

*To know the riddle of life, to
want, to dare, to remain silent*



He who lives in life as if he were in eternity,
and in eternity as if he were in life, is free.

— JAKOB BÖHME

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TO PICTURE THE ETERNAL AND INCOMPREHENSIBLE IN FORMS, and to describe the unimaginable in words, is a task whose difficulty has been experienced by all who ever attempted it. The formless cannot be described in forms, it can only be represented by allegories which can only be understood by those whose minds are open to the illumination of truth. The misunderstandings of allegorical expressions in the sacred books has led to religious wars, to the torturing, burning, and killing of thousands of innocent victims, it has caused the living wives of dead Hindus to be burned with the corpses of their husbands, it has caused ignorant men and women to throw themselves before the wheels of the car of the *Juggernath*, it causes the endless quarrels between some 200 Christian sects,¹ and while the truth unites all humanity into one harmonious whole the misunderstanding of it produces innumerable discords and diseases.

The Bible says: “The secret things belong unto the Lord,”² and the Bhagwat Gita repeats the same truth in the following words: “Those whose minds are attracted to my invisible nature have a great labour to encounter, because an invisible path is difficult to be found by corporeal beings.”³ The greatest poets of the world have had occasion to regret the poverty of human language, which rendered it impossible to express the language of their hearts in words; and those whose minds have been fully opened to the knowledge of spiritual truths, the wisest of all men, such as Buddha and Jehoshua, have left no written records of their doctrines, because their conceptions were too grand to be expressed in words, and can be understood only by those who feel as they felt, and whose hearts are open to the sunlight of divine illumination.

¹ [Today there are about 38,000 Christian denominations in the world.]

² [Deuteronomy xxix, 29]

³ [Gita 12 vs. 5]

Everything in nature has a threefold nature, and likewise the allegories of the sacred books of the East as well as those of the West have a threefold meaning — an exoteric, an esoteric, and a secret signification. The vulgar — the learned as well as the unlearned — can see only the exoteric side, which, in the majority of cases, is so absurd, that its very absurdity should serve as a warning to people endowed with common sense not to accept these fables in their literal meaning; there is, however, nothing too absurd to attract the attention of the ignorant, and we see them, therefore, split into three classes, namely — first into those who implicitly believe their literal meaning; secondly, into those who reject them on account of their supposed absurdity, never suspecting a deeper meaning; and, thirdly, into those who are irritated at their absurdity, and valiantly fight the man of straw which they have themselves set up in their minds.

Those who are willing to learn can be instructed, but they that believe that they already know, refuse to be taught. For this reason the legitimate guardians of the truth, the teachers of science and religion, are often the last ones to recognize the truth, and the old French proverb, that “*les extremes se touchent*,”¹ is as true of the realm of intellect as it is in other departments of nature. The *esoteric* meaning of symbols may be understood by those whose intellect is open to intuition, and may be explained to all who do not reject the truth; but the *secret* meaning of the sacred symbols cannot be explained in words, it can be understood only by those who have entered the practical way.

How can we enter the path? — Petrified speculative science, mouldy speculative philosophy, and dried-up speculative theology groan in the embrace of death. Mankind awakes from its slumber and asks them for the bread of wisdom, but receives only a stone. It turns to science, but science is silent, she wraps herself up in her vanity and turns away; it turns to philosophy and old philosophy answers, but her talk is an incomprehensible jargon, and confuses matters still more. It turns to theology, but theology threatens the obnoxious questioner with hell and bids him to remain ignorant. But the people, on the whole, are no longer satisfied with such answers; they are no longer satisfied with the assertion that the truth is known to a few, they want to enjoy it themselves.

If we wish to enter the path to infinite life, the first requirement is

To know the riddle of life

To be able to know the truth we must learn, and to learn the truth we must free our minds from all the intellectual rubbish that has accumulated there through the perverted methods of education of modern civilisation. The more false doctrines we have learned the more difficult will be the labour to make room for the truth, and it may take years to unlearn that which we have learned at the expense of a great deal of labour, money, and time. The Bible says that “we must become like little children before we can enter the kingdom of truth.”² The principal thing to know is *to know our-*

¹ [i.e., extremes meet.]

