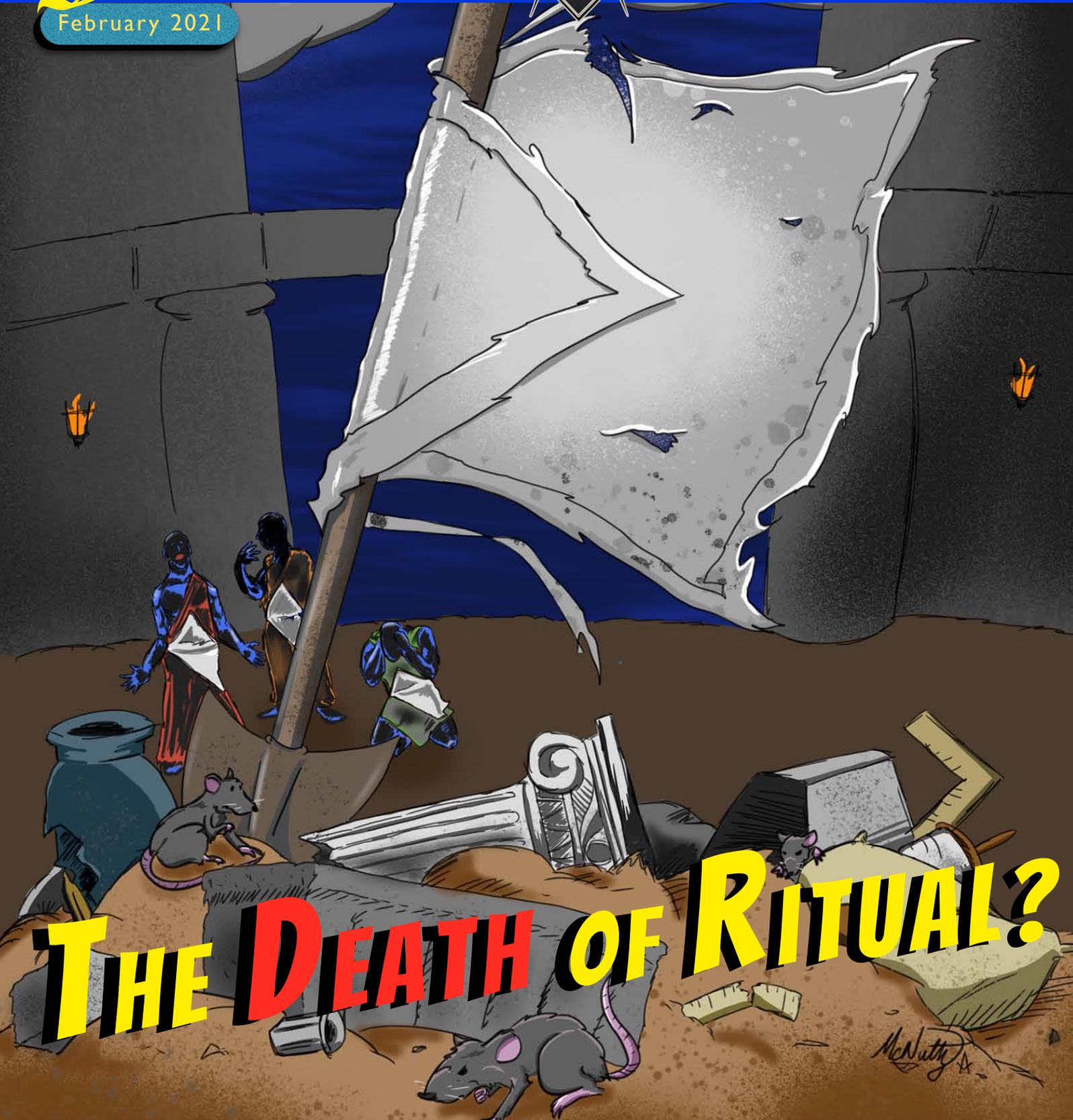


Southern California Research Lodge

# Fraternal Review



February 2021



## THE DEATH OF RITUAL?

WHY WE NEED RITUAL NOW MORE THAN EVER



## *Our Rituals Need to Fulfill the Soul*

An often-heard argument is that Freemasonry is about more than “just the ritual.” This sentiment reduces ritual to a mere exercise of rote memorization and recitation of the words of which our ceremonies are composed. While it is indeed these things, it is not merely these things.

Throughout this issue’s pages, we will find that Freemasonry’s rituals—be they internal, external, or universal—are vast repositories of useful knowledge that enable man to preserve society through the progression of the soul. With this in mind, we made a very conscious decision that the reader’s journey through this *Fraternal Review* would be mostly personal rather than merely academic. Many have written about rituals from the vantage point of an observer or researcher. In contrast, most of the authors in this issue speak from the inside, from their own personal experience.

Ritual is a medicine prescribed for the treatment of an unhealthy soul. It is no accident that we often find the word “prescribe” associated with the word “ritual.” In Masonry, this prescription is much more than merely the form and function of the three degree ceremonies. In addition, one consumes this elixir through communal meals, manners of embrace, modes of dress, and the use of terms of endearment such as calling one “Brother.” The modern initiate would do well to understand that, while Freemasonry is not merely its rituals, it is nothing without them.

Likewise, society is hollow without its rituals; they are the ties that bind humanity. We have an inherent need to celebrate transitions, whether they signify a beginning, middle, or end. Over the last year, because of the Covid-19 pandemic, many rituals have been subdued, postponed, rescheduled, or canceled. People have laughed alone and cried alone. People have been born alone, and they have died alone. In the end, perhaps that is man’s greatest fear...to be alone and forgotten.

The power of ritual comes from its use. The difference between knowing and doing is the difference between the scholar and the initiate. We hope that our humble offerings enable Freemasons to understand the vast unexplored treasures hidden within our tradition and society so that they may use them to heal themselves and those around them, and truly dwell together in unity.

