

## **THE ESOTERIC WITHIN THE EXOTERIC**

Esoteric Schools Within The Theosophical Movement

A paper presented to the Theosophical History Conference San Diego, June 1992

Dr. Gregory Tillett

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### Author's Preface

This paper was begun as an overview for a book I was intending to write on "secret societies" within the Theosophical movement (including Adyar, Point Loma, ULT, Steiner, and others).

Readers should note that the paper was written in 1992, and that I now have vastly more material on its contents (especially related to the Egyptian Rite) so that the paper requires substantial revision (although not correction, since nothing I wrote in the paper has been shown to be inaccurate) and expansion. Likewise, the bibliography requires considerable expansion and up-dating.

I was recently asked to make this paper available, and, not foreseeing being able to update and expand it in the near future, I decided to make it available in its original, albeit incomplete, form.

Appended to this paper is a summary of the history of the Egyptian Rite written many years later than the original work.

I am especially grateful my late friend and colleague, Dr John Cooper, who provided advice on the paper, and made available material from his vast archive of material on Theosophical history, most of which is now in the National Library of Australia: <http://www.nla.gov.au/selected-library-collections/john-cooper-theosophy-collection>

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# THE ESOTERIC WITHIN THE EXOTERIC: SECRET SOCIETIES IN THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Dr Gregory Tillett

## 1. Background

Precisely what it was that Helena Petrovna Blavatsky [HPB](1831-1891) had in mind when she inspired the foundation of the Theosophical Society [TS] in 1875 is not known; however, from her writings it can be deduced that she hoped for more than a literary association of people generally interested in comparative religion and occultism.

The Objects of the Society as defined in 1875 were

to collect and diffuse a knowledge of the laws which govern the universe.[1]

The Objects tended to become less explicit or specific over the years: essentially, they have always been the three current Objects, and which might be summarized as universal brotherhood, comparative religion and psychical research.[2]

It seems evident that HPB really wanted an occult fraternity rather than a literary society; the tension between the two is apparent in the tension between HPB and Henry Steel Olcott[HSO](1832-1907), and runs throughout later TS history. It is equally evident in Theosophical Societies of the present. Is the TS a society for the study of various subjects, but without corporate commitment to any conclusions or any specific teachings; if it has teachings, whence come they and by what authority have they been received and are they imposed. Or is the Society in existence to propagate a specific (to use the strange phrase adopted by the Adyar Society) "body of truths"; and, if so, how is it to do that. Even if the Society possesses doctrines, is it only a learned society, or is it in fact, in the traditional Eastern or Western sense, an occult school, training, not merely informing.

There was a long tradition in western occultism of secret organizations, and of esoteric groups, or at least of higher and more exalted grades (in many cases reaching up to Masters, Secret Chiefs, or Unknown Superiors) within secret organizations.[3] A graduated, degree based system of esoteric enlightenment and the revelation of hidden knowledge had characterized Freemasonry and virtually all occult organizations from the Strikte Observanz of von Hund (1722-1776), and through claimants to the Rosicrucian,

Templar and Masonic tradition.[4]

It seems to have been to a fusion of the western Masonic model and the oriental guru-chela model that Blavatsky looked.[5]

In its early days the TS worked as a secret society. At a meeting on January 12, 1876 a resolution was passed:

That in future the Society adopt the principle of secrecy in connection with its proceedings and transactions, and that a Committee be appointed to draw up and report upon details necessary to give effect to such a change.[6]

Thereafter, Fellows were admitted through a ritual initiation in which they were given passwords, grips and signs which they undertook to keep secret and by which they were enabled to recognize other members. But there was little practical effort to maintain secrecy, even though applicants for membership signed a document in which they pledged "to ever maintain ABSOLUTE SECRECY respecting [the Society's] proceedings, including its investigations and experiments, except in so far as publication may be authorized by the society or council".

By May 3, 1878 a "CIRCULAR printed for the Information of Correspondents" stated

III. At first The Society was an open body, but later it was re-organized on the principle of secrecy, experience having demonstrated the advisability of such a change....[7]

The fifth clause of the Circular read:

V. Its Fellowship is divided into three Sections, and each Section into three Degrees. All candidates for active fellowship are required to enter as probationers, in the Third Degree of the Third Section, and no fixed time is specified in which the the new Fellow can advance from any lower to a higher degree; all depends on merit. To be admitted into the highest degree, of the first section, the Theosophist must have become freed of every leaning toward any one form of religion in preference to another. He must be free from all exacting obligations to society, politics and family. He must be ready to lay down his life, if necessary, for the good of Humanity, and of a brother Fellow of whatsoever race, colour or ostensible creed. He must renounce wine, and every other description of intoxicating beverages, and adopt a life of strict chastity. Those who have not yet wholly disenthralled themselves from religious prejudice, and other forms of selfishness, but have made a certain progress towards self-mastery and enlightenment, belong in the Second Section. The Third Section is

probationary; its members can leave the Society at will, although the obligation assumed at entrance will continually bind them to absolute secrecy as to what may have been communicated under instructions.[8]

On December 17, 1879, the Council of the TS declared that the Society consisted of three sections:

XI. The Society consists of three Sections. The highest or First Section is composed exclusively of proficients or initiates in Esoteric Science and Philosophy, who take a deep interest in the Society's affairs and instruct the President-Founder how best to regulate them, but whom none but such as they voluntarily communicate with, have the right to know.  
[quoted in Ransom, 1938:547]

The Second Section consisted of Fellows, and the Third Section of the Probationers. This structure was adopted by the Convention at Bombay in February, 1880, but was thereafter effectively ignored.  
[9]

By 1883 HPB was giving indications of a willingness to take occult pupils: for example, her 1883 article "Chelas and Lay Chelas" [10]. Her practical occult teaching was increased after the establishment of Lucifer in 1887.