² [Matthew xviii, 2-4]

selves; if we know ourselves, we will know that we are to be the kings of the universe. The essential *Man* is a *Son of God*, he is something far greater, far more sublime and far more powerful than the insignificant puppet described as a man in our scientific works on anthropology.

Well may *Man* who knows his true nature be proud of his nobility and power; well may the *man* known to modern science be ashamed of his weakness. Well may the former consider himself superior to the gods, and the latter, a worm of the earth, crawl into a corner and ask for the protection of a real man who is a god. The rational *Man* is a divine being, whose power extends as far as his thoughts can reach; the irrational man is a compound of semi-animal forces, subject to their caprices and whims, with a spark of divine fire in him to enable him to control them, but which spark, in the great majority of cases, is left to smoulder and die. The former is immortal, the latter lives a few years among the illusions of life. The former knows that he lives for ever in the All, the latter expects to die, or perhaps to obtain a lease on his personal existence by the favour of some personal god who may permit him to carry his iniquities into a sphere, in which only the pure can exist.¹

There are three kinds of knowledge, the useful, the useless and the harmful. The most useful knowledge is the one which relates to the essential nature of man, to his destiny, and to his possibilities. There is no higher knowledge than the knowledge of *religion*; that is to say, the knowledge of all that *relates* to the spiritual, emotional, and physical nature of man. He who has this knowledge is necessarily the true physician for the soul as well as for the body, and he heals by the power of his spirit. An attempt to separate religion from science and the practice of morality from the practice of medicine leads to illusions of the most dangerous kind.

The useless knowledge is the knowledge of, or rather the adherence to, illusions and falsehoods; it is no real knowledge, although it embraces a great deal of what is considered of great importance in civilized countries that men should know. Many of our “scientific attainments” confer no real knowledge, because they are based upon misconceptions, and however logical the deductions made from false premises may be, falsehoods can produce only falsehoods.

As long as the true nature of man is not known, his lower interests are mistaken for his higher ones. Scientific attainments are often only useful for the purpose of obtaining the power to speculate on the ignorance of those that have no such intellectual acquirements, and by taking advantage of their beliefs to obtain money and material comfort. Such scientific attainments may be good for such purposes, but they retard the progress of man in a spiritual direction they are therefore — to say the least — useless for the only true and permanent interest of man.

The harmful knowledge consists in scientific attainments without any corresponding perception of the moral aspect of truth. It is only partial knowledge, because it recognizes only a part of the truth. A high intellectual development without any corresponding growth of morality is a curse to mankind. Knowledge to be good must be il-

¹ *Revelation* xxi, 27

luminated by Wisdom, knowledge without wisdom is dangerous to possess. Misunderstanding and misapplication of truths are the source of suffering.

The attainment of power is often not accompanied with any proper understanding how to apply that power wisely. The invention of the fulminates of mercury, of gunpowder and nitro-glycerine, has caused much suffering to a large part of humanity. Not that the substances applied, or the forces which are liberated, are intrinsically evil, but their misunderstanding or misapplication leads to evil results. If all men were intelligent enough to understand the laws which govern them, and wise enough to employ them for good purposes only, no evil results would follow.

If we proceed a step further and imagine intellectual but wicked and selfish people possessed not only of the power to employ explosives, poisonous drugs, and medicines to injure others, but able to send their own invisible poisonous influences to a distance, to leave at will the prison-house of the physical body and go out in their *astral forms* to kill or injure others, the most disastrous results would follow. Such forbidden knowledge has been and is sometimes possessed by people with criminal tendencies, a fact which is universally known in the East, and upon the possibility and actuality of such facts have been established on many occasions, and among others by many of the witch trials of the Middle Ages. Modern scientists may now laugh at these facts, but the doctors of law, of medicine and of theology of their times were as sure of their knowledge then as their modern representatives are of their own opinions to-day, and the former had as many intellectual capacities as the latter. The only difference is that the former knew these facts, but gave a wrong explanation, the latter refuse to examine them and give no explanation at all.

Man is continually surrounded by unseen influences, and the *astral plane* is swarming with entities and forces, which are acting upon him for good or for evil, according to his good or evil inclinations. At the present state of evolution man has a physical body, which is admirably adapted to modify the influence from the astral plane and to shelter him against the "*monsters of the deep*."