Fraternally and Sincerely,

R.W. Bro. Michael Jarzabek, Past Junior Grand Warden,  
Grand Lodge of Massachusetts

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# FEBRUARY DATES

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the California Grand Lodge has suspended in-person Masonic events until further notice. A proliferation of online Masonic lecture series has developed, some for Masons only, and some for non-Masons as well. The following programs are scheduled for the month of February. Times given below are all Pacific Standard Time.

## ON-LINE MASONIC SPEAKER SERIES

Webcasts presented by the Grand Lodge of California, and Quatuor Coronati Lodge No. 2076:

- Wednesday, Feb. 3, at 7pm PST: C.R. “Chuck” Dunning: *Contemplative Masonry*.

- Wednesday, Feb 17, at 7pm PST: Russell Charvonia, PGM: *Our Role in Restoring Civility to Society*.

Free; open to the public. Pre-registration a must at [www.freemason.org/speakerseries/](http://www.freemason.org/speakerseries/). Past lectures in the series also archived.

## 21ST CENTURY CONVERSATIONS ON FREEMASONRY

Lectures and discussions, presented by The Rubicon Masonic Society and William O. Ware Lodge of Research. Last Monday of each month throughout 2021, at 4pm PST via Zoom: Open to all-Masons; suit & tie attire. Monday, Feb. 22: Tom Jackson: *Freemasonry's Future*; Pre-register at: <https://rubiconmasonicsociety.com/rsvp>

## OPEN LECTURES ON FREEMASONRY

25-minute lectures + 15-minute Q&A; via Zoom. Open to all; details and required pre-registration at [www.OpenLFM.org](http://www.OpenLFM.org).

Saturday, Feb. 27, at 11am PST: Oscar Alleyne: *The Masonic Legend of Count Roume de St. Laurent*. Prior lectures available on SoundCloud and YouTube.

## NEWPORT MESA LODGE

### EDUCATION PROGRAM

Saturday, Feb. 20, at 5pm PST. Dr. Maria Eugenia Vazquez-Semadini: *Freemasonry and the Catholic Church*. To access the event via Zoom: Meeting ID: 873 9928 3239; Passcode: traveler. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87399283239?pwd=SE9tejJobjFlaGcyWnpIU1ZkeG56dz09>.

## ILLUMINATION LECTURE SERIES

South Pasadena Lodge No. 290's new YouTube Channel: *The Illumination Lecture Series* features previously archived lectures available to Masons and non-Masons.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGJKMRVwkhAtYonSpogMfFg>

Please email your Lodge's special dates to: [jerielsmith@gmail.com](mailto:jerielsmith@gmail.com). Please do so a month in advance.

## MASONIC RITUAL AS DEVELOPMENT PRACTICE

BY ERIK MARKS

I didn't join Freemasonry because I thought it would be a fun way to meet a bunch of guys, have some great meals, or because my brother joined. There was a lot of trepidation for me, as I assumed it was a serious commitment to others and to myself. Prior to my initiation, even well-trained and experienced brothers could not have told me what I was entering into. I now know that this is part of the secret. No, I don't mean keeping the specific language of the ritual secret, though that is important as a commitment and container; I mean that no one around me explained the initiatic nature of the ritual.

Many of us have initialized a new disk drive to make it usable for its purpose. Though simple by comparison, it is similar, in a way, to initializing—though we call it initiating—a Mason. For me, psychologically, the ritual sets in motion a process by which the psyche is opened up. This effect is based on a willingness to accept the process in this particular way. If we willfully resist, the effect is diminished. Our conductor can walk us through the steps, say the obligation, make the movements; and though we will be

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*“I could dispense with the surface level and allow my psyche to associate freely, to interact more deeply with the words, concepts, commitments, and my own inner workings.”*

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allowed into the fraternity, our Masonic selves will remain psycho-spiritually mostly un-initiated. I feel fortunate to have been guided through other initiatic rites, so I was open to this process from the start. Some of us may simply be ready, and the initiation may happen whether we know it or not.

Following initiation, passing, and raising, I began to memorize the ritual. Committing something to memory adds to its strength. It also then becomes a resource we don't have to look up to reference. In the first two years since my raising, I would recite in my mind all three degrees every day on my walks to and from work. By literally walking my way through the ritual daily, I could pass through the overt meanings and begin to move around in the deeper meanings. I could dispense with the surface level and allow my psyche to associate freely, to interact more deeply with the words, concepts, commitments, and my own inner workings.

Ongoing recitation, witnessing, and participation in ritual deepened my understanding—not only of the ritual itself, but also of its effects on me—as I willingly allowed myself to learn from it. By committing to the practice and to ritual, I have built a structure by which I bump up against my humanness in all its flawed glory, to be reflected back and to be changed through the tools at our disposal.

This year I've let slip my daily practice(s), to my detriment. It is easy to become lax and let things slide. This is a mistake. In the last month, I've used the ritual to help me gain ground as to why I *choose* to not live with greater rigor. The emblematic meditations suggested by Masonic authors Chuck Dunning and Andrew Hammer, and by the Masonic Legacy Society, allow for an ongoing practice of ritual that allows each Mason to explore the Self in greater detail, even away from the lodge—as one spends most of their life outside of the lodge in the service of the outer world.

Often I've told myself lies about working hard: “I deserve a break,” etc. By this, I don't mean avoiding self-care. I actually mean something that sounds like a paradox: delving into the secrets of self with useful tools and faithful, trusted companions is challenging work. It is tiring, and requires very thoughtful self-care. It means I must hold myself to a higher standard—which is why I recite my ritual now almost daily again. It reminds me that upon initiation, upon being made a Mason, I cannot be unmade.

**IMAGE CREDIT:** *Hercules' fight with the Nemean lion*, by Pieter Paul Rubens circa 1615. The ritual of survival. Man fighting the beast within himself every single day. - F.R. Guest Editor



# Ancient Roots: Three Stages Of Initiatic Spirituality



Photo by Leticia Burgos

*“Notably, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato believed that the education of young men had to be based, fundamentally, on music (craftsman), wrestling (warrior), and philosophy (magician).”*

By Angel Millar

Craftsman. Warrior. Magician. As if an echo reverberating through the millennia, these three words remind us of something that lies buried deep in the history of mankind and deep within our own psyche. “Primitive” by the standards of modernity, when we reflect on them, they nevertheless stir in us an awakening to our own potential, mental, physical, and spiritual.