At the 1885 Convention the rules were revised, and the Objects more or less as presently held were adopted. The Initiation ceremony was abandoned "as giving rise to misunderstanding on the part of the public, and the form of obligation being repugnant to many." [11] But the signs and passwords were retained.

## 2. Esoteric Freemasonry and the TS

HPB had an interest in Freemasonry, and quoted in her work from the writings of several Masons, including the English Masonic author and eccentric, John Yarker (1833-1913), and of the influential American Mason, General Albert Pike (1809-1891).[12] She stated that the Knights Templar "was the last European secret organization which, as a body, had in its possession some of the mysteries of the East"[13], but that modern claimants to Templar tradition, including Masonic lodges, had never possessed any of the secrets, although, on occasion, they may have been influenced by individuals "secretly working under the direction of Eastern Brotherhoods" [14].

The nature of the relationship between early Theosophy and Freemasonry was with marginal rather than with mainstream Freemasonry, but was mutually influential nevertheless. HPB's

writings were read with considerable interest by that small group of Masons who had an interest in the esoteric aspects of the Craft, and many of them subsequently joined the TS. These included the founders of both the Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia [SRIA][15], and of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn [GD][16]; these organizations paralleled Masonry in the use of secret ceremonial initiations and grades of membership, although the GD, unlike the SRIA, admitted both men and women, and did not require Masonic membership as a pre-requisite. Both SRIA and GD, in addition to a graded hierarchy, effectively included within their esoteric organizations yet other secret groups.

There were some discussions in the early days of the TS as to whether it ought to have a formal relationship with Masonry. HSO, recorded in his Old Diary Leaves:

On the 17th April [1878] we began to talk with [Charles] Sotheran, General T. [Doubleday], and one or two other high Masons about constituting our Society into a Masonic body with a Ritual and Degrees; the idea being that it would form a natural complement to the higher degrees of the craft, restoring to it the vital elements of Oriental mysticism which it lacked or had lost. At the same time, such an arrangement would give strength and permanency to the Society by allying it to the ancient Brotherhood whose lodges are established throughout the whole world.[17]

This proposal was not finally abandoned until HPB and HSO had gone to Bombay, and they "relinquished it only when we found the Society growing rapidly by its own inherent impetus and making it impolitic for us to merge it into the Masonic body". [469]

### 3. The Sat B'hai and the TS

HPB had begun corresponding with the English writer on Freemasonry and collector of Masonic ephemera, John Yarker, towards the end of 1877. Yarker had been attracted to HPB as the result of reading Isis Unveiled (published in 1877). A friend of HPB had sent her a copy of his work, Notes on the Scientific and Religious Mysteries of Antiquity (1872), to which she made reference in Isis Unveiled, describing the volume as "brimful of learning and, what is more, of knowledge, as it seems to us."

Yarker, who was made an Honorary Fellow of the TS in August, 1877, offered HPB the rituals of an order known generally as the Sat B'hai, hoping, first, that she would comment upon them on the basis of her great esoteric knowledge, and second, that she would use them as the basis for developing the TS along Masonic lines. [19]

In April, 1878, HPB and Colonel Olcott discussed this

possibility, and concluded that it would serve to restore "the vital element of Oriental Mysticism" to the higher degrees. But there were objections from Indian members of the TS, and the scheme was abandoned. However, both HPB and Olcott were made Honorary Members of the Sat B'hai, on August 9, 1877. HPB was made a member of the sixth degree, level one, Arch Auditor; the name of this degree and level was Rad, and, like the fifth and seventh degrees, was open both to non-Masons and to women. HSO was made a member of the second degree, sixth level, Arch Courier; the name of this degree was Garuda, and it was open only to Master Masons (as was the first degree)[20]. In Sat B'hai the first degree was the highest, and the seventh the lowest.

The Royal Oriental Order of Sikha (Apex) and the Sat B'hai seems to have been founded by an Anglo-Indian, Captain James Henry Lawrence Archer of the Indian Army, but the organization of the Order was largely the work of Kenneth Robert Henderson Mackenzie (1833-86), author of the Royal Masonic Cyclopaedia (1877), and a member of the TS. The first public statements about the Order appeared in correspondence in The Freemason in early 1871, however although great claims were made for its antiquity and importance, and despite Mackenzie's efforts to establish it as a working organization, it does not seem to have moved much beyond being a plan. By January, 1879, Mackenzie had concluded that the Order had finished.[21]

The Sat B'hai was never adopted for use within the TS.

#### 4. HPB and Esoteric Theosophy

On October 9, 1888 HPB founded the Esoteric Section of the TS at London; she was the Outer Head [OH], and a Master the Inner Head [IH]. She had previously made various attempts at establishing some sort of inner group and had over the years, formed small groups of disciples for instruction. In 1884, for example, a Committee was established at the suggestion of T Subba Row, to receive and direct esoteric teachings and transmit them to the existing Inner Group (which had been operating under A.P. Sinnett since 1883) in London. This committee included Olcott, HPB, Subba Row, Damodar Mavalankar, Mr and Mrs Cooper-Oakley and Ramaswami Iyer [22].

Similarly in 1884, a group of members of the Inner Group of the London Lodge, petitioned the Masters from "this Inner Group - the Adytum of the London Lodge" for their "unchartered recognition", and permission "to form our own bye-laws and choose our own council", promising they would manifest "implicit confidence in the Mahatmas and their teachings and unswerving obedience to their wishes in all matters connected with spiritual progress". Miss Francesca Arundale wrote out the pledge and all the members signed it; they included Mary Anne Arundale, A J Cooper-Oakley,

Isabel Cooper-Oakley, Archibald Keightley, Bertram Keightley, Isabel de Steiger, John Varley, Hermann Schmiechen, Mabel Collins, A.P. Sinnett, Patience Sinnett and others. [23]. The conditional approval of the Masters M and KH appeared mysteriously on the written petition, but the group quickly faded.

