dreams of delusion. They are terms which must be understood in their proper sense; they formulate the varied applications of one and the same secret, the several aspects of a single operation, which is defined in a more comprehensive manner under the name of the Great Work. Furthermore, there exists in Nature a force which is immeasurably more powerful than steam, and a single man, who is able to adapt and direct it, might change thereby the face of the whole world. This force was known to the ancients; it consists in a Universal Agent having equilibrium for its supreme law, while its direction is concerned immediately with the Great Arcanum of Transcendental Magic. By the direction of this agent it is possible to modify the very order of the seasons; to produce at night the phenomena of day; to correspond instantaneously between one extremity of the earth and the other; to see, like Apollonius, what is taking place on the other side of the world; to heal or injure at a distance; to give speech a universal success and reverberation. This agent, which barely manifests under the uncertain methods of Mesmer's followers, is precisely that which the adepts of the Middle Ages denominated the First Matter of the Great Work. The Gnostics represented it as the fiery body of the Holy Spirit; it was the object of adoration in the Secret Rites of the Sabbath and the Temple, under the hieroglyphic

figure of Baphomet or the Androgyne of Mendes. All this will be proved.

Here then are the secrets of occult philosophy, and such is Magic in history. Let us glance at it now as it appears in its books and its acts, in its Initiations and its Rites. The key of all magical allegories is found in the tablets which we have mentioned, and these tablets we regard as the work of Hermes. About this book, which may be called the keystone of the whole edifice of occult science, are grouped innumerable legends that are either its partial translation or its commentary reproduced perpetually, under a thousand varied forms. Sometimes the ingenious fables combine harmoniously into a great epic which characterizes an epoch, though how or why is not clear to the uninitiated. Thus, the fabulous history of the Golden Fleece resumes and also veils the Hermetic and magical doctrines of Orpheus; and if we recur only to the mysterious poetry of Greece, it is because the sanctuaries of Egypt and India to some extent dismay us by their resources, leaving our choice embarrassed in the midst of such abundant wealth.

We are eager, moreover, to reach the Thebaid at once, that dread synthesis of all doctrine, past, present and future; that – so to speak – infinite fable, which reaches, like the Deity of Orpheus, to either end of the cycle of human life.

Extraordinary fact! The seven gates of Thebes, attacked and defended by seven chiefs who have sworn upon the blood of victims, possess the same significance as the seven seals of the Sacred Book interpreted by seven genii and assailed by a monster with seven heads, after being opened

by a Lamb which liveth and was dead, in the allegorical work of St. John. The mysterious origin of Oedipus, found hanging on the tree of Cithaeron like a bleeding fruit, recalls the symbols of Moses and the narratives of Genesis. He makes war upon his father, whom he slays without knowing – tremendous prophecy of the blind emancipation of reason apart from science. Thereafter he meets with the sphinx, that symbol of symbols, the eternal enigma of the vulgar, the granite pedestal of the sciences of the sages, the voracious and silent monster whose unchanging form expresses the one dogma of the Great Universal Mystery. How is the tetrad changed into the duad and explained by the triad? In more common but more emblematic terms, what is that animal which in the morning has four feet, two at noon, and three in the evening? Philosophically speaking, how does the doctrine of elementary forces produce the dualism of Zoroaster, while it is summarized by the triad of Pythagoras and Plato? What is the ultimate reason of allegories and numbers, the final message of all symbolisms? Oedipus replies with a simple and terrible word which destroys the sphinx and makes the diviner King of Thebes: the answer to the enigma is MAN! . . . Unfortunate! He has seen too much, and yet through a clouded glass. A little while and he will expiate his ominous and imperfect clairvoyance by a voluntary blindness, and then vanish in the midst of a storm, like all civilizations which – each in its own day – shall divine an answer to the riddle of the sphinx without grasping its whole import and mystery. Everything is symbolical and transcendental in this titanic epic of human destinies. The two antagonistic brothers formulate the

second part of the Grand Mystery, completed divinely by the sacrifice of Antigone. There follows the last war; the brethren slay one another; Capaneus is destroyed by the lightning which he defies; Amphiaraus is swallowed by the earth; and all these are so many allegories which, by their truth and their grandeur, astonish those who can penetrate their triple hieratic sense. Aeschylus, annotated by Ballanche, gives only a weak notion concerning them, whatever the primeval sublimities of the Greek poet or the ingenuities of the French critic.