In one form or another, the figures of the craftsman, the warrior, and the magician were known to every ancient culture on earth. In some cases, the functions of each could be performed by a single member of a tribe, with herders having to double as warriors, and with responsibility for performing religious or initiatory rituals falling to older members of the tribe or to the head of the household.

For many cultures, though, they were more than just duties, vocations, or positions in society. Together, the craftsman or farmer, warrior, and magician (sage, priest, or brahmin, etc.) characterized a culture’s very soul. Written around three millennia ago, in Iran, the sacred Avestan texts (of the world’s first monotheistic religion, Zoroastrianism) show us a culture composed of peasants and farmers, warrior nobles, and priests. Around two thousand years before this, claimed comparative philologist and mythologist Georges Dumézil, Indo-European societies (from which the Zoroastrian society ultimately emerged) had essentially the same three

classes or castes.

However, it is possible that, as David W. Anthony has suggested, the herder/cultivator, warrior, and priest may have constituted “three age grades,” through which every man would pass, if he lived long enough. As is the case with the Maasai of Africa, the younger men might have worked as herders or artisans, while the elders of the tribe would have taken on the role of priests or spiritual guides. The profession of the warrior would, then, have been taken up by men between these two ages, when they were at their maximum physical strength.

It is, perhaps, almost impossible for the true initiatic structure not to include the three vocations, castes, or archetypes of craftsman, warrior, and magician (or priest, spiritual guide, mystic, etc.). Notably, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato believed that the education of young men had to be based, fundamentally, on music (craftsman), wrestling (warrior), and philosophy (magician). Zen Buddhism was adopted by the samurai warriors, who were also encouraged to practice the arts of peace. (The most famous samurai, Miyamoto Musashi, is still renowned for his painting and calligraphy.) During the 12th century, Sufism adopted the structure of the trade guilds (with apprentices and a Sufi master), marrying it to both Islamic mysticism and Islamic chivalry (*futuwwa*,

literally “young manhood”).

More importantly for us, more recently, former director of the Chancellor Robert R. Livingston Masonic Library, William D. Moore, argued in his book *Masonic Temples* that American Freemasonry came to embody the archetypes of the craftsman, holy warrior, and mystic in the Craft Lodge, the Masonic Order of the Temple (or “Templar” Degrees), and the Scottish Rite respectively; though we find these overlapping, with the sword (associated with the warrior) being worn by the Tyler of the Craft lodge, for example.

If we think of the craftsman, warrior, and magician not merely as three vocations within society but as three types of consciousness within initiation itself, we might say that the craftsman who is aware of his role as an initiator has risen to the stage of the magician, brahmin, or sage, etc., and returned to his vocation in a higher, priestly form.

Traditionally, acceptance into a vocation often required the novice going through some kind of initiation ritual which imparted a mythology that explained how the art itself came into existence, which god or mythic figure created it, and what ethics and behavior are expected of the initiate.

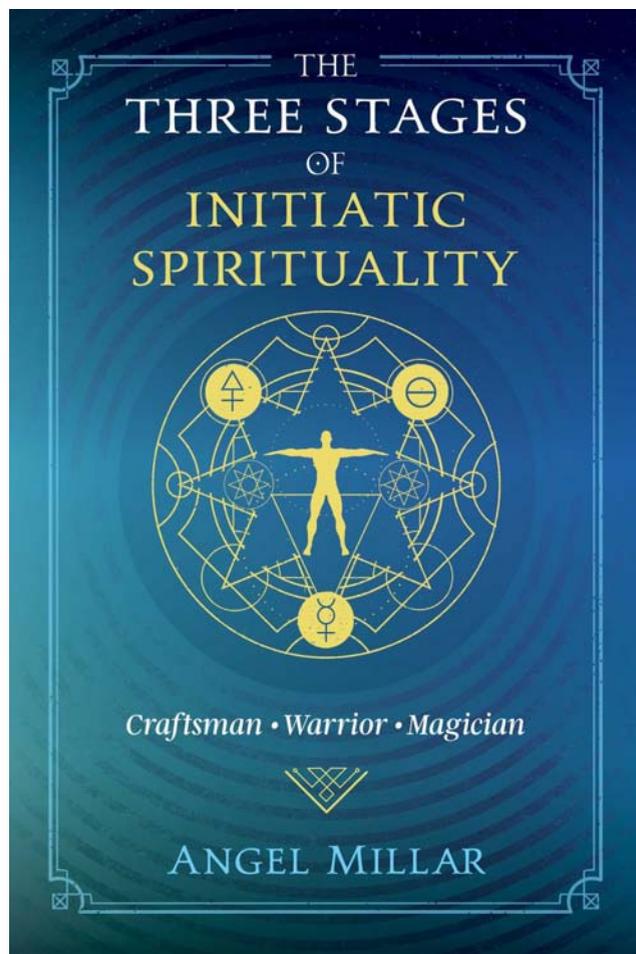
Ritual initiation is, in effect, a kind of spiritual machinery or spiritual technology, not in the contemporary sense of these words, but in their original sense or, to point to a historical period, in the sense used by the ancient Greeks. (*Techne* means technology, technique, craft, the act of crafting.) By spiritual machinery, we are referring to several interrelated mythic and natural forces, most literally—or in the most outward sense—the machinery or tools of the gods or of the trade or guild: the hammer, chisel, square, compasses, fire, flint, and alchemical vessels, etc., which appear in the initiation ritual as symbols of a higher and deeper reality.

The root of the term “machinery” is the Proto-Indo-European *maghana*, “that which enables.” It is related, also, to the Greek word *makhaná* (tool, means) and to the Old English *mæg*, meaning “I can,” and to the contemporary English word “may.” In the context of initiation, the machine that enables is the ritual itself—its set of procedures, movements, the unveiling of symbols and ritual objects, etc., reflecting the predictable movements of the planets; the seasons; of birth, life, and death, etc.