HPB had been encouraged in plans for the ES by the American Theosophist, W.Q. Judge [WQJ] (1851-1896), who drew up the plans and drafted the rules for the ES. Judge wrote The Book of Rules for the ES, "under the guidance of Master M and HPB", it was said. On December 14, 1888, HPB appointed Judge as her "only representative for said Section in America" "in virtue of his character as a chela of thirteen years standing". [24]

In May, 1887, Judge had sought HPB's approval to establish an Inner Group like Sinnett's. Some, including Robert Gilbert, have suggested that HPB established the ES "specifically to avert the loss of would-be practical occultists to the ranks of the Golden Dawn and to prevent a complete split between the followers of the Eastern and those of the Western Path". [25] De facto and eventually formal relations were established between the GD and the ESTS [26].

Olcott opposed the formation of the ES, but was persuaded to yield by a letter allegedly from one of the Masters. Olcott published an executive direction allowing the establishment of the section:

#### The Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society

Owing to the fact that a large number of Fellows of the Society have felt the necessity for the formation of a body of Esoteric students to be organized on the original lines devised by the real founders of the T.S., the following order has been issued by the President-Founder:

I. To promote the esoteric interests of the Theosophical Society by the deeper study of esoteric philosophy there is hereby organized a body to be known as the Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society.

II. The constitution and sole direction of the same is vested in Madame H.P. Blavatsky, as its Head: she is solely responsible to the Members for results; and the Section has no official or corporate connection with the Exoteric Society save in the person of the President-Founder.

III. Persons wishing to join the Section, and willing to abide by its rules, should communicate directly with: Mme. H.P. Blavatsky, 17 Lansdowne Road, Holland Parl, London W.



(Signed) H.S. Olcott  
President in Council

Attest: H.P. Blavatsky.  
Corresponding Secretary [27]

Olcott later somewhat revised his involvement in the establishment of the ES when he wrote in Old Diary Leaves:

The reason for my throwing the whole responsibility for results upon H.P.B. was that she had already made one failure in this direction at Adyar in 1884, when she, with T. Subba Row, Oakley, Damodar, and others, tried to organize a secret class, or group, whose members were to have been brought more closely into relations with the Masters, but which failed, and I did not care to be responsible for the fulfilment of any special engagements she might make with the new set of students she was now gathering about her, in her disturbed state of mind. I helped her write some of her instructions, and did all I could to make the way easy for her, but that was all.[28]

HPB wrote a preliminary memorandum for the ES, which she described as a probationary and general purpose degree to prepare the student for the study of "Occultism or Raja Yoga", and noting that "the real Head of the Esoteric Section is a Master of whom H.P. Blavatsky is the mouth-piece for the Section".[29] ES members were later formed into Lodges with their own charters.

The Objects of the Society were amended in 1888, following the establishment of the ES, so that the third object -

pursued by a portion of the Fellows of the Society, is to investigate unexplained laws of nature and the psychic powers of man.

was followed by the statement

(The Fellows interested in this third object now form a distinct private division of the Society under the direction of the Corresponding Secretary.)[30]

This supplementary statement was deleted by 1890.

Candidates were required to sign a pledge; in addition to general clauses about making Theosophy a living factor in their lives, supporting the Theosophical Movement, constantly struggling against the "lower nature" and maintaining secrecy regarding the

signs and passwords of the Section and its documents, there was also a more controversial promise of obedience to the OH. This originally read:

I pledge myself to support before the world, the Theosophical Movement, its leaders and its members; and in particular to obey, without cavil or delay, the orders of the Head of the Esoteric Section in all that concerns my relation with the Theosophical movement.[31]

HPB found it necessary, in the face of controversy, not least of it with Olcott, to modify this clause, so that it became:

I pledge myself to support before the world the Theosophical movement, and in particular to answer and obey, without cavil or delay, all orders given me through the outer Heads of this School, in all that concerns my Theosophical duties and Esoteric work, so far as I can do so without violating my positive obligations under the moral law and the laws of the land; and I expressly agree that I may be expelled from the School and that the fact of such expulsion may be made known to its members, should I violate this pledge of obedience and secrecy. [[32]

HP also had to establish a procedure for dealing with disputes as to the extent of such obedience. She appointed HSO her confidential agent and sole representative for the ES in Asiatic countries, although he never actually became a member of the Section.

Sinnett declined to participate in the ES, and, together with some twenty of his own students, continued a separate Inner Group of the London Lodge, which will be considered later in this paper.

##### 5. HPB's Esoteric Section

HPB sent out to applicants for the new section a letter, together with the "Rules of the Esoteric Section (Probationary) of the Theosophical Society" and the Pledge. Applicants were required to "give up more than one personal habit" and to "adopt some ascetic rules", including not consuming alcohol or eating meat.

HPB wrote:

It is through an Esoteric Section alone...that the great exoteric Society must be redeemed and made to realise that in union and harmony alone lie its strength and power. The object of the Section, then, is to help the future growth of the Theosophical Society as a whole in the true direction by promoting brotherly union at least among a choice

minority.[33]

The EST material under HPB consisted of a number of privately published pamphlets and circulars. The text of the Instructions was written by HPB between 1888-89. These included:

ESTS Book of Rules  
 Instructions I  
                   II  
                   III

These have been published in H.P. Blavatsky. Collected Writings, volume 12.

