

*Every Initiate must be
an adept in Occultism*



BUDDHAS AND INITIATES SERIES
EVERY INITIATE MUST BE AN ADEPT IN OCCULTISM

[It requires ages to become an adept.] A full-blown Adept or an INITIATE. There is a great difference between the two. An Adept is one versed in some and *any* special Art or Science. An “Initiate” is one who is initiated into the mysteries of the Esoteric or Occult philosophy — a Hierophant.

— H.P. BLAVATSKY¹

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The Initiates are sure to come in company with the gods.

— SOCRATES in Plato’s *Phaedo*, 60c

In the first issue of *La Revue Théosophique*, at the beginning of the fine lecture of our Brother and colleague, the learned corresponding secretary of the *Hermes* Theosophical Society, we read in a note:²

We term *Initiate* every seeker in possession of the elementary data of occult science. It is necessary to be careful not to confuse this term with the term *Adept*, which stands for the highest degree to which an Initiate can attain. We have in Europe many Initiates, but I do not think there are any Adepts, like those of the Orient.

Unfamiliar with the fine points of the French language, and not having at my elbow even an etymological dictionary, it is impossible for me to say whether this double definition is authorized in French, except in the terminology of Free-Masons. But in English, and according to the meaning sanctioned by usage among the Theosophists and the Occultists of India, these two terms have a meaning absolutely different from the one given to them by the author; I may say that the definition given by Monsieur Papus of the word *Adept* is one that applies to the word *Initiate*, and *vice versa*.

I would never have thought of pointing out this error — in the eyes of Theosophists, at least — if it did not threaten, as far as I can see, to produce a most deplorable future confusion in the minds of the subscribers to our Journal.

¹ *Blavatsky Collected Writings*, (MISCELLANEOUS NOTES) XI p. 158

² Note 2, p. 23

Using — as I am doing myself — these two qualifying terms in a sense entirely opposite to the one given to them by the Masons and Monsieur Papus, *quid pro quos*¹ which should be avoided at all costs are bound to arise. Let us understand each other first, if we want to be understood by our readers.

Let us agree upon a fixed and invariable definition of the terms which we use in Theosophy, for otherwise, instead of orderliness and clarity, we would bring into the chaos of ideas held by the world of the profane nothing but greater confusion.

Without knowing the reasons which have made our learned co-worker use the above-mentioned terms as he has, I will limit myself by confronting the “Widow’s Sons” who are using them in a sense diametrically opposite to their real meaning.

Everybody knows that the word “Adept” comes from the Latin *Adeptus*. This term is derived from two words: *ad*, “of,” and *apisci*, “to pursue” (*āp* in Sanskrit).

An Adept is therefore an individual who is versed in some art or science, having acquired it in one or another manner. It follows that this term can be applied just as well to an adept in astronomy, as to one in the art of making *pâtés de foie gras*. A shoemaker as well as a perfume-maker, the one versed in the art of making shoes, and the other in the art of chemistry, are both “adepts.”

In the case of the term *Initiate*, it is different. Every *Initiate* must be an adept in occultism; he must become one before being initiated in the Greater Mysteries. But not every adept is always an *Initiate*. It is true that the *Illuminati* used the term *Adeptus* in speaking of themselves, but they did so in a general sense, as in the seventh degree of the Order of the Rite of Zinnendorf. Thus again, one used the terms *Adoptatus*, *Adeptus Coronatus* in the seventh degree of the Swedish Rite; and *Adeptus Exemptus* in the Seventh degree of the Rosy Cross. This was an innovation of the Middle Ages. None of the real *Initiates* of the Greater (or even the Lesser) Mysteries is called *Adeptus* in classical works, but rather *Initiatus*, in Latin, and *Epopetes*, *εποπτης*, in Greek. The *Illuminati* themselves gave the title of *Initiates* only to those among their brethren who were more learned than all the others in the mysteries of their Society. Only the less learned ones were *Mystes* and *Adepts*, seeing that they had yet been admitted but to the lower degrees.

Let us now turn to the term “initiate.”

It should be stated at the very outset that there is a great difference between the verbal and the substantive form of the word. A professor *initiates* his student into the first elements of some science, a science in which that student can become an adept, in other words versed in his specialty. On the contrary, an adept in occultism is at first *instructed* in religious mysteries, after which, if he does not fail during the terrible initiatory trials, he becomes an INITIATE. The best translators of the classics invariably render the Greek word *εποπτης* as “initiated into the Greater Mysteries”; as this term is synonymous with *Hierophant*, *ιεροφαντης*, “*he who explains* the sacred mysteries.” *Initiatus* with the Romans was equivalent to the term *Mystagogos* and both were exclusively reserved for the one who, in the *Temple*, initiated into the highest mysteries. It represented then, figuratively, the universal Creator. No one dared to

¹ [a reciprocal exchange]

pronounce this word before the profane. The place of the “Initiatus” was in the East, where he was seated, a golden globe hanging from his neck. Freemasons have tried to imitate the Hierophant-*Initiatus* in the person of their “Venerables” and the Grand-Masters of their Lodges.