These things are not objects of devotion, *per se*, but hint at natural law or cosmic law, i.e., an all-pervasive cosmic Intelligence, Consciousness, or Law Giver that has set everything in motion. The heavens and earth are, in other words, a kind of machine of God or the gods, and the

initiatic ritual emulates and connects the initiate to its essence, or the fuel, of existence.

Initiation unveils the workings of the cosmos outside of the initiate and points to his place within it and to the path he might take through it, toward the Divine. He is not a cog but a star, a universe—a microcosm that reflects the whole of existence and its essence. In attaining that consciousness in which he feels he can understand, can do, and can cultivate a new, empowered way of living and being, he starts to glimpse, and to embody, what is sometimes called the Higher Self.



This article was adapted from the book *The Three Stages Of Initiatic Spirituality: Craftsman, Warrior, Magician* by Angel Millar (Inner Traditions publishing, 2020). Millar is a well-known author and speaker on initiation, Freemasonry, esotericism, and self-development, and has spoken at Masonic Con in Massachusetts and in Los Angeles; at 300: Freemasonry’s Legacy, Freemasonry’s Future (Virginia); at Esotericon 2020; and at Masonic Lodges across the U.S.A.

## Hierophant Card

By RW Robert Johnson

In Tarot, key number five is the Hierophant. I know what you might be thinking—what does Tarot have to do with Ritual (other than that the Tarot **IS** ritual)? Is this guy going to spin some magic mumbo-jumbo here? No—no, I am not. Instead, I want to approach this topic by explaining what the Hierophant represents as an idea and then tell you what it stands for and how that can be applied to Freemasonry in a practical sense.

By the act of witnessing ritual and taking part in it, we are taking part in the materializing of philosophical concepts, making them real. The importance of ritual cannot be overstated, and yet we have entire swaths of the Fraternity who hold little value in it. Have you ever heard, “*Ritual is what we must all suffer through to get to the good parts of Freemasonry*”?

To become a Freemason and hold no regard for the ritual is antithetical to the entire system. We experience the world of matter through the eyes of The Fool, wisdom nipping at our heels, and the Hierophant speaks to “*He that has ears to hear.*” What revelations do the witnesses to ritual gain? Perhaps more importantly, what words from the Hierophant are we missing by not witnessing the ritual; and by not contemplating the more profound significance of what’s being presented?

In the Tarot system, the Fool (Tarot key #0) sees what the Hierophant says (in mind). If you witness the ritual, your perception of it is governed by the Hierophant after passing through the eyes of The Fool. As an initiate into our mysteries, the candidate is blindfolded, and the emphasis is shifted to feeling and hearing. The Hierophant allows one to absorb the ritual in a way that is now enhanced due to the subduing of sight. In Freudian terms, the Hierophant may represent the superego—and as a tool, the medium by which higher intuition comes to us—feeding the id so as to arrive at a medium, the ego.

As ritual consists of the spoken word, this alludes to the neck or throat, ruled by Taurus. The Hierophant wears a collar that is gold or silver and is tied directly to the sense of hearing, but that collar may also be seen as bull horns reflective of Taurus. Taurus is ruled by Venus—The Rose—The Truth and the Way. To listen to the words of ritual—to reflect using the Hierophant—to hear it, is an art not all of us are capable of. Paul Foster Case says in *The True and Invisible Rosicrucian Order*, “*All apples can’t be ripe at the same time. As with fruit, men ripen according to the laws of their [personal] development.*”

If we consider that the four cardinal virtues represent, in total, the intuition, we begin to see the Hierophant’s role in ritual and in Freemasonry. Prudence, Temperance, Fortitude, and Justice come together to give us an objective view of our true selves. What we cognitively discern from the amalgamation of these becomes the sum total of the intuition.

If you bear witness to the ritual, you will gain the insights needed to change your life. If you listen, you will hear the Hierophant, who will give you proper instruction; instruction that will lead you to success in all things, whether spiritual or practical; instruction that is not contrary to reason and will never lead you to evil places.

In all, the ritual is the act, the man is the experiencer, and the Hierophant is the feedback allowing the man to act according to the dictates of his own conscience for the good of all beings. Good ritual is of supreme importance.