Members were admitted by a form of ritual, and meetings took a ritual form. The mantra "AUM" was used. The ESTS had the system of passwords usual in such organizations: members were to identify themselves by saying "Dhyani" (wisdom), to which the reply was "Putra" (son), with the response "satri" (dawn) bringing the reply "asoph" (meaning unknown).

The ESTS was administered by a Council in London headed by HPB, and including Annie Besant, Countess Wachmeister, William Wynn Westcott, William Kingsland, E.T. Sturdy, W.R. Old, L.M. Cooper, Anna Bonus Kingsford, Isabel Cooper-Oakley, Emily Kislingbury, G.R.S. Mead, ALC, H. Coryn and C.F. Wright. In the USA a Council was headed by WQJ, and included J.H. Salisbury, Mrs Campbell van der Planck, J.D. Buck, A.B. Griggs, William S Wing and Allen Griffiths. On December 14, 1888, HPB appointed WQJ as her sole representative for the EST in America.

In 1889 the formal relationship between the TS and the ES was theoretically severed and the ES became known as The Eastern School of Theosophy.[34]

By 1890 an Inner Group [IG] of the ES was formed. This has been carefully documented by Spierenburg [35]. The IG met between August, 1890, and a few days before HPB's death in April, 1891. Members were invited to join subject to strictly observing the rules of the ES, abstaining from meat-eating and preserving "absolute chastity", regularly attending meetings, and maintaining strict secrecy of both the teachings given by and the fact of membership in the Group.

The IG met weekly at 19 Avenue Road, London, in a specially built room which was not used by any other than HPB or the 12 members of the group, six men and six women. The members of the IG were Annie Besant (1847-1933), G R S Mead (1863-1933), Alice Cleather (1856-1939), Isabel Cooper-Oakley (1854-1914), Laura Cooper (who married G R S Mead and died in 1924), Emily Kislingbury, Countess Wachtmeister (1838-1910), Herbert Coryn (1863-1927), Dr Archibald

Keightley (1859-1930), Walter R Old, E.T. Sturdy (1860-1957), and Claude Falls Wright (1867-1923). In addition there were two other members: the Indian Rai B.K. Laheri and William Wynn Westcott (1848-1925).

The role and use of the "occult room" remains one of the mysteries of Theosophical history [36]. However, it seems certain that the room was used, or was intended to be used, for occult rituals of some kind; it included coloured windows and mirrors.

HPB gave her teachings to the IG orally, and these were taken down in note form by the pupils present, and sent in to two secretaries, Besant and Mead, who were then required to write them up; the draft was then considered at a future meeting, corrected and amended by HPB. Part of this material was originally published in 1891 for members of the ES as ES Instruction IV (authorized by AB and WQJ); in the "Notice" preceding the material, Besant and Judge commented:

The matter contained in this Instruction was delivered orally by H.P.B. in her Group Teachings of members of the Third Degree. It was thus given with a view of its being transmitted to members of the Second Degree...  
[37]

Most of the teachings of the IG were made public in 1897 in the so-called third volume of The Secret Doctrine [38] as "Notes on Some Oral Teachings". The Adyar ESTS published both ES and IG material in The Esoteric School of Theosophy: Instructions by H.P. Blavatsky. I, II, III, IV, V, VI. [39]

On April 1, 1891, HPB appointed Annie Besant, who had joined the TS and the ES in 1889 and risen rapidly to become HPB's favourite disciple, Chief Secretary of the Inner Group and Recorder of the Teachings.

HPB died on May 8, 1891. Following her death, a meeting of the Council of the ES was held in London on May 27, and determined that

the highest officials in the School for the present are Annie Besant and William Q Judge ... and that from henceforth with Annie Besant and William W Judge rests the full charge and management of this School.[40]

It is interesting to note that they did not claim to be Outer Heads.

A report of the Council meeting was sent to all members of the ES on May 27, 1891, and attached to it was a notice signed by AB and WQJ as joint Outer Heads. In July, 1891, they also jointly

authorized the publication of ES Instruction IV, a Supplement to IV and Instruction V (which contained IG material). However, in their notice Besant and Judge declared: "We who write to you claim over you no authority save such as she [HPB] delegated to us. We are your fellow students."[emphasis added][41]

On March 29, 1892, Besant and Judge sent a further notice to ES members informing them that there was henceforth no official connection between the ES and the TS.[42] A further notice on this subject was sent out in August.[43]

By April, 1893, when A Statement of the Schools accounts was sent to members, the membership register (in which members had numbers) had reached 2009.[44]

Olcott's hostility to the ES, and to secret societies within the TS generally, long simmering, was openly expressed in a letter he wrote to Judge in 1893:

The E.S, and especially the I.G., Svastika and other rings within rings I consider a danger and a possible source of great wrong and evil....So long as the E.S. does not work against the Const[itutio]n. of the T.S. I shall not oppose it, but when it does then I fight.[45]

Following the Judge Case and the split between the Theosophical Society in America and the rest of the TS, the EST was also divided into two separate organizations in 1894, one with Annie Besant as OH and the other with WQJ as OH. The process whereby either or both Besant and Judge claimed to hold the office of OH is unclear, although presumably it is based on instructions from the Master who was the IH.

Not all Theosophists who sought to find initiation into the occult mysteries did so, however, through official channels. Sinnett was one who operated his own organization, the history of which will be considered later in this paper, and Meyrink was another.

## 6. Meyrink's Blue Star

In 1891 the Theosophical Lodge of the Blue Star was established in the flat of the novelist Gustav Meyrink (1886-1932) in Prague. Its ten or so members engaged in various asectical austerities, practiced breathing, visualization and meditation exercises before finally committing itself to the exercises contained in Rama Prasad's Nature's Finer Forces[46] which, along with a number of other Theosophical works, Meyrink translated. [47] Several members travelled to London and joined Mrs Besant's ES.