But does the cloak make the monk?

It is to be regretted that they did not limit themselves to this one and sole profanation.

The French (and English) substantive “initiation,” being derived from the Latin word *initium*, beginning, the Masons, with more respect for the dead letter *which kills*, than for the spirit which quickens, have applied the term “initiate” to all their neophytes or candidates — to the beginners — in all the degrees of Masonry, the highest as well as the lowest.

And yet, they knew better than anyone else that the term *Initiatus* belonged to the 5th and highest degree of the Order of the Templars; that the title of *Initiate in the mysteries* was the 21st degree of the Metropolitan chapter in France; and that the one of *Initiate in the profound mysteries* indicated the 62nd degree of the same chapter. Knowing all this, they nevertheless applied this sacred title, sanctified by its antiquity, to their mere candidates, youngsters among the “Widow’s Sons.” But just because the passion for innovations and modifications of various kinds made the Masons do things which an occultist of the Orient would consider a veritable sacrilege, is that a reason why Theosophists should accept their terminology?

As far as we are concerned, disciples of the Masters of the Orient as we are, we have nothing to do with modern Masonry. The real secrets of symbolic Masonry are lost, as Ragon, by the way, proves very well. The keystone, the central stone of the arch built by the first royal dynasties of Initiates — ten times prehistoric — has been shaken loose since the closing of the latest mysteries. The task of destruction, or rather of strangulation and suffocation begun by the Caesars, has finally been completed, in Europe, by the Fathers of the Church. Imported again, since those days, from the sanctuaries of the Far East, the sacred stone was cracked and finally broken into a thousand pieces.

Upon whom shall we lay the blame for this crime?

Is it upon the Freemasons, especially the Templars, persecuted, assassinated, violently despoiled of their annals and their written statutes? Is it upon the Church which, after appropriating to itself the dogma and rituals of primitive Masonry, was bent upon making its travestied rites pass for the only TRUTH, and decided to stifle the latter?

Whichever it may be, it is no longer the Masons who have the *whole* truth, whether we cast the blame on Rome or the insect *Shermah*¹ of Solomon’s famous temple, which modern Masonry claims as the basis and origin of the Order.

¹ According to a Jewish tradition, the stones which were used to build Solomon’s temple (an allegorical symbol taken literally and made into an actual edifice) were not chiselled or polished by human hands, but by a worm called *Samis*, created by God for this express purpose. These stones were miraculously transported to the location where the temple was to be erected, and cemented afterwards by the angels who built Solomon’s temple. The Masons introduced the *Worm Samis* into their legendary history and call it the “insect *Shermah*.”

For tens of thousands of years, the genealogical tree of the sacred Science which all races had in common, remained identical, as the temple of this science is ONE and is built on the unshakable rock of primeval truth. But the Masons of the last two centuries have preferred to detach themselves from it. Once more, and this time in practice, rather than in theory, they shattered the *cube*, which then broke into twelve parts. They rejected the real stone for the false, and whatever they did with the former one — their *corner-stone* — it was not according to the spirit which quickens, but *according to the dead letter which kills*.

Is it again the Worm Samis (*alias* “insect Shermah”) — whose traces on the rejected stone led the “builders of the Temple” into error — which gnawed at the same structure? What was done then, was done knowingly. The builders surely knew the sum total¹ by heart, *i.e.*, the thirteen lines of *five* faces.

What does it matter? As for ourselves — faithful disciples of the Orient — we prefer, instead of all these stones, one that has nothing to do with any of the other mummeries of masonic degrees.

We will keep to the *eben Shetiyyah* (which has a different name in Sanskrit), the perfect cube which, while containing the *delta* or triangle, replaces the name of the Kabalistic Tetragrammaton by the symbol of the *incommunicable name*.

We willingly leave to the Masons their “insect,” hoping meanwhile for their sake that modern symbology, which advances with such rapid strides, does not discover the identity of the Worm *Shermah-Samis* with Hiram-Abif — which would be rather embarrassing.

However, on second thought, this discovery would not be without its useful side, nor would it be without great charm. The idea of a worm being at the head of Masonic genealogy, and the Architect of the first Masonic temple, would also make of this worm the “father Adam” of the Masons, and would endear the “Widow’s Sons” even more to Darwinists. This would bring them closer to modern Science which seeks natural proofs to strengthen the theory of Haekelian evolution. What would it matter to them, once that they have lost the secret of their true origin?