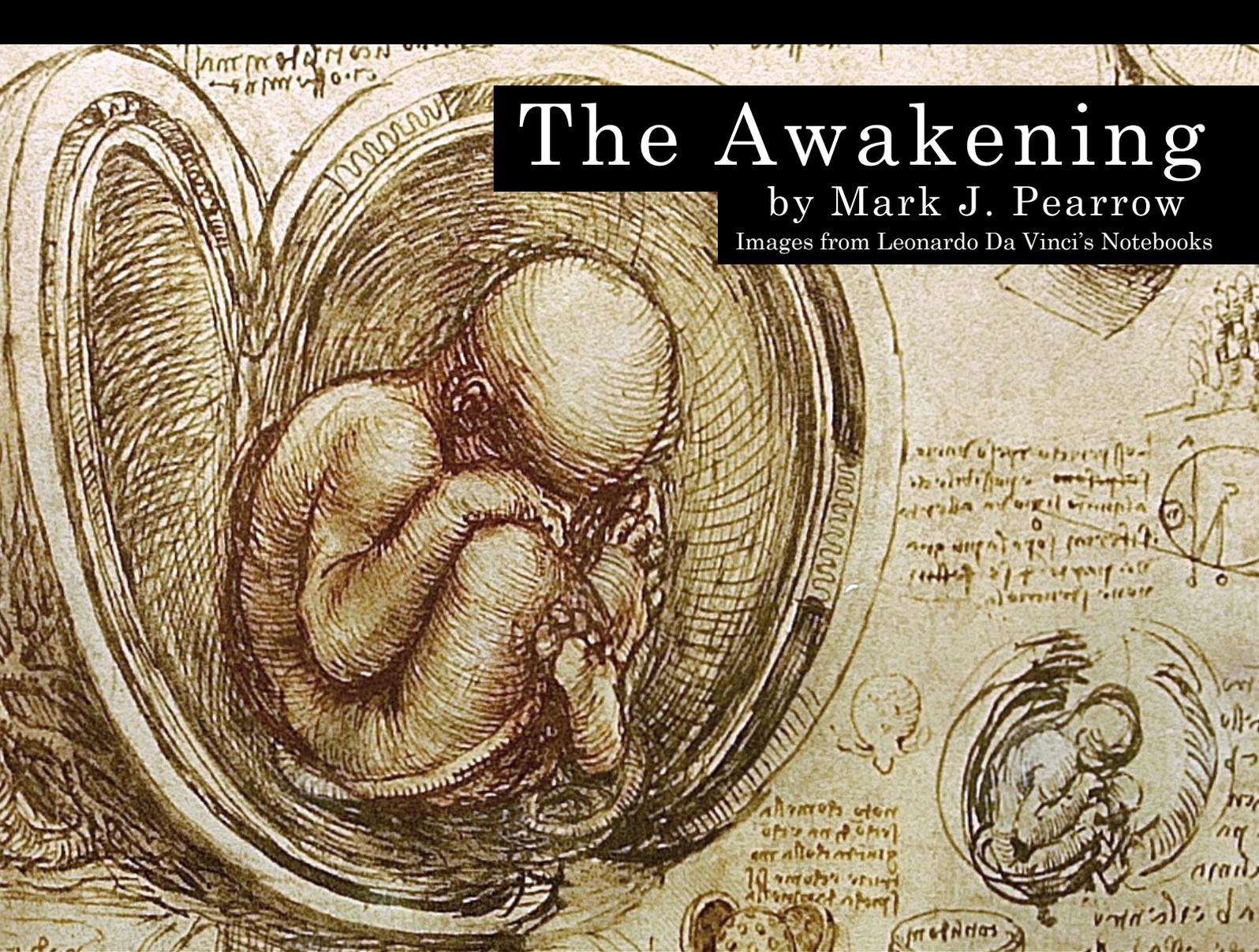


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# The Awakening

by Mark J. Pearrow

Images from Leonardo Da Vinci's Notebooks

At the root of the fertile tree of symbology and embodied wisdom of Freemasonry, one can find the oft-neglected aspect of *Initiation*. Before the illuminated catalog of virtues, tenets, emblems, lectures, and understandings can be opened to the Entered Apprentice, he must first cross the threshold of the door upon which he knocks. It is this willful entry into a new world that constitutes initiation, and is arguably the most important moment in a Mason's journey—but it is often overlooked, unnoticed, unremarkable. It is, however, no idle or meaningless ceremony; it is quite the opposite.

Our journey into the World begins much as the Entered Apprentice's does: in quiet darkness. In the moment of birth, we are ushered into a strange new world of light, and life as we have known it for nine months will never be the same. Life outside the comfort of the womb is stark, and it takes a long while before our eyes can begin to see the majesty of Creation. Passing the threshold of the door, the initiate is guided from the outer world of the profane by the Junior Deacon to the inner world of the sacred, and the initiate's inner life is forever changed; that is the whole point of initiation. Just as the infant enters the world in an indigent state, so enters the apprentice, in need of nurturing and exposure to the wealth of Masonry. Symbolically, the Senior

Deacon is the guide to the strange new world of the initiate, but outside of degree work, it is the obligation of every Mason to nurture the initiate.

Throughout history, rites of passage and other kinds of initiation have modeled life and death, birth and rebirth; and according to author Mircea Eliade, "it is only in initiation that death is given a positive value."<sup>1</sup> In the initiatic sense, death no longer means merely an empty tomb or coffin, but a womb for rebirth. Lodges that make use of the Chamber of Reflection might note that the chamber, meant to represent a cave, is also symbolically a spiritual womb. It is a place where the old ways can be shaken off, and a new journey begun. While initiation has played a major role in human society for millennia, Eliade argues that it is all but extinct in Western culture in the present day. There are some vestiges left here and there: the rite of baptism, bar and bat mitzvahs, school graduations, weddings—these all contain the threads of the fabric of initiation and of the moving from one state of life into another.

French anthropologist Arnold van Gennep (1873–1957) asserts in his 1909 book *Les Rites de Passage* that most

initiation rites or rituals can be broken into three distinct parts:

1. Separation
2. Transition
3. Reincorporation

During the first stage, *separation*, the initiand is disconnected from his previous life or world. This can take place via a vigil, a trek, being placed in a sacred building, or in many other symbolic and physical means. This is a crucial part of initiation as it represents the movement from the profane to the sacred, and movement from the old life into the new. In some senses, this stage is like a little death, in which the initiand “dies” to the old ways and is “born” into the new. In jurisdictions where the Chamber of Reflection is used efficaciously, that symbolic “cavern” represents the womb—dark, quiet, reflective—that precedes the journey into the light of the Temple, or the new, sacred world.



Crossing the threshold at the door—after those three distinct knocks—is very much a symbol of this crossing from one life into the next. Van Gennep referred to the state that the initiand is now in as “liminal,” which is derived from the Latin *limin* (threshold). One can, without too much mental acrobatics, see this as the Entered Apprentice Degree.

A new Mason should feel that transition in his heart, as should all the members on the sidelines. They are not merely watching yet another run of the same old degree: they are watching a new life being made. Every single member of the Lodge can, and should, contribute to the spirit of this change for the candidate. After all, if there is no difference in the candidate’s heart after this step, what point is there in the whole affair?

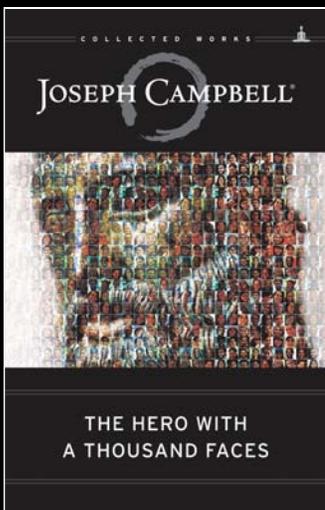
In the next phase of initiation, *transition*, the initiand is in the limbo-world between states. This chrysalis affords the

candidate the opportunity to learn the tools and practices needed to self-improve, grow, and move into the final phase. Challenges may be set along the path that must be passed in order for the initiand to prove his worthiness of progress. The role of the mentor is important here; in many rites, a guide must keep the candidate from harm and explain the curiosities of the inner life of the sacred to him. This stage might sound similar to the degree of Fellowcraft.