## 7. W.Q.Judge and the Esoteric Section in America

Although Judge accepted joint Outer Headship of the ES with AB after HPB's death, he was later to claim this was approved by the Master M only "for the present". By 1894 Judge believed that the situation had become unworkable, and claimed that the Master had directed him to reorganize the work of the ES and to take sole charge of it. Judge stated that AB was under the influence of a Black Magician, and was being adversely affected by her occult relationship with Dr Gyanendra Nath Chakravarti (1863-1936), a prominent Indian Theosophist who was, at the time, acting as Mrs Besant's guru. Mrs Besant also at that time believed that HPB had reincarnated as Chakravarti's daughter, a claim Judge repudiated.[48]

Accordingly, Judge issued an ES Circular dated November 3, 1894, announcing that he had warned AB against Chakravarti in September, 1893 but she had ignored him, and therefore he now declared her joint headship of the ES "at an end", and declared:

...I resume in the E.S.T. in full all the functions and powers given to me by H.P.B. :. and that came to me by orderly succession after her passing from this life, and declare myself the sole head of the E.S.T...[49]

Not unexpectedly, AB refused to accept Judge's decision, and continued her own ES work apart from Judge, with herself as sole OH. There were, therefore, two co-existing ESTs.

In a circular of December 3, 1894, Judge declared that by order of the Masters the ES Instructions were no longer to be kept secret (with the exception of a specified parts).[50]

Judge's ES material was published in Echoes of the Orient, Vol III.

## 8. A.P. Sinnett and the Inner Group of the London Lodge

Alfred Percy Sinnett (1840-1921) became a member of the TS in 1879, and was Vice-President from 1880-1888.

In 1882, in the midst of the period in which he was receiving letters from the Masters (1880-1885)[51] Sinnett worked on a proposal for a grade structure for the Third Section, and received Mahatmic advice on this subject [52]; the Master advised that, because of the limited education of many Asiatics, it was virtually impossible to create a system of grades which would be suitable to both easterners and westerners, but nevertheless gave

encouragement for the developed of a "scheme of 'Degrees'". Sinnett's proposal appears to have been of seven degrees, but nothing seems to have come of it.

Following the period during which he received letters from the Masters (1880-1885), Sinnett was surrounded by a small group of Theosophists who were interested in hearing about and listening to readings of extracts from the Mahatma letters. Sinnett declined to participate in HPB's ES, and, together with some twenty of his own students, continued a separate Inner Group of the London Lodge.

A.P. Sinnett held what he described as "regular mesmeric meetings" at which the Master spoke through "Mary" [Maude Travers ( -1929), wife of William Scott-Elliott ( -1919)][53]. Sinnett noted that "all knowledge of which was kept back from" HPB and her group [54] and that the Master "did not wish her to be acquainted in any way about [the] private developments" since they "would become liable to contamination". [55]

"Mary" left Sinnett in May, 1888 but maintained occasional contact and sent him letters containing the Master's instructions. She returned to work with him in February, 1889 until May that year, and then again from January, 1890 to May, 1891.

"A special group of the most earnest students of the London Lodge" was established in 1892: it included Francesca Arundale, Leadbeater, Scott Elliott and "Mary", and, from June, 1894, Annie Besant. Transactions of the London Lodge was published as a result.

Sinnett described the formation of the group in 1892 in the following way:

..we formed a group of the most earnest students of the London Lodge for special work in which the Master undertook to help us. For a long time - up till about now, we had kept the secret of Mary's faculties and development, but for the group these became known.[56]

"Mary's" work ended effectively on October 10, 1893, when she married and after 1898 there were no communications through her. For a period Leadbeater took on the role of channel for the Master.[57]

At the end of 1902 Sinnett met Nancy Harward who began to serve as a medium for contact with the Master Hilarion.

The London Lodge broke with the Adyar Ts in 1907 as a result the Leadbeater scandal, and Sinnett formed a new group called the

Eleusinian Society, which lasted but a short time. Sinnett continued to receive instructions from the Master through Robert King (1869-1954).

In 1911, Sinnett returned to the Adyar Society, again becoming Vice-President, and the London Lodge was re-chartered. Sinnett continued, however, making contact with the Masters via various psychics, the most important being King, a professional psychic, later to become a bishop in the Liberal Catholic Church.

It is unclear whether any of the esoteric teachings "brought through" for Sinnett's group survive (apart from the published papers in Transactions and Leadbeater's The Astral Plane and early writings on past lives). The later teachings received through King may probably be reconstructed from King's own (largely unpublished) writings [58], and, perhaps, those of his disciple, W.E. Butler, who formed his own esoteric group.[59]

#### 9. Annie Besant and the Adyar Esoteric Tradition

Following Judge's attempt to depose her from co-headship of the ES, Annie Besant claimed sole possession of the OH position. In 1898 she closed the ES as then constituted and required members to return their papers to her. She opened a new EST, and many of the previous members joined it. [60]

In 1900 Mrs Besant received what she believed to be a message from the Master KH which included criticisms of her administration of the ES. That letter was first published in 1919 by the TPH at Adyar, but the critical sentences were omitted, as they were when republished in 1948. The critical comments read:

You have for some time been under deluding influences. Shun pride, vanity and love of power. Be not guided by emotion but learn to stand alone. Be accurate and critical rather than credulous. The mistakes of the past must not be glossed over with imaginary explanations. The E.S.T. must be reformed so as to be as unsectarian and creedless as the T.S. The rules must be few and simple and acceptable to all. No one has a right to claim authority over a pupil or his conscience. Ask him not what he believes. All who are sincere and pure minded must have admittance.....Misleading secrecy has given the death blow to numerous organizations. The cant about "Masters" must be silently but firmly put down.....You will have to leave a good deal of your emotions and credulity before you become a safe guide among the influences that will commence to work in the new cycle.[61]

About 1904, Mrs Besant reorganized the ES into a system of



disciplines: the occult (which she administered), the mystic (which Babu Upendranath Basu (1862- , joined the TS in 1884) administered) and the philosophic (which G.R.S. Mead administered and which was dropped when he left the TS). In 1907 she re-introduced the second degree.