Let no one object to this assertion which is a well-established fact. I take the opportunity of reminding the Masonic Gentlemen who might read this, that, as far as *esoteric* Masonry is concerned, nearly all its secrets have disappeared since Elias Ashmole and his immediate successors. If they try to contradict us, we will tell them, as Job did:

Thine own mouth condemneth thee and not I: yea, thine own lips testify against thee.²

Our greatest secrets used to be taught in the Masonic lodges the world over. But their Grand Masters and *Gurus* perished one after the other, and what remained

¹ This sum total is made up of a *bisected isosceles* triangle — three lines — the edge of the cube being the base; two squares diagonally *bisected*, each one having a perpendicular line towards the centre — six lines; two straight lines at right angle to each other; and a square diagonally *bisected* — two lines; sum total — 13 lines or 5 faces of the cube.

² xv, 6

written in secret manuscripts — like the one of Nicholas Stone, for instance, destroyed in 1720 by conscientious brethren — was reduced to ashes between the end of the XVIIth and the beginning of the XVIIIth century in England, as well as on the continent.¹

Why such destruction?

Certain brethren in England have said from mouth to ear that the destruction was the result of a shameful pact between certain Masons and the Church. An aged “brother,” a great Kabbalist, has just died here, whose grandfather, a renowned Mason, was an intimate friend of Count de Saint-Germain, when the latter was sent, it is said, by Louis XV, to England, in 1760, to negotiate peace between the two countries. The Count de Saint-Germain left in the hands of this Mason certain documents relating to the history of Masonry, and containing the key to more than one misunderstood mystery. He did so on the condition that these documents would become the secret heritage of all those descendants of the Kabbalists who became Masons. These papers, however, were of value to but two Masons: the father and the son who has just died, and they will be of no use to anyone else in Europe. Before his death, the precious documents were left with an Oriental (a Hindu) who was commissioned to transmit them to a certain person who would come to Amritsar, City of Immortality, to claim them. It is also told, confidentially, that the famous founder of the Lodge of Trinosophists, J.M. Ragon, was also initiated into many secrets by an Oriental, in Belgium, and some say that he knew Saint-Germain in his youth. This might perhaps explain why the author of the *Tuileur général de la Franc-Maçonnerie*, or *Manuel de l’Initié*, affirmed that Elias Ashmole was the real founder of modern Masonry. No one knew better than Ragon the extent of the loss of Masonic secrets, as he himself says:

“It is of the very essence and nature of the Mason to seek light wherever he thinks he can find it,” proclaims the *circular* of the Grand Orient of France. “In the meanwhile,” he adds, “they give the Masons the glorious title of children of light, and they leave them enveloped in darkness!”²

Thus, if Monsieur Papus copied the Masons, as we think, in his definition of the terms *Adept* and *Initiate*, he was wrong, for one does not turn towards darkness when one is already standing in the light. Theosophy has invented nothing, has said nothing new, but simply faithfully repeats the lessons of the remotest antiquity. The terminology established some fifteen years ago in the Theosophical Society is the correct one, because in every case these terms are a faithful translation of their Sanskrit equivalents, almost as old as the latest human race. This terminology could not be

¹ [This is what Mackey’s *Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry* (1929), Vol. II, p. 970, says about it:

“This manuscript is no longer in existence, having been one of those which was destroyed, in 1720, by some too scrupulous Brethren. Brother Preston (1792 edition, p. 167) describes it as ‘an old manuscript, which was destroyed with many others in 1720, said to have been in the possession of Nicholas Stone, a curious sculptor under Inigo Jones.’ Preston gives, however, an extract from it, which details the affection borne by Saint Alban for the Freemasons, the wages he gave them, and the Charter which he obtained from the King to hold a General Assembly. Anderson (*Constitutions*, 1738, p. 99) who calls Stone the Warden of Inigo Jones, intimates that he wrote the manuscript, and gives it as authority for a statement that in 1607 Jones held the Quarterly Communications. The extract made by Preston, and the brief reference by Anderson, are all that is left of the *Stone Manuscript*.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]

² *Cours philosophique, etc.*, pp. 59-60

modified at present, without running the risk of introducing into the theosophical teachings a chaos which would be deplorable and dangerous to their clarity.

Let us remind ourselves of these truthful words of Ragon:

Initiation had its cradle in India. It has preceded the civilizations of Asia and Greece, and in refining the mind and the customs of the people, it has furnished the basis for all civil, political, and religious laws.

The word *initiate* is the same as *dvija*, the “twice-born” Brāhmana. It means that initiation was considered a birth into a new life, or, as Apuleius has it, it is a “resurrection to a new life,” *novam vitam inibat* . . . ¹

Except for what has been pointed out above, the lecture of Monsieur Papus on the seal of the Society is admirable, and the erudition which he displays therein is most remarkable. The Fellows of our Fraternity owe him sincere thanks for explanations which are as clear and just as they are interesting.

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¹ [Although these actual words could not be located in the Latin text of Apuleius' *Metamorphoses*, yet it is most likely that what is meant is the passage in Book XI, xvi (Helm's ed.), which states in parts “*qui vitae praecedentis innocentia fideque meruerit . . . ut renatus quodam modo statim . . .*” — “one who earned by reason of the innocence (blamelessness) of his former life a sort of resurrection, etc.” — *Boris de Zirkoff*.]