If the physical body is in good health, it acts as an armour, and moreover man has the power by a judicious exercise of his will, to so concentrate the *odic*¹ aura by which he is surrounded as to render his armour impenetrable; but if by bad health, by a careless expenditure of vitality, or by the practice of mediumship, he disperses through space the odic emanations belonging to his sphere, his physical armour will become weakened and unable to protect him; he becomes the victim of elementaries and elemental forces, his mental faculties will lose their balance, and sooner or later he will, like the symbolical *Adam and Eve*, know that he is naked, and exposed to influences which he cannot repel. Such is the result for which those ignorantly crave who wish to obtain knowledge without corresponding morality. To supply the ignorant or weak with powers of destruction would be like providing children with gunpowder and matches for play.

Only an intelligent and well-balanced mind can discriminate properly and dive into the hidden mysteries of Nature. "Only the pure in heart can see God."² He who has

¹ [See "Od" in: the *Theosophical Glossary*.]

² [*Matthew* v, 8]

reached that stage need not search for an *Adept* to instruct him; the higher intelligences will be attracted to him and become his instructor, in the same manner as he may be attracted by the beauty of an animal or of a flower.

A harp does not invent sound but obeys the hand of a master, and the more perfect the instrument, the sweeter may be the music. A diamond does not originate light, but reflects it, and the purer the diamond the purer will be its lustre. Man does not invent original thought, will, and intelligence. He is a mirror in which the thought of the supreme cause is reflected, an instrument through which the eternal will expresses itself; a pearl filled with a drop of water from the universal ocean of intelligence.

“If you eat from the tree of knowledge you will surely die.”¹ Your personality will be swallowed up by a realization of the fact that personal isolation is only an illusion, and that you are one with the all. But as your personality dies, a greater truth opens before you, and you become not only God-like, but God (*Good*).

He who ascends to the top of a high mountain need not inquire for somebody to bring him pure air. Pure air surrounds him there on all sides. The realm of wisdom is not limited, and he whose mind is receptive will not suffer from want of divine influx to feed his aspiration.

The school in which the occultist graduates has many classes, each class representing a life. The days of vacation may arrive before the lesson is learned, and what has been learned may be forgotten during the time of vacation; but still the impression remains, and a thing once learned is easily learned again. This accounts for the different talents with which men are endowed, and for their propensities for good or for evil. No effort is lost, every cause creates a corresponding affect, no favours are granted, no injustice takes place. Blind to bribes and deaf to appeals is the law of justice, dealing out to every one according to his merits or demerits; but he who has no selfish desire for reward, and no cowardly fear of punishment, but who dares to act rightly because he cannot do wrong, identifies himself with the law, and in the equilibrium of the law will he find his *Power*.

The second requirement is

To want

If we do not want to receive the truth we will not obtain it, because it rests in the spirit, and the spirit is a power that exercises the universal law of attraction; it “gravitates” to the mind that corresponds to its vibrations, and is repulsed by discords.

Men believe that they love the truth, but there are few who desire it. They love only welcome truths; those that are unwelcome are usually rejected. Opinions which flatter the vanity and are in harmony with accustomed modes of thought are accepted; strange truths are often regarded with astonishment and driven away from the door. They are often afraid of that which they do not know, and, not knowing the truth, they are afraid to receive it. They ask new truths for their passports, and if they do

¹ [Genesis ii, 17]

not bear the stamp of some fashionable authority they are looked upon as illegitimate children, and are not permitted to grow.

How shall we know the truth? Irrational man asks for external proofs, but rational man requires no other certificate for the truth but its own appearance. There can be no difference between speculative and practical *knowledge*; an opinion based upon mere speculation, is no knowledge. Knowledge can only be attained by speculation, if the speculation is accompanied by experience. Those who want to know the truth must practise it; those who cannot practise it will not know it; speculations without practice can only lead to doubtful opinions.