The secret book of antique initiation was not unknown to Homer, who outlines its plan and chief figures on the shield of Achilles, with minute precision. But the gracious Homeric fictions replaced too soon in popular memory the simple and abstract truths of primeval revelation. Humanity clung to the form and allowed the idea to be forgotten; signs lost power in their multiplication; Magic became corrupted also at this period, and degenerated with the sorcerers of Thessaly into the most profane enchantments. The crime of Oedipus brought forth its deadly fruits, and the science of good and evil erected evil into a sacrilegious divinity.

Men, weary of the light, took refuge in the shadow of bodily substance; the dream of that void which is filled by God seemed in their eyes to be greater than God Himself, and thus hell was created.

When, in the course of this work, we make use of the consecrated terms God, Heaven and Hell, let it be understood, once and for all, that our meaning is as far removed from that which the profane attach to them as initiation is remote from vulgar thought. God, for us, is the

AZOT of the sages, the efficient and final principle of the Great Work.

Returning to the fable of Oedipus, the crime of the King of Thebes was that he failed to understand the sphinx; that he destroyed the scourge of Thebes without being pure enough to complete the expiation in the name of his people. The plague, in consequence, avenged speedily the death of the monster, and the King of Thebes, forced to abdicate, sacrificed himself to the terrible manes of the sphinx, more alive and voracious than ever when it had passed from the domain of form into that of idea. Oedipus divined what was man and he put out his own eyes because he did not see what was God. He divulged half of the Great Arcanum, and, to save his people, it was necessary for him to bear the remaining half of the terrible secret into exile and the grave.

After the colossal fable of Oedipus we find the gracious poem of Psyche, which was certainly not invented by Apuleius. The Great Magical Arcanum reappears here under the figure of a mysterious union between a god and a weak mortal, abandoned alone and naked on a rock. Psyche must remain in ignorance of the secret of her ideal royalty, and if she behold her husband she must lose him. Here Apuleius commentates and interprets Moses; but did not the Elohim of Israel and the gods of Apuleius both issue from the sanctuaries of Memphis and Thebes?

Psyche is the sister of Eve, or rather she is Eve spiritualized. Both desire to know and lose innocence for the honour of the ordeal. Both deserve to go down into hell, one to bring back the antique box of Pandora, the other to find and to crush the head of the old serpent, who is the symbol

of time and of evil. Both are guilty of the crime which must be expiated by the Prometheus of ancient days and the Lucifer of the Christian legend, the one delivered by Hercules and the other overcome by the Saviour. The Great Magical Secret is therefore the lamp and dagger of Psyche, the apple of Eve, the sacred fire of Prometheus, the burning sceptre of Lucifer, but it is also the Holy Cross of the Redeemer. To be acquainted with it sufficiently for its abuse or divulgation is to deserve all sufferings; to know as one should alone know it, namely, to make use of and conceal it, is to be master of the Absolute.

A single word comprehends all things, and this word consists of four letters: it is the Tetragram of the Hebrews, the AZOT of the alchemists, the Thot of the Bohemians, or the Taro of the Kabalists. This word, expressed after so many manners, means God for the profane, man for the philosophers, and imparts to the adepts the final term of human sciences and the key of divine power; but he only can use it who understands the necessity of never revealing it. Had Oedipus, instead of killing the sphinx, overcome it, harnessed it to his chariot and thus entered Thebes, he would have been king without incest, without misfortunes and without exile. Had Psyche, by meekness and affection, persuaded Love to reveal himself, she would never have lost Love. Now, Love is one of the mythological images of the Great Secret and the Great Agent, because it postulates at once an action and a passion, a void and a plenitude, a shaft and a wound. The initiates will understand me, and on account of the profane I must not speak more clearly.

After the marvellous Golden Ass of Apuleius, we find no more magical epics.

Science, conquered in Alexandria by the fanaticism of the murderers of Hypatia, became Christian, or rather concealed itself under Christian veils with Ammonius, Synesius and the pseudonymous author of the books of Dionysius the Areopagite.

