

Initiation

By Frater Achad

Part II

My heart tells me that the foregoing section, which I at first intended as a brief essay on the subject of Initiation, is not complete enough to fulfill its purpose. I shall therefore deal with some of the points a little more fully.

Mention has been made of the necessity of being "duly and truly prepared" for Initiation. In one of the exterior Orders the candidate is asked: "Where were you first prepared for Initiation?" He is then prompted to reply: "In my heart!" In another Rite of the Order the same question is asked, but the reply in this instance is: "In Heart, Verily!"

At first sight, or hearing, both of these forms of reply may seem very much alike, and the difference but superficial. Both imply that before seeking Initiation of any sort the heart of the candidate prompted him to do so of his own free will and accord, and that in response to that urge he took the necessary steps towards the end in view.

But there is a subtle difference, which, since the reply was prompted by the guide of the candidate, discloses a greater degree of wisdom in one instance, on the part of that Guide or of those who devised the particular set of rituals. The first reply indicates a purely personal prompting, "In my heart." The second not alone gives the impression of impersonality by the words "In Heart," which may equally well stand for the heart of man, or of Humanity or of the Universe, but is followed by "Verily" indicating that this was a prompting of "Truth" itself. But there is more than this concealed, for if we notice the initials (and initials are very important where Initiation is concerned), we see that they are IHV, forming the great Triune Name of God and the first three letters of INVH the Holy Tetragrammaton or Ineffable Name. These three letters are those of the Father, Mother and Son, thus indicating the Trinity which is manifest on all planes, their numeration $10+5+6=21$, that of AHIH the Word of Pure Being; while the letter of the Father plus that of the Mother gives a numerical value of 15 which reduces to 6; that of the Son and of the Heart in which this operation takes place.

The above is only given as an instance in order to show how two sets of rituals, seeming to purport very similar ideas on the

surface, may vary very much in their essential quality; and that although they may leave a similar impression upon the mind of the candidate at the time he passes through them, may in the one instance end there, while in the other, as his mind becomes more keen later on in life, may still go on working within him, leading him to discover layer after layer of truth as he becomes more truly prepared to receive it.

Real initiation goes on in the Heart just in this way; the ceremony of initiation in a lodge room is but for the purpose of planting the seed. Whether that seed has the germ of life in it or not makes all the difference of course. So does the soil.

Suggestion and autosuggestion are the principle factors in initiation ceremonies of this kind. The method is very scientific if properly carried out.

The lodge room in each degree, suggests, or should suggest, by the arrangement of its furniture, etc., some higher Order of the Universe. The actions and movements of the officers, and those which the candidate is instructed to perform, should all represent movements of the Order of Nature, or the Cosmic Order, or of some higher one. The whole scene should serve to impress the mind of the candidate with a miniature view of that Larger Self of which he is a part and a reflection, or of some important portion of it, so that degree after degree serves to build up a complete picture of the Universe as it IS, not as it seems to the uninitiated.

Each word or token given to the candidate should be strictly symbolic of a further truth, and all should find their correspondence in Nature, God and the Universe. Every word should be a true formula of Power, and the arrangement of the letters of that word, its numerical value, sound and other properties, should all conceal the means whereby the candidate may learn to continue upon his own INITIATIVE, towards a deeper and fuller understanding of the ceremony than he could ever obtain at the time he first passed through it.

Briefly during a ceremony of this sort, the candidate is taken out of his normal surroundings, caused to be in a very impressionable state of mind, and then certain suggestions are given to him, which, when accepted, become autosuggestions which go on working in his subconscious mind, perhaps for many years afterwards. Whether these suggestions really do him good or not depends partly on the wisdom displayed in the ritual itself, and partly upon the power of the one who initiates him. A great deal must also depend on the moments immediately following the time when he is symbolically brought to light, and sees for the first time the nature of the lodge into which he has been led. He may carry away the impression of a

Nameless Crown of Glory, or of a black stove-pipe hat. It is not his fault if, in some instances, the latter is the case.

Let us turn our attention to a brief survey of a series of symbolic degrees, as they perhaps should be in order to have a real initiatory effect.

The earliest would probably represent some state before birth, such as the choice of the Soul to seek fresh incarnation on this planet. This degree might be simple in appearance, but of great importance. The First Degree, proper, would represent birth and the responsibility of incarnation in the human race. Part of this responsibility must be upon the parents, who in turn should instruct the new born child in the proper actions and procedure. The degree should at least suggest the child's travels with the Moon before he definitely starts his journey with the Sun. Next will come a degree of advancement into life, with all its responsibilities more and more thrown on the shoulders of the individual, and that life should be a preparation for the great change called Death, which to some is a grinning phantom of terror, and to others the crowning point of a well spent career. The Third Degree will show the man who has learned how to live, the proper way to die, and it should show him that there is no death, for the Sun is always shining despite the appearance of night and day upon this planet. It should give him the means whereby death may be overcome in equal combat, and recognized as our brother and friend rather than our enemy.

Everyone who has been born on this Planet must undergo these experiences and the duty of the lodge is to instruct them in their proper course of action in regard to them.

Then we come to a point where some men are capable of further experience, during this life, which others are not sufficiently advanced and properly prepared to share. For their sake, we should go on if possible, since having obtained those experiences we may learn to *raise* them in our turn. But we cannot expect to do this by our own unaided efforts, so that we find a true knowledge of the Nature of God is necessary in the next degree. Having obtained at least a glimpse of this, and perhaps a true formula of God-Name by which to work, it becomes necessary that we form a Council, for we have at least dimly realized that we are not so much separate individuals as parts of one Great Whole. This becomes clearer and clearer to the true initiate who then becomes prepared to give up his "personality" or "mask" in order that he may unite himself with that Higher Self who is not limited and enslaved in the bondage of matter. There is usually a missing Degree here, purposely such, since a bridge must be builded from East to West, ere the

fuller life may be entered upon. Having thus unofficially, so to say, bridged this Abyss, in the next degree the mysteries of self-crucifixion are made plain, so that in truth the initiate may learn to say "This is my body which I destroy in order that it may be renewed." Having learned the secret of Life in its fuller meaning, he then passes through degrees which confer upon him more and more power of expression in every way, until in the final stages he is prepared to bring down the Light to his fellow men in the darkness without, and giving up all the glory of his high office he descends and mingles with humanity in the lowest degrees, caring naught for his own advancement—for on reaching the End he had found it one with the Beginning—except insofar as his Greater Self, the Body of Humanity, advances with him.

So, for the first time he may be considered as an actual initiate, not merely a symbolical one. He is prepared (duly and truly prepared) to begin again.

So he too, may be said to be seeking INITIATION.