There are two ways of arriving at imperfect knowledge, and doubtful opinions by speculation. One, comparable to the slow and tedious work of ascending a river from its mouth, is to investigate effects and to guess at their causes. It is the *inductive* method, usually followed by science, and resembles the wanderings of a man around the periphery of a large circle, in the attempt to find its invisible centre. The other is the *deductive* method, and consists in mentally ascending to the centre of that circle and investigate the cause and to follow its effects towards the periphery. The latter method would be the easiest if the centre were known, or if it could be found by the intellect. But the innermost centre of all things is the spirit, and it cannot be grasped by the intellect of mortal man, much less be perceived by his physical senses.

The only way to obtain true practical knowledge of spiritual truths is to develop true power of spiritual perception — in other words, the awakening of the inner consciousness to the recognition of truth. Only a mind which has been purified from all selfish desires, and is filled with a strong determination to learn the truth, and nothing else but the truth, is thereby “duly and truly prepared”¹ to enter the temple of wisdom. The Adept, who has succeeded in uniting his consciousness with the centre of the Universal Mind, can from thence survey the infinite all, and the mysteries of nature are open before him. He who has brought his whole being into consonance with the Universal Mind can mentally enter into the very centre of things and recognize their character. Those who can recognize the truth by spiritual perception do not depend on opinions, and arguments used against them are thrown away, because they *know* the truth, and no amount of arguing can make them disbelieve what they know. There are intellectual men who attempt to use arguments against the Adepts, because the former are not capable of comprehending the meaning of spiritual perception, and compare that state with the intellectual working of their material brains.

To enter a state in which universal truth may come to our direct perception, no intellectual labour but spiritual development is required. We must become master of our own thoughts and desires, and be able to sink our thoughts into the invisible centre of all. To do this requires effort and perseverance, and the average investigator, finding it easier to perfect his physical instruments than to educate his spiritual faculties, usually remains satisfied with a superficial knowledge of details, and argues himself into a belief that the original cause cannot be known.

¹ [Cf. Masonic Lodge Ritual]

Men do not seriously desire the truth, because they cannot estimate what they do not know, and they do not know it because they cannot reach what they do not seriously desire. Mere curiosity, or a wish to learn to know the truth at our leisure without neglecting the claims of the elementary kingdom composing our soul, is not sufficient to attract the spirit. Man is chained to the kingdom of the Elementals with a thousand chains. The inhabitants of his soul appear before him in their most seductive forms. If they are driven away they change their masks and renew their petitions in some other form. But the chains by which man is bound are forged by his own desire. His vices do not cling to him against his will. He clings to them, and they will desert him as soon as he rises up in the strength and dignity of his manhood and shakes them off.

The third requirement is therefore

To dare¹

We must dare to act and throw off our desires, instead of waiting patiently until they desert us. We must dare to tear ourselves loose from accustomed habits, irrational thoughts, and selfish considerations, and from everything that is an impediment to our recognition of the truth. We must dare to conquer ourselves and to conquer the world; dare to face the ridicule of the ignorant, the vilifications of bigots, the haughtiness of the vain, the contempt of the learned, and the envy of the small; dare to proclaim the truth if it is useful to do so, and dare to be silent if taunted by the fool.² We must dare to face poverty, suffering, and isolation, and dare to act under all circumstances according to our highest conception of truth.

All this might be easily accomplished, if the will of man were free; if man were his own master and not bound with the chains of the soul; but man is a relative being, and as such his will can only be free to a certain extent; it can only enjoy a relative liberty as long as it is a slave to desire. Man may perform certain acts and leave others undone if he chooses; but his desires determine his choice, and man acts in obedience to them. A man who is free has the power to will that which he does not desire, and not to will that to which his desires attract him.

To make the will free, action is required, and each action strengthens the will, and each unselfish deed increases its power. *In unity is power.* To render our will powerful we may unite it with the will of others, and if the desires of the others are different from ours, our will may thereby become free from our own desires. *In action is strength.* If we oppose our will to the will of others, by acting against the desires of others, we may increase its strength, but we become thereby isolated from others.

There is only *one* universal power of will, because divinity is a whole. It may act in the direction for good and in the direction for evil; but its action for good is the strongest because it emanates from the eternal source of all good. This will-power being the collective sum of all will-power in the universe, is the power that moves the worlds. It is necessarily immeasurably stronger than any individual will-power can

¹ [Cf. "Try." Much more than a mere exhortation!]