Following Olcott's death in February, 1907, AB was elected PTS and thus became both PTS and OH EST.

In 1908 Mrs Besant believed that the Masters directed her to make the E.S. "into a Second Section of the Society in intention and purpose, as in the early days; and They would again constitute Themselves as the First Section, not according to Rules, but in fact..." [62] Mrs Besant believed the Masters, and HPB, visited Adyar at this time, and were seen and felt by many, and that the Master M said: "The First Section has been re-organized in the Shrine Room" (that is, the ES Room at Adyar). [63]

In 1911, Mrs Besant re-structured the ES. It was divided into an Esoteric School (consisting of a probationary order of a single degree, and a pledged order for which belief in the coming of the World Teacher was essential) and an Esoteric Section consisting of three disciplines: bhakti, jana and karma yoga.

Mrs Besant later enlarged the pledge of the ES to ensure enthusiastic work for the additional range of associated activities and organizations, including the Order of the Star in the East and the projected "Coming" through Krishnamurti, the Liberal Catholic Church, Co-Freemasonry [64]:

I pledge myself to cooperate with unswerving loyalty with the Outer Head for any object which she declares to be the work for the Masters, and to resign from the ES if I feel that such cooperation is impossible for me. [65]

#### 10. The Temple of the Rosy Cross

In 1912, Mrs Besant, together with James Wedgwood (1883-1951) and Marie Russak (1867- ), established a new esoteric group within the TS: The Temple of the Rosy Cross. It was a ritualistic group concerned with ceremonial and symbolism, and with an adventist theme. Mrs Besant claimed the ritual had been composed under inspiration from the Master the Count. It was closed down eventually by a direction from the Master the Count via Leadbeater; Leadbeater had never approved of the Temple. [[66]

Elements of the ritual of the Temple were incorporated into the Krotona Ritual. [67] The Temple was, supposedly, carried on the the Ritual of the Mystic Star prepared by Jinarajadasa as a semi-public, non-initiatory rite. [68]

## 11. Leadbeater and the Adyar ES

Considerable dissension and turmoil erupted within the Adyar TS and ES over the associated activities and the role of Leadbeater: various groups of the ES were suspended or closed down, including those in Switzerland and the USA, and large numbers of original members resigned. Leadbeater was the de facto OH of the ES, maintaining the inner plane links with the Masters, informing people of their status on the occult path and dominating Mrs Besant.

The ES was much more openly discussed than in HPB's time, and its status as an elite group within the TS made clear. For example, in 1916 AB wrote:

The T.S. is not only the Society which you see in the world...It consists of three Sections; the first is the Masters Themselves; the second is composed of graded esoteric students, the highest grade being of disciples who know the Masters face to face; the third is the outer Society. The two first of these Sections constitute within the Society an inner organization known as the E.S. [[69]

and in 1920 she said

The Society does not consist only of it's outer membership. There is inside the Society an inner body consisting of circles, one above the other, reaching from the youngest members newly admitted to the Rishis Themselves...[70]

In 1921, Mrs Besant suspended the ES in America for a year as the result of conflicts arising from a "Back to Blavatsky" movement in the USA, trouble over the Leadbeater scandals and opposition to the auxiliary movements, like the Liberal Catholic Church and the Order of the Star.

At some TS functions, members of the various grades of the ES and other TS groups wore insignia, generally in the form of coloured ribbons, to indicate their grades within the inner organization, and the occult status these implied.

The teachings of the ES changed significantly during AB's time: many revelations brought via Leadbeater were incorporated - for example, the material contained in his book The Masters and the Path (1925) was originally published only for members of the ES. Members were informed as to their status on the Path of Initiation, were informed of Initiations as and when they took them, and were given details of past lives. Qualification for admission to the ES included membership of the TS for several years, abstinence from meat, alcohol and tobacco and sexual

intercourse.

Separate ES headquarters were established in the major centres of the Society. Special ES rooms were maintained at Adyar, and special Theosophical, but not directly controlled by the TS, centres were established at Sydney, Australia (The Manor), at Huizen, The Netherlands (St Michael's) and at Ojai, USA (Krotona). Adyar (under KH), Sydney (under M) and Huzien (under the other 5 Masters) represented the three world occult centres.

Members were admitted to the ES through a ceremonial initiation, were given copies of the portraits of two of the Masters, and were expected to meditate each day and to attend regular ES meetings.

Under Mrs Besant the EST came to consist of several Degrees: candidates were admitted as Shravakas or "hearers", and could, after a satisfactory probation of two or three years, take the Pledge of the ES and proceed to Degree I and Degree II. Groups were established under Wardens, and national groups operated under Corresponding Secretaries (for example, Leadbeater was Corresponding Secretary for Australasia). Members were required to choose a Discipline within which to work after trying each for a month. There were to be Groups under Sub-Wardens for each discipline. The disciplines were

The General Discipline (Raja Yoga)  
The Christian Gnostic or Devotional Discipline  
The Pythagorean Discipline  
The Karma or Action Discipline

For each discipline there were rules, study papers, and recommended reading and meditational practices.