In such times it was necessary to exonerate miracles under the pretence of superstition and science by an unintelligible language. Hieroglyphic writing was revived; pantacles and characters were invented to summarize an entire doctrine by a sign, a whole sequence of tendencies and revelations in a word. What was the end of the aspirants to knowledge? They sought the secret of the Great Work, the Philosophical Stone, the perpetual motion, the quadrature of the circle, the Universal Medicine – formulae which often saved them from persecution and hatred by causing them to be taxed with madness, but all signifying one of the phases of the Great Magical Secret, as we shall show later on. This absence of epics continues till our Romance of the Rose; but the rose-symbol, which expresses also the mysterious and magical sense of Dante's poem, is borrowed from the transcendent Kabbalah, and it is time that we should have recourse to this vast and hidden source of universal philosophy.

The Bible, with all its allegories, gives expression to the religious knowledge of the Hebrews only in an incomplete and veiled manner. The book which we have mentioned, the hieratic characters of which we shall explain subsequently, that book which William Postel names the Genesis of Enoch,

existed certainly before Moses and the prophets, whose doctrine, fundamentally identical with that of the ancient Egyptians, had also its exotericism and its veils. When Moses spoke to the people, says the sacred book allegorically, he placed a veil over his face, and he removed it when communing with God: this accounts for the alleged Biblical absurdities which so exercised the satirical powers of Voltaire. The books were written only as memorials of tradition and in symbols that were unintelligible to the profane. The Pentateuch and the poems of the prophets were, moreover, elementary works, alike in doctrine, ethics and liturgy; the true secret and traditional philosophy was not committed to writing until a later period and under veils even less transparent. Thus arose a second and unknown Bible, or rather one which was not comprehended by Christians, a storehouse, so they say, of monstrous absurdities – for in this case believers, involved by the same ignorance, speak the language of sceptics – but a monument, as we affirm, which comprises all that philosophical and religious genius has ever accomplished or imagined in the sublime order, a treasure encompassed by thorns, a diamond concealed in a rude and opaque stone: our readers will have guessed already that we refer to the Talmud. How strange is the destiny of the Jews, those scapegoats, martyrs and saviours of the world, a people full of vitality, a bold and hardy race, which persecutions have preserved intact, because it has not yet accomplished its mission! Do not our apostolical traditions declare that after the decline of faith among the Gentiles salvation shall again come forth out of the house of Jacob, and that then the

crucified Jew Who is adored by the Christians will give the empire of the world into the hands of God His Father?

On penetrating into the sanctuary of the Kabbalah one is seized with admiration in the presence of a doctrine so logical, so simple and at the same time so absolute. The essential union of ideas and signs; the consecration of the most fundamental realities by primitive characters; the trinity of words, letters and numbers; a philosophy simple as the alphabet, profound and infinite as the Word; theorems more complete and luminous than those of Pythagoras; a theology which may be summed up on the fingers; an infinite which can be held in the hollow of an infant's hand; ten figures and twenty-two letters, a triangle, a square and a circle: such are the elements of the Kabbalah. Such also are the component principles of the written Word, reflection of that spoken Word which created the world! All truly dogmatic religions have issued from the Kabbalah and return therein. Whatsoever is grand or scientific in the religious dreams of the illuminated, of Jacob Bohme, Swedenborg, Saint-Martin and the rest, is borrowed from the Kabbalah; all Masonic associations owe to it their secrets and their symbols. The Kabbalah alone consecrates the alliance of universal reason and the Divine Word; it establishes by the counterpoise of two forces in apparent opposition, the eternal balance of being; it alone reconciles reason with faith, power with liberty, science with mystery: it has the keys of the present, past and future!

To become initiated into the Kabbalah it is insufficient to read and to meditate upon the writings of Reuchlin, Galatinus, Kircher, or Picus de Mirandola; it is necessary to

study and understand the Hebrew writers in the collection of Pisto-rius, the *Sepher Yetzirah* above all; it is essential in particular to master the great book Zohar, to investigate the collection of 1684, entitled *Kabbala Denudata*, especially the treatise on “Kabalistic Pneumatics” and that on the “Revolution of Souls”; and afterwards to enter boldly into the luminous darkness of the whole dogmatic and allegorical body of the Talmud. We shall be then in a position to understand William Postel, and shall admit secretly that – apart from his very premature and overgenerous dreams about the emancipation of women – this celebrated, learned, illuminated man could not have been so mad as is pretended by those who have not read him.

We have sketched rapidly the history of occult philosophy; we have indicated its sources and analysed in a few words its chief memorials. The present division of our work refers only to the science, but Magic, or rather magical power, comprehends two things, a science and a force: without the force the science is nothing, or rather it is a danger. To give knowledge to power alone, such is the supreme law of initiations. Hence did the Great Revealer say: ‘The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent only shall carry it away.’ The door of truth is closed, like the sanctuary of a virgin: he must be a man who would enter.