² *Proverbs*, xxvi 4

possibly be, because the whole is larger than the part, and the infinite greater than the finite. He who unites his own will with the universal will becomes powerful; he who exercises his will by opposing it may become strong, but while the former attains eternal life with the whole, the latter causes his own destruction, as he will finally be crushed by the opposing force which is immeasurably stronger than he.

There are consequently three ways to develop the power of will and to make it free of desire:

The *first* is to act against our own desires by forcing ourselves to perform acts which are disagreeable and painful. This method used to be prevalent in the West during the Middle Ages, and is to-day practised in the East by Fakirs and the lower class of ascetics. It is a method by which people disposed to witchcraft may obtain sufficient strength of will to control some of the lower Elements and acquire power to affect men and animals at a distance by the influence of their will. It consists in the endurance of pain with indifference, and the accounts given by travellers in the East show to what height of absurdity such practices have been carried out. But while such practices may strengthen the will, they do not eradicate desires: but they rather increase the desires by the law that every action is followed by a proportionate reaction. Seen in the proper light, people given to such practices do not act against their desires; because their principle desire is the attainment of personal power, to which their minor desires are only subordinate. Penances and tortures are therefore worse than useless for the higher development of the soul.

The *second* way is to sacrifice our desire to the power of good, and to act under all circumstances in obedience to the law. If we then have any desires that are not in accordance with the law, those desires will be made to starve and to die. In this way we will unite ourselves with the power of good and attain the infinite good.

The *third* way is to sacrifice our desire to the power of evil by doing evil without any selfish considerations. By doing so we unite ourselves with the power of evil and will perish with it at the end.

Philosophical courage is a quality for which men are respected everywhere. The Red Indian prides himself at his indifference to physical pain, the Fakir undergoes tortures to strengthen his will-power, the civilized soldier is eager to prove his contempt for danger, and to measure his strength with the strength of the enemy. But there are deeds to perform that require a courage of a superior kind. It requires only momentary outbursts of power or temporary efforts of will to perform a daring deed on the physical plane, and after it is accomplished it is followed by satisfaction and rest; but in the realm of the soul there is no rest for those that have not succeeded in eradicating that which is evil. A continual and unremitted strain is needed to keep the emotions in order, and this strain is rendered still more fatiguing by the circumstance that it depends entirely on our own will whether or not we will endure it, and that if we relax the bridle and allow our emotions to run free and disorderly, sensual gratification is the result. It requires a courage of the highest order to act under all circumstances in obedience to the law. Long may the battle last, but each victory

strengthens the will; each act of submission renders it more powerful, until at last the combat is ended, and over the battlefield where the remnants of the slain desires are exposed to the decomposing action of the elements hovers the spiritual eagle, rising towards the sun and enjoying the serene tranquillity of the ethereal realm.

Metals are purified by fire and the spirit is purified by suffering. Only when the molten mass has cooled can we judge of the progress of the purification; only when a victory over the emotions is gained and peace follows after the struggle, can the spirit rest to contemplate and realize the beauty of eternal truth. In vain will men attempt to listen to the voice of truth during the clash of contending desires and opinions, only in the silence that follows the storm can the voice of truth be heard.¹

The fourth requirement to the recognition of the truth is therefore

To remain silent

This means that we must not allow any desire to speak in our heart, but only the voice of the truth; because the truth is a jealous goddess and suffers no rivals. He who selects wisdom for the bride of his soul must woo her with his whole heart and dismiss the concubines from the bridal chamber of his soul. He must clothe her in the purity of his affection and ornament her with the gold of his love, for wisdom is modest, she does not adorn herself but waits until she is adorned by her love. She cannot be bought with money nor with promises, her love is only gained by acts of devotion. Science is only the handmaid of wisdom, and he who makes love to the servant will be rejected by the mistress; but he who sacrifices his whole being to wisdom will be united with her.

The Bhagwat Gita says: “He who thinketh constantly of me, his mind undiverted by any other object, will find me. I will at all times be easily found by a constant devotion to me.”²

The Christian Mystic, Jakob Böhme, an illuminated seer, expresses the same truth, in the form of a dialogue between the master and his disciple, as follows.