The final phase of initiation, *reincorporation*, sees the successful initiand crossing fully into the new world or state, and being brought back into the body of the community, but this time with a new role or status. The word reincorporation itself represents the bringing back into the body, and here, this can be taken several ways. The allegory of Hiram Abiff is particularly salient in this regard, and the Master Mason Degree can be viewed as the completion of the universal cycle of initiation.

Another view of the three stages of initiation can be seen in Bro. Angel Millar’s work *The Three Stages of Initiatic Spirituality: Craftsman, Warrior, Magician*. In this book, Bro. Millar breaks the initiatic journey again into three stages—or *archetypes*—but through a different lens; not a competing view, but one that is complimentary and helps the student more fully understand the initiatic cycle. In the first archetype, *Craftsman*, the initiand learns the development and use of tools, first for their operative powers, but then these later become powerful symbolic tools. In the second archetype, *Warrior*, the initiand uses tools to overcome challenges, often by force. The final archetype, *Magician*, sees the initiand entering into the Divine and reuniting the microcosm and the Macrocosm. In both van Gennep’s three stages and Millar’s three archetypes, one can find congruences with Joseph Campbell’s *Hero’s Journey*<sup>2</sup>; an initiatic template of twelve steps that has captured the minds of modern writers like George Lucas.

Certainly, Freemasonry is in no way the first organization or culture to make use of initiation to mark and model an important life transition. Many traditions going back to the beginning of written history have done so; though our modern ritual appears to draw significantly from concepts seen in so-called “mystery schools”—largely Greco-Roman religious groups that reserved participation to initiates (called, in Greek, *mystai*, which derives from *myéō*, to properly shut the eyes and mouth to experience<sup>3</sup>)—hearkening to that important Masonic virtue, silence. Since the rites, customs, and experiences of the Mystery Schools were, by definition, never to be written down—only given from mouth to ear, and only to those who were well-qualified—we have little evidence of exactly what happened in them. We have to draw from the archaeological evidence from dig sites of meeting places of the various Mysteries, as well as some (very biased, in all



likelihood) writings from critics and detractors. What we can derive, however, is that several Mysteries began their initiation in a cave or cavern-like structure; for example, the Mithraic Mysteries were often situated in an edifice called a *mithraeum*. These ritual structures flourished during the height of the Mithraic Golden Age, from 100 B.C until c. 300 A.D. Just such a structure is the *mithraeum* beneath the *Basilica of San*

*Clemente* in Rome. This cavernous motif is seen in the Masonic Chamber of Reflection. Around the walls of this cavern are often inscribed Zodiacal symbols, from which we infer that the room was meant to represent a microcosm, a version of the universe writ small, in which their circumambulations were meant to represent the cycle of life and death through the solar cycle. They were also associated with degrees of initiation, each representing a further step along the cycle.<sup>4</sup>

Often, a *mithraeum* would be set up to accommodate what appears to be an important part of their rites: a common meal, set at a long table in the middle of the room. Ritual dining has been an important part of human culture throughout the ages, as breaking bread together literally “brings everyone to the table.” Little wonder, then, that the Festive Board and Masonic meals in many forms, from pancake breakfasts to Table Lodges, play an important role in maintaining a sense of togetherness. We live in an age that is starkly different than our Mithraic counterparts. For them, being able to communicate with each other meant always being in personal proximity; for us, we have the illusion of togetherness projected by our myriad electronic devices, making us always connected, but ironically, always alone. In this current age of pandemic, that paradox is amplified, and is a great challenge not only to initiation, but to fellowship itself.

Many other Mystery schools had features that appear in some form in our modern Masonic traditions. Although many attempts have been made over the years to “connect the dots” between these traditions and modernity, it’s probably impossible to paint a complete picture of the evolution of Masonry throughout the ages. One complicating factor is that all activity in Mystery Schools, which had been a very common part of Greco-Roman culture (and beyond) for hundreds of years, were outlawed and became punishable by death under the rule of Roman Emperor Theodosius I, who in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD declared Nicaean Trinitarian Christianity to be the only legitimate religion of the Empire. From then on, almost all practices that fell outside of that scope were considered

heresy and punishable by death, and by the Emperor’s words, only practiced by “foolish madmen” (Theodosian Code XVI.1.2).<sup>5</sup>

One might think that the symbolic trail is lost at that critical time, but we do have glimmers of initiatic activity through the Dark Ages and into the Renaissance and then modernity. Some religious ceremonies have aspects of initiation in them—Baptism, marriage, funerals, knighthood—and initiatic activities have continued, unimpeded by Roman dictates, in many other parts of the world, including Native American culture, African cultures, India, Asia. The rites of each small tribe in this huge world each merit a depth of study far outside the scope of this small article. The reader is encouraged to pick up the trail and follow it where he will.

Whatever framework one uses to understand the complex mystery of initiation, there’s one very important truth, and a corresponding obligation that falls upon each of us: initiation does not end with the degrees. Those are merely symbols, a Cliff’s Note version, of the transformation that is to come in the life of a candidate. It is not by the mere production of a perfect Middle Chamber lecture that the candidate is somehow magically transformed into a better man. It is not by mere virtue of perfectly executed floorwork that the candidate will suddenly understand the cosmic cycle and gain the wisdom of Solomon. None of those trappings of performant Masonry matter at all, except in the ego of the performers, if we do not then act, each of us, as lifelong Senior Deacons, as spirit guides, for each new candidate, throughout the rest of their Masonic lives. Put quite eloquently by Wor Bro. Ronald J. Watkins,

*“Freemasonry is at its core an initiatory experience. Its primary purpose is to provide initiation through ritual then to give mentoring to all Master Masons. Indeed, mentoring is an essential component to becoming a fully realized Mason.”*<sup>6</sup>

Awakening from the comfort sleep of the uninitiated is no small matter; most of humanity would rather habitually hit the snooze button until at last they fall into that eternal sleep. For those of us who dare to make the demand at the door by three distinct knocks, we are obliged to support one another on the journey and keep ourselves awake at the wheel.