Her devotion to Krishnamurti, and her albeit unwilling acceptance of his opposition to ritual and secret societies, led Mrs Besant to formally close the ES throughout the world on October 21, 1928, declaring that Krishnamurti was the only teacher [71]. Leadbeater and his followers strongly opposed this move, and were undoubtedly relieved when, on August 3, 1929, Krishnamurti dissolved the Order of the Star and effectively resigned from the messianic position they had created for him. In December, 1929, the ES was partially re-opened "as it was found that by suspending the active functioning the whole Society suffered the loss of spirit and vitality". [72] By 1930, Mrs Besant had almost fully re-opened the ES, declaring that she was the OH and the Master M the IH; she further announced that henceforth only the Raja yoga discipline would be followed, and that members were expected to follow Krishnamurti's teachings. How one followed the teachings of a man who denied he was a teacher, had teachings, or wanted disciples, and who implicitly repudiated the ES,

initiations and Masters was not explained.

In February, 1931, Mrs Besant called on ES members to go to Adyar to assist in revitalizing it as a "Flaming Centre" as the Masters' direction. With Jinarajadasa's assistance, Mrs Besant yet again re-organized the ES, and fully re-established it in November, 1932.

Following the dissolution of the Order of the Star, the TS and the ES suffered dramatic losses of membership: membership in the exoteric Society fell by some 15,000 in five years.[73]

Within the Adyar, a variety of secret societies developed under the inspiration of C.W. Leadbeater. In addition to the more commonplace esoteric groups, Leadbeater also operated what can best be described as an esoteric homosexual tantra group. It will be considered in more detail later in this paper.

## 12. Co-Freemasonry and Esoteric Theosophy

Co-Freemasonry constituted a further esoteric group within the Adyar TS, operated a system of graded initiation within which esoteric teachings were communicated. In Co-Masonry, as distinct from traditional (male) Freemasonry, a variety of esoteric teachings are communicated to the initiates providing what is described as a "mystic" interpretation of the ceremonial. Co-Freemasonry was one of the "Three World Movements" identified in 1925 within the Adyar TS as being specifically inspired by and part of the work of the Masters.

Freemasonry is known as a secret society, although Masons declare it rather to be a "society with secrets", and "a peculiar system of morality, veiled in allegory and illustrated by symbols". [74] Traditionally, Masonry was strictly reserved for men, but on January 14, 1882, a French Lodge initiated a woman, Maria Deraismes, and was, accordingly, suspended from the group of lodges to which it belonged. [75]

The Grand Loge Symbolique Ecossaise de France [the Grand Lodge of Scottish Symbolical Masonry of France] had its origins in the schism in 1879 of a number of lodges from the jurisdiction of the Supreme Council of the Grand Loge Generale Ecossaise, which had been established in France in 1804 as the French branch of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite in England. This new body received support from the Grand Orient de France, the rival body to the Grand Lodge. [76]

Within the new Grand Lodge was the Loge Les Libres Penseurs, which met at Pecq in Seine-et-Oise, and it was in this lodge on January 14, 1882, that seven Master Masons participated in the initiation of Mademoiselle Maria Deraismes (1828-1894), an

eminent worker for social and feminist causes, and President of the Association for the Emancipation of Women. The lodge was threatened with suspension, and for ten years did not initiate any other women. But on March 14, 1893, Mme Deraismes initiated a number of women, and on April 4 her brethren proceeded to establish a new Grand Lodge, La Grand Loge Symbolique Ecossaise de France, Le Droit Humain, admitting women as well as men to the mysteries of Freemasonry. At the time it consisted only of the one lodge in Paris; the first lodge outside France was established in Zurich in 1895. Gradually the movement spread into England, the United States, Holland, India and other countries. By 1901 it had grown sufficiently to require the establishment of a new Masonic authority for the conferring of degrees from the 1st to the 33rd.

A governing body, the Co-Masonic Universal Council, was established under the Presidency of Dr Georges Martin (d.1916) and nine other Grand Inspectors General of the 33rd degree on May 11, 1899. It took as its title "The Supreme Council of International Co-Freemasonry Consisting of Sovereign Grand Inspectors General of the 33rd and Last Degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite".

The first Englishwoman to enter Co-Masonry was Miss Francesca Arundale (-1924), who pioneered its establishment in Great Britain, and was also a pioneer Theosophist in England and India. Miss Arundale, the aunt of George Arundale, was initiated in 1895, and introduced Mrs Annie Besant (1847-1933) to the movement in 1902. [34] Mrs Besant and some associates, all Theosophists, travelled to Paris where they were initiated into the three degrees in the Loge Le Droit Humain No 1.

The first Co-Masonic Lodge in London was established in September, 1902, under the title "Human Duty No 6". Founding officers of the Lodge were all leading members of the TS, including Mrs Besant, Colonel William Lauder ( - 1924), Mrs Evelyn Lauder, Miss Esther Bright (1868- ), Mrs Maude Sharpe ( ) and Miss Francesca Arundale. Co-Freemasonry quickly became popular with members of the TS. [77]

Gradually additional Masonic degrees were introduced into Co-Masonry in England, mainly via English Masons who were also Theosophists: Mark, Ark and Royal Arch, as well as what are known as the "higher degrees" (that is, from the fourth to the thirty-third) began to be worked.

In 1913 a Grand Council for Great Britain was established with Annie Besant as Grand Master, Ursula Bright as Deputy, James Wedgwood as Grand Secretary and Francesca Arundale as the representative of India. Throughout the English-speaking world, Co-Masonry was dominated by Theosophists.

By 1934 there were twenty-two federations and jurisdictions throughout the world. Within the British jurisdictions, which consisted primarily of Theosophists or members sympathetic to the TS in Great Britain, the USA, Australia and other areas, there were 107 Craft Lodges, 22 Mark Lodges, 22 Royal Arch Chapters, 17 Rose Croix Chapters (18 ), an Areopagus (of the 30 ) and a Consistitory (of the 32 ).