The disciple said to the master: “How can I succeed in arriving at that supersensual life, in which I may see and hear the Supreme?”

The master answered: “If you can only for a moment enter in thought into the formless, where no creature resides, you will hear the voice of the Supreme.”

The disciple said: “Is this far or near?”

The master answered: “It is in yourself, and if you can command only for one hour the silence of your desires, you will hear the inexpressible words of the Supreme. If your own will and self are silent in you, the perception of the eternal will be manifest through you; God will hear and see, and talk through you; your own hearing, desiring, and seeing prevents you to see and hear the Supreme.”³

¹ *Light in the Path*, by M.C.

² [Gita 8 vs. 14]

³ Jakob Böhme: *Theosophical Writings*, Book vi

These directions are identical with those prescribed by the practice of *Raja-Yog*, by which the holy men of the East unite their minds with formless and infinite. All religious ceremonies are calculated to elevate the mind into the region of the formless and, in fact, all religious systems can have no other legitimate object than to teach methods how to attain such states. All churches are not worthy the name of church, which means a *spiritual union*, unless they serve as schools in which the science of uniting oneself with the eternal fountain of life is practically taught. But it is easier to allow one's mind to revel among the multifarious forms and attractions of the material plane, and to listen to the Siren song of the Elementals inhabiting the soul, than to enter the apparently dark caves of the formless, where at first no sound is heard in the eternal stillness of night but the echo of our voice, but where alone true power resides. It is easier to let our minds be controlled by thoughts that come and go without our bidding than to hold fast to a thought and command it to remain, and to close the doors of the soul to all thoughts that have not the seal of truth impressed upon their forms; and this is the reason why the majority of men and women prefer the illusions of finite life to the eternal realities of the infinite — why they prefer sufferings to happiness, and ignorance to a knowledge of truth.

Man is himself a thought, pervading the ocean of Mind. If his soul is in perfect accord with the truth, the truth will unite itself with his soul. A talented musician will not need a scientific calculation of the vibrations of sound to know whether a melody which he hears is melodious or not; a person who is one with the truth will recognize himself in the mirror of everything that is true.

The highest power in nature is wisdom, and it is the highest principle that man can possess. The highest power of intellectual man is to express wisdom in language, the highest power of physical man is to express that language in acts.

Every form in Nature is a symbol of an idea and represents a sign or a letter, or a word; and a succession of such symbols forms a language. Nature is therefore the divine language, in which the Universal Mind expresses its ideas. The individual mind, which is developed to such a state of perfection as to form the best instrument through which the highest intelligence can manifest itself, will be the most apt to realize the meaning of that language. The highest secrets of Nature are, therefore, accessible to him whose mental constitution is so perfected as to enable him to be a vehicle or an instrument for the expression of the highest ideas of the Universal mind. Arrived at a certain state of perfection, Man is able to read the thoughts of other individuals without the necessity of speech, and this power of reading that universal language which does not depend on sounds is the power of intuition — a power which in most men, in the present state of evolution, exists only as a latent spark, while in more perfect men it exists as a sun illuminating the mental horizon. By this power of the mind man penetrates into the centre of things and understands their true meaning.

Such a language means a radiation of the essence of things into the centre of the human mind, and a radiation from that centre into the universal ocean of mind. Man in a state of purity, being an image and an external expression of the highest principle, is able to reflect and reproduce the highest truth in its original purity, and man's expressions ought therefore to be a perfect reproduction or echo of the impressions

which he receives; but average man being immersed in matter, as result of a combination of principles on a lower scale of evolution, receives the pure original rays only in a state of refraction, and can therefore reproduce them only in an imperfect condition. He has wandered away from the sun of truth, and beholding it from a distance it appears to him only as a small star that may perhaps vanish from sight. Everything in Nature has its name and he who has the power to call a thing by its proper name can call it into existence by pronouncing that name. But the proper name of a thing is not the arbitrary name given to it by man, but the expression of the totality of its powers and attributes, because the powers and attributes of each being are intimately connected with its means of expression, and between both exists the most exact proportion in regard to measure, time, and condition.