1 Eliade, M. (2012: Revised Printing) *Rites & Symbols of Initiation – The Mysteries of Birth & Rebirth*. New York: Spring Publications, Inc.

2 Campbell, Joseph. *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*. Vol. 17. New World Library, 2008.

3 Strong, James. *Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*. Abingdon Press, 1890.

4 Cosmopoulos, Michael B. (Ed). (2003) *Greek Mysteries: The Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*. Routledge Press, New York.

5 <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/source/theodcodexvi.asp>

6 [http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/Freemasonry\\_and\\_Initiation.html](http://www.freemasons-freemasonry.com/Freemasonry_and_Initiation.html)



# “To eat (after Ritual) or not to eat? That is the question”

by Wor. Baruti KMT-Sisouvong, 32°  
Ph.D. Candidate

In many cultures and among social groups, food is considered a central element for connecting with another to foment enduring friendships—both personal and business. Perhaps most Masons have experienced more than a few meetings with their brothers over dinner, lunch, and/or a Sunday Brunch. When it comes to food in general and meeting during a meal in particular, such moments feed not only our bodies but also our social souls. Such is certainly the case with food and Freemasonry.

While some Lodges may consume a meal ahead of the stated meeting or ritual work, there is something to be said for enjoying a meal after the work has concluded—particularly post-ritual. Let us consider three reasons for enjoying a meal after Ritual.

Firstly, food has a way of grounding us. In short, it brings us back to our bodies as the mastication, digestion, and assimilation of foodstuff is designed to slow us down. And it is this process that has the ability to bring us back to earth after conducting and/or witnessing ritual—even more so when we experience superbly-executed ritual work, both of the spoken and floor work variety.

Secondly, after conducting Ritual work for a newly Entered, Passed, or Raised Brother, the opportunity to sit

may prove as beneficial to the evening as the ritual itself for all in attendance—*Yes! Even our Brethren seated along the side-lines.* In short, a post-ritual meal provides an opportunity to not only discuss the experiences of the evening, it is also a chance to deeply contemplate individual or collective experiences so as to more fully integrate the ritual’s lessons and symbols with Brethren responsible for delivering said ritual and who may have themselves ruminated over the same along their Masonic journey.

Thirdly, in carving out time post-ritual and in a relaxed manner, we may learn something about ritual execution not previously considered. And that nugget of wisdom may well concretise our understanding of key elements and lead to an even better delivery for Candidates. And after all, are we not there to make certain the Candidate being Entered and/or Brother being either Passed or Raised has the best experience possible? If not, let this moment be your starting point to ensure such by mastering both your understanding and delivery of Ritual. In this, it will prove helpful to witness ritual from as many perspectives as possible.

That said, it is the belief of this author that our Masonic Ritual may be experienced in no less than five

# The Green Lantern Pizza Recipe



ways: as a Candidate; as a Brother delivering the Ritual; as a side-line Brother witnessing the Ritual; as one contemplates the Ritual away from a Tyled Lodge in the privacy of one's Internal Lodge or mind; and by living it in one's daily travels. As a result, each Brother in attendance for a meal afterward may prove a valuable reference offering a unique perspective based both on his vantage-point during the ritual and as a result of his previous and current contemplations. What better time to obtain "more light" than during a post-ritual meal?

*What if my Lodge has its meal before the start of Lodge?*  
The short answer: Try something new!

In many Lodges, there may be a long history of "doing things a particular way." As such, some Brothers may be initially resistant to such a change. We all know the famous Past Master refrain, "It wasn't done that way in my year!" In such cases, strong alliances with more seasoned and reasoned Brethren may prove beneficial. Therefore, observe the Brethren of your Lodge and seek to connect with those of a like mind to arrange a post-ritual meal and note the quality of the exchange among the Brethren in attendance and its impact thereafter. It may prove to be the new cement that builds not only stronger new and seasoned Brothers but a stronger Lodge culture. With nothing to lose yet everything to gain as it relates to deeper friendships and new understandings of our Ritual, why not give it a shot?

Aum appétit!

About Our Brother: *Wor. Baruti KMT-Sisouvong (pronounced buh-ROO-tee KE-met-SEE-soo-VAWNG) is a Ph.D. Candidate studying Mystical Experiences among Freemasons and Rosicrucians and along with his wife, Mina, serves as Director of the Transcendental Meditation Program in Cambridge and the larger metropolitan area of Boston, MA. They have two children—Chloe Rose and Emerson James Warren—ages 6 & 3 respectively. Find him on Social Media.*

*The following is a recipe that Baruti and Mina use to ground themselves after performing ritual in their personal practices. Their Vegan Chili Recipe can be found here: <https://bit.ly/3oqiLN5>*

## **Spelt Flour Pizza Crust:**

- \* 1½ cup wholegrain spelt flour
- \* 1 teaspoon baking powder
- \* ½ teaspoon sea salt
- \* 2 tablespoons olive oil
- \* 6 tablespoons filtered water
- \* Optional: 1 tablespoon Italian Seasoning

## **Spinach Pesto Recipe:**

- \* 2 Cups Spinach
- \* 3 Tablespoons Hemp Seeds (or Walnuts)
- \* 2 Tablespoons Avocado Oil
- \* 2 Tablespoons Lemon Juice
- \* ½ Tablespoon Nutritional Yeast
- \* Pinch of Salt and Pepper
- \* Additional Water for desired texture

## **Toppings:**

- \* Sauté 3 cups of Spinach
- \* Roast half a head of Garlic Cloves
- \* Roast 2.5 cups of Butternut Squash
- \* Roast 2.5 cups of Sliced Mushrooms
- \* ¼ cup of Daiya Classic Blend Vegan Cheese

## **Instructions:**

- \* Combine dry ingredients.
- \* Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil.
- \* Slowly add a tablespoon of water at a time and start kneading the dough for about 60 seconds.
- \* Let the dough ball sit in a covered bowl for 10-15 minutes.
- \* Preheat the oven to 400 °F/200 °C.
- \* Roll out the dough on a well-floured surface, if you like your base fairly thin roll it out to a diameter of 12-14 inches.
- \* Prick the crust multiple times with a fork to prevent bubbles forming in the dough.
- \* Bake the crust for about 12 minutes.
- \* Add toppings as desired and bake on the bottom rack for a further 15-20 minutes until the ingredients are cooked.
- \* Enjoy!