All miracles are promised to faith, and what is faith except the audacity of will which does not hesitate in the darkness, but advances towards the light in spite of all ordeals, and surmounting all obstacles? It is unnecessary to repeat here the history of ancient initiations: the more

dangerous and terrible they were, the greater was their efficacy. Hence, in those days, the world had men to govern and instruct it. The Sacerdotal Art and the Royal Art consisted above all in ordeals of courage, discretion and will. It was a novitiate similar to that of those priests who, under the name of Jesuits, are so unpopular at the present day, but would govern the world notwithstanding, had they a truly wise and intelligent chief.

After passing our life in the search for the Absolute in religion, science and justice; after revolving in the circle of Faust, we have reached the primal doctrine and the first book of humanity. At this point we pause, having discovered the secret of human omnipotence and indefinite progress, the key of all symbolisms, the first and final doctrine: we have come to understand what was meant by that expression so often made use of in the Gospel – the Kingdom of God.

To provide a fixed point as a fulcrum for human activity is to solve the problem of Archimedes, by realizing the use of his famous lever. This it is which was accomplished by the great initiators who have electrified the world, and they could not have done so except by means of the Great and Incommunicable Secret.

However, as a guarantee of its renewed youth, the symbolical phoenix never reappeared before the eyes of the world without having consumed solemnly the remains and evidences of its previous life. So also Moses saw to it that all those who had known Egypt and her mysteries should end their life in the desert; at Ephesus St. Paul burnt all books which treated of the occult sciences; and in fine, the French

Revolution, daughter of the great Johannite Orient and the ashes of the Templars, spoliated the churches and blasphemed the allegories of the Divine Cultus. But all doctrines and all revivals proscribe Magic and condemn its mysteries to the flames and to oblivion. The reason is that each religion or philosophy which comes into the world is a Benjamin of humanity and insures its own life by destroying its mother. It is because the symbolical serpent turns ever devouring its own tail; it is because, as essential condition of existence, a void is necessary to every plenitude, space for every dimension, an affirmation for each negation: herein is the eternal realization of the phoenix allegory.

Two illustrious scholars have preceded me along the path that I am travelling, but they have, so to speak, spent the dark night therein. I refer to Volney and Dupuis, to Dupuis above all, whose immense erudition produced only a negative work, for in the origin of all religions he saw nothing but astronomy, taking thus the symbolic cycle for doctrine and the calendar for legend. He was deficient in one branch of knowledge, that of true Magic which comprises the secrets of the Kabbalah. Dupuis passed through the antique sanctuaries, like the prophet Ezekiel over the plain strewn with bones, and only understood death, for want of that word which collects the virtue of the four winds and can make a living people of all the vast ossuary, by crying to the ancient symbols: 'Arise! Take up a new form and walk!' But the hour has come when we must have the courage to attempt what no one has dared to perform previously. Like Julian, we would rebuild the temple, and in so doing we do not believe that we shall be belying a

wisdom that we venerate, which also Julian would himself have been worthy to adore, had the rancorous and fanatical doctors of his period permitted him to understand it. For us the Temple has two Pillars, on one of which Christianity has inscribed its name. We have therefore no wish to attack Christianity: far from it, we seek to explain and accomplish it. Intelligence and will have exercised alternately their power in the world; religion and philosophy are still at war with one another, but they must end in agreement. The provisional object of Christianity was to establish, by obedience and faith, a supernatural or religious equality among men, to immobilize intelligence by faith, so as to provide a fulcrum for virtue which came for the destruction of the aristocracy of science, or rather to replace that aristocracy, then already destroyed. Philosophy, on the contrary, has laboured to bring back men by liberty and reason to natural inequality, and to substitute wits for virtue by inaugurating the reign of industry. Neither of these operations has proved complete or adequate; neither has brought men to perfection and felicity.

That which is now dreamed, almost without daring to hope for it, is an alliance between the two forces so long regarded as contrary, and there is good ground for desiring it, seeing that these two great powers of the human soul are no more opposed to one another than is the sex of man opposed to that of woman.

Undoubtedly they differ, but their apparently contrary dispositions come only from their aptitude to meet and unite.