There is only one genuine and interior language for man, the symbols of which are natural and must be intelligible to all, and this language is either an interior direct communication of thought or an exterior expression by means of the senses. This interior language is the parent of the exterior one and being caused by the radiation of the first cause which is unity and with whom all men are one, it follows that if the original irradiation of the supreme ray were existing in all men in its original purity, all men would understand the same interior language and also the same exterior one, because the latter is the imperfect external expression of the former, and in fact this original language still exists, but few understand it, and none can learn it except by the process of interior evolution. The interior language, if forcibly expressed, breathes — so to say — spirit; while the exterior one is only a succession of sounds. The key to that interior language is in the divine *Logos*, the key to the exterior one is in the mental organization of collective bodies of men. Man in his present condition, hears the voice which speaks that interior language, but not-understand it; he sees the sacred symbols, but does not comprehend them; his ear is accustomed to connect certain sounds but the true vibrations are lost; he understands human writings in books, but he cannot divine the hieroglyphics that express the true nature of things.

Each word in that interior language in the character of the thing itself, a sign and symbol which men cultivate unknowingly; each is the centre of each being, and whoever reaches that centre is in possession of the word and the sign. These symbols are the essential characteristics which distinguish one individual or group of individuals from others; by these symbols are harmonious souls attracted, and one artist recognizes another artist by beholding his works without seeing his person. True spirit unites all distances of space and time and is independent of accidental relations.

Men have ever been desiring an universal language. Such an universal language cannot be arbitrarily constructed, or if so constructed, would be more difficult to learn than any other. True language must express the harmony of the soul with the nature of things, and as long as there is distinction of character and disharmony, there can be no universal harmonious language.

There is a three-fold expression of the divine principle; a physical, and intellectual, and a divine word. The first is the language of nature, the second the language of reason, the third one is power. Each thought is represented by a certain allegorical sign; each being is a characteristic symbol and leaving exterior image of its interior

state. Each body is the symbol of an invisible and corresponding power, and Man, in whom the highest powers are contained is the most noble symbol in nature, the first and most beautiful letter in the alphabet of earth. For every thought there is an outward expression, and if we have a thought which we cannot express by symbols, it does not follow that such symbols do not exist, but that we are unacquainted with them. A word or a language is the expression of thought, and to be perfect it must give perfect expression to the thought it is intended to convey. By giving a false expression to the thought the power of language is lost. In our present state of civilization words are often used mere for the purpose of concealing than revealing thought. Lying therefore disgraceful, and involves a loss of power and subsequent degradation. To give pure and perfect expression to thought is White magic, to act upon the imagination so as to create false impressions is witchcraft, deception, and falsehood. Such witchcraft is practised every day and almost in every station of life, from the priest in the pulpit who wheedles his audience into a belief that he possesses the keys of heaven, down to the merchant who cheats with his goods and to the old maid who secures a husband by means of artificial teeth and false hair. Such practices are publicly denounced and silently followed; they will lead to a universal disappearance of faith and truth, they will necessarily lead to active evil and bring destruction upon the nation that allows them to grow; because, as the power of good increases by practice, in the same manner increases the power of evil.

Man's mission is to do good; that means to do that which is most useful for his development. By doing, good, the more refined principles are attracted to him; his material constitution will become more and more refined, and his interior illuminated by the light of divine reason, until even his physical body may assume the attributes of the astral form, and man himself be a spirit. By doing evil he attracts to himself the unintelligent and material principles of Nature, the elements of evil; his higher principles become more and more material and heavy until dragged into the mire of matter by his own weight, he is unable to rise to the light, he becomes metaphysically petrified and his power of intuition lost.

Man's actions are his writings. By putting his thoughts in action he expresses them and records them in the book of life. Every evil act is followed by a degradation of principle, a metaphysical incrustation of the soul. Good actions may dissolve existing incrustations produced by evil deeds and re-establish the soul in its former condition. Repentance, unless followed by action, is useless. It is like the inflammation caused by a thorn in the flesh; it causes pain by gathering to its assistance the vital forces of the body; but unless the thorn is removed by the active intervention of the individual, an abscess and putrefaction may be the result. Man's acts are his creations, they give form to his thoughts. The motive endows them with life, the will furnishes them with strength.