# The Touch of the Goddesses

by Adina Dabija

Elation, excitement, enthusiasm are attributes of any mystical experience. They naturally move the energy upwards towards the higher centers where the connection with the divine can be achieved. The knowledge acquired from the mystical experience has to be eventually grounded, embodied and applied in real life.

As days separate into light and darkness, seasons into cold and warm, directions into east and west, south and north, polarity also presides over the spiritual world, which is also part of the natural world. In natural or immanent religions such as Hellenism, Hinduism or Daoism, substance and activity support and feed each other, in a balancing act. In Hinduism the goddess of Destruction and rebirth—Kali—naturally balances the principle of creation represented by Brahma. They are different aspects of the same primordial energy manifested; different sides of the same coin. The ancient Greeks saw universal feminine powers in Hestia (the goddess of hearth and fire), Artemis (the goddess of wild nature), Aphrodite (the goddess of beauty and harmony), Athena (the goddess of wisdom and counsel), Hera (goddess of family and marriage) and Demeter (the goddess of the harvest and agriculture), naturally balancing the sacred masculine archetypes represented by the Greek Gods. In Hellenism, the polarity between substance (passive) and process (active) is used to harmonize the two poles of the spiritual experience. For example, how could Wisdom alone—Athena—function without the messenger god Hermes? By immersing into the mysteries, the initiate can invite the harmony between the feminine and the masculine aspects in her or his own life.

The balance is very difficult or impossible to achieve in patriarchal transcendental religions, where a singular masculine archetype not only took over the

bulk of the symbolism, but came close to the strangulation and even annihilation of the divine feminine archetypes. The few that survived, such as Mother Mary or Fatima, are simply called to serve and submit to the unique patriarchal aspect of the Divine. Those religions are more susceptible to extremist practices such as fanaticism or sectarianism. In some religions, women are not eligible as priests or not even allowed around men in church. This extends to the relationship with one's own body, disregarding the body, as in self-flagellation practices that deny the body as a vehicle of the soul; or in the extermination of the infidels or non-believers.

As someone born in Eastern Europe, raised as a Christian Orthodox during post-communist times, I witnessed a total separation between men and women in the Church. Women had to cover their heads as a symbol of total submission to the patriarchy, were not allowed in the Church in the “dirty” period of the month, and were raised in shame and guilt because of the original sin; let alone considered unfit to conduct the ritual as priestesses. I felt confused by the tradition inherited from my parents and I realized I was looking down on my own mother, and I was becoming a perfect misogynist myself. Women seemed unworthy to me—because I was trained to feel unworthy. As a teenager I could not tolerate this well, and I had a total breakup with this tradition, becoming an atheist in love with the Divine outside the orthodox church. Later on, I started to search for harmony in my soul through poetry and painting. I searched for an immutable guiding principle in life through philosophy and alchemy, reading Daoist texts, Plato's dialogues, Marsilio Ficino, hermetic texts and Gurdjieff. I felt more balanced, reaching out to the Divine with curiosity and love, a love that had been until then suffocated by dogma, fear and



**“In Hellenism, the polarity between substance (passive) and process (active) is used to harmonize the two poles of the spiritual experience.”**

shame. Now an initiate in Hellenism, I consider the act of harmonizing the masculine and feminine aspects of the divine as a source of spiritual and emotional power and balance.

One of the reasons I became a doctor was to be able to bring balance and harmony into people’s lives and help them embody the soul in a healthy way, realizing that the concept of polarity is very much present in our physical bodies, which always strive for balance and homeostasis. A healthy body has an electrical charge between the head and the feet, as well as within the cell’s membrane. If the charge is diminished or reversed, we become less healthy. We experience this electrical charge due to a flow of subtle energy, or ether, or vital force that is created from, among other things, mineral intake, and moves through meridians that run vertically throughout the body from the head to the feet. What I found over time in my medical practice is that enhancing the downward flow of subtle energy through the body with breath and proper nutrition is the most powerful single method we know of to heal. The connection with the earth makes us less susceptible to an unhealthy movement of energy, that can result in imbalances such as stroke or mental disease.

The union with the Divine requires the burning of a spiritual fire, which is an assumed task that mobilizes the resources of the physical body. These resources have to return to the physical body eventually, through proper rest, nutrition and breathing so the body can sustain other experiences. In this context, the vegan diet can be dangerous for health, and especially for the health of the initiate, who has to sustain periods of fasting and other spiritual practices that move the energy upwards. For example, if you do not eat meat, then you must eat more green vegetables to obtain iron and other minerals to maintain the proper mineral balance in the body.

As, more than ever, the veil of the unseen is getting thinner, we, the people on the planet, are being offered the chance to go through an awakening process. Whether this process consists in coming into a larger awareness, committing to spiritual practice or learning to reconnect to one’s inner power, the process always mobilizes intense mental, energetic and spiritual resources. In this delicate endeavor, a careful balancing act is much needed—that of connecting and activating archetypal feminine energies to anchor and ground the upward movement of mental and spiritual resources required for the activation of the higher intellectual and emotional centers.

# FINAL WORD



Thomas Pynchon

The magic in these Masonic rituals is very, very old. And way back in those days, it worked. As time went on, and it started being used for spectacle, to consolidate what were only secular appearances of power, it began to lose its zip. But the words, moves, and machinery have been more or less faithfully carried down over the millennia, through the grim rationalizing of the World, and so the magic is still there, though latent, needing only to touch the right sensitive head to reassert itself.

Thomas Pynchon, *Gravity's Rainbow*

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