An intention is useless as long as it is not put into action. A sign, a letter, or a word is useless unless it conveys a meaning which is realized by him who employs it; a symbol represents an idea, but no symbol can be efficacious unless it is intellectually applied. The most potent magical signs are useless to him who cannot realize what they mean, while to him who is well versed in occult science, a single point, a line, or any geometrical figure, may convey a vast meaning.

Let us, for instance, examine the Pentagram or the five-pointed star. Superstitious and credulous people believed once, that, at the sight of this sign, wicked demons would fly away in terror, that it would protect houses against the sorcerer and the witch. The sign is found everywhere, as a trade-mark or an ornament. As understood by the majority, it means nothing but an ordinary geometrical figure; applied intellectually, it invests man with power.

It represents, amongst other things, the Microcosmos of man and his power over the forces of Nature. The four lower triangles represent the four elementary forces of Nature with their correlations and interrelations; the dangers which threaten him from the astral plane and the temptations to which he is exposed through the senses. But all these triangles are interwoven with the triangle at the top, the seat of intelligence upon which they all act, and which governs them all by the power of will. By the intellectual application of that sign — that is, by governing the lower instincts through wisdom — man gains mastery over the forces of Nature. We must take care that the figure is well drawn and leaves no open place; that means, we must be always guarded on all sides, because if one single pet desire is permitted to enter the temple, the harmony of the whole will be endangered; but by drawing up all the elements of the lower triangles into the higher ones, and making them subservient to it, equilibrium will be established and power will be the result. The circle of triangles will then form into a square — the symbol of perfection, and man's destiny will be fulfilled.

To the Christian, the sign of the cross represents an instrument of torture and death; to the occultist it represents resurrection and life. It symbolizes the dual manifestations of Nature's enemies; attraction and repulsion, matter and spirit, the male and the female element, and the point of intersection of the two lines, the centre of wisdom, the *Rose of the cross*, the central sun of the universe. *In Hoc Signo Vincet*¹ is true if the sign is wisely applied.

A line dividing itself into two is division and evil, and crooked is the antithesis of straight. Disunion and separation produces evil; in union is strength.

One of the most important signs whose realization gives power, is that of the double interlaced triangle, surrounded by a snake who bites his tail. He who has thoroughly comprehended that sign knows the laws of evolution and involution, the descent of the spirit into matter, and the reascension of matter to spirit. He knows the never-ending cycles of eternity with its days and nights of creation, the evolution of the life-impulse as it travels from planet to planet, beginning in the elemental kingdom and ending in an evolution of man, far beyond the comprehension of man of the present day. Six points are seen in the star, but the seventh in the centre cannot be seen. From this invisible centre, the great spiritual sun radiates its seven primordial rays, forming a circle whose periphery is without limit and beyond comprehension, evolving systems of worlds and reabsorbing them into his bosom.

The present material age is ever ready to reject without examination the symbols of the past whose meaning it cannot realize because it knows them not. Engaged in the pursuit of material pleasures, it loses sight of its true interest, and exchanges spir-

¹ [Latin rendition of Greek *εν τωιτω νικα*, by this (sign) you will conquer.]

itual wealth for worthless baubles. Losing sight of his destiny, man runs after a shadow, while others embitter their lives for the purpose of propitiating an angry God, and to buy from him happiness in a life of which they know nothing, and even doubt its existence. Ruled by fear, many bow before the Moloch of superstition and ignorance, while others wilfully shut their eyes to the light of reason and madly rush into the arms of a dead and cold material science to perish in her stony embrace, but the wise, whose far-seeing perception reaches beyond the narrow circle of his material surroundings and beyond the short span of time which embraces his life on earth, knows that it is in his own power to control his future destiny. He raises the magic wand of his reason and quiets the tempest raging in the astral plane. The emotions which were rushing to his destruction obey him and execute his orders, and he walks safely upon the waters under whose calmed surface is hidden the abyss of death, while above his head shines that bright constellation formed of *Truth, Knowledge, and Power whose centre is Wisdom and whose source can be found in the spiritual self-consciousness of every human being.*



“Oedipus and Sphinx unriddled,” in our Constitution of Man Series.