In 1934 the British Federation was divided in two: the Western Federation, covering Great Britain, Ireland, South Africa and Canada ( with Mrs Besant's daughter, Mabel Besant-Scott (1870- ), as Grand Commander) and the Eastern Federation covering India, Ceylon, Australia and New Zealand ( with George Arundale as Grand Commander).

English-speaking Co-Freemasonry has used a variety of rituals, several of them reflecting strong Theosophical influence. These include one ritual virtually identical which that used by the Grand Lodge of England, and one which is a translation of the Craft workings in use in French Co-Freemasonry. In 1908 what is known as the "Dharma Working" was published: it the includes additional charges in the 1 and 2 initiations used by Dharma Lodge in India, and in later editions these were referred to as "The Mystic Charges". The charges noted that Masonry was not derived from the "Building Crafts of the Middle Ages" but from "the Ancient Mysteries, once forming the heart of every great Religion". There was a direct reference to the role of the Elementals in Masonic ritual. [78]

In 1913 Mrs Besant obtained permission to revise the English ritual, and included a number of oblique Theosophical references. Further revisions in 1916 and 1925 under the influence of C.W.Leadbeater led to workings with explicit Theosophical and occult inclusions. The 1916 ritual included a number of Psalms, and a ceremony of invocation of the Elementals during the 1 in which the candidate makes offerings at the four cardinal points. On the candidate's behalf the Junior Deacon addresses the Elementals. For example, at the North he says: "Ho! Elementals of the Earth, who guard the right sight of the Sacred Portal. Behold! A blinded child of mortality, seeking immortality approacheth." [79] The 1916 ritual was revised for the 1925 edition.

An additional rite, known as the "Verulam Working" was compiled largely by J.I.Wedgwood.

A variety of rituals were also used for degrees other than Craft. The original 18 (Rose Croix) working was based on the French Grand Orient rite, and omitted all prayers and other invocations of the deity; the rite was worked "To The Glory of Humanity",

rather than, as is traditional, "To the Glory of God". Its symbolism, traditionally Christian, was changed; for example, the initials INRI are, in the traditional working, explained as referring to the Latin for "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews", but in this rite they refer to the Latin for "Nature is Regenerated by Fire".[80]

The influence of the TS on Co-Freemasonry in the English-speaking world remains considerable. The current Grand Commander of the Eastern Federation is Mrs Radha Burnier 33 , President of the TS, and Outer Head of the ES. All Presidents of the TS from Mrs Besant onwards have been high-ranking Co-Masons: Besant, Arundale, Jinarajadasa and Sri Ram were all 33 .

### 13. The Egyptian Rite of Ancient Freemasonry

In part to compensate for the de-esotericization of the ES under Mrs Besant's Krishnamurti enthusiasm, Leadbeater developed a new esoteric organization designed to be the most secret, the most exclusive and the most powerful occult group in the world. He gathered together a group of girls from the Dutch East Indies, chosen by Leadbeater during one of his visits to Java. The girls were sent to The Manor by their parents, willingly or otherwise, in 1927-8, and remained there with Leadbeater until he moved to settle permanently at Adyar early in 1929. They were known as "The Seven Virgins of Java", and were related in Leadbeater's scheme of things to the World Mother, who would manifest her special force through them, to the powers behind the LCC and Co-Masonry, and to the still-surviving idea of the World Teacher. [81]

Leadbeater long had an interest in Java, and wrote a book on its occult history. The seven girls were treated as a group, an innovation for Leadbeater, since he had always previously emphasized the need for individuality and individual attention. They were told that they had to function as an organic whole, and would pass through Initiations and other psychic experiences corporately.

The girls were all trained in Co-Masonry, and rigidly drilled in ceremonial by Leadbeater's secretary, Miss Maddox. Eventually, despite their youthful years, they were all elevated by Leadbeater to the highest grade of Masonry, the 33rd Degree, and were all made members of the ES. They were to be involved in the establishment of the "Egyptian Rite of Ancient Freemasonry", and remains a secret inner group within the TS (although now known as the "Egyptian Rite of the Ancient Mysteries"). Potential members were required to be members of the TS and the ES, and to be Co-Masons, although these requirements seem to have been liberalized in recent times. Although the Egyptian Rite (or ER, as it came to be known) now has few members, it continues to

work its six degrees in centres throughout the Theosophical world.

Leadbeater planned that the ER would draw together the angels associated with Church ceremonial, and those of Co-Masonic working, and in this he claimed the encouragement and inspiration of the Master The Count, who assisted in the drafting of the rituals. The rituals were originally compiled by Wedgwood, since he was said to have a special relationship with The Count. However, Leadbeater did not like the results, and submitted them to Arundale for revision. The final work was said to constitute "the most powerful occult ritual in the world", and the seven girls were kept busy rehearsing their parts in it to ensure that they were perfect for the day when the ER could be inaugurated in the Co-Masonic Temple at Adyar. This was done in 1929, after the ES had been re-opened. A formal charter for the ER was issued by the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Rite of Memphis at Palermo (Italy) which was, at the time, controlled by a Theosophist, Reginald Gambier Macbean. Macbean had admitted Leadbeater, Wedgwood, George Arundale, Oscar Kollerstrom and Jinarajadasa to the Rite and, when the Palermo Sanctuary was suppressed by Mussolini, transferred his rights in it to those five brethren

The published Ritual was issued on Christmas Day, 1931, bearing the imprimatur of Mrs Besant as Grand Master, and a solemn warning from Arundale, as Grand Secretary, that the ritual was the property of the "S.S." (presumably the "Sovereign Sanctuary") and "must be returned on demand and provision must be made for the return on the death of the member". When not in actual use, the Ritual should be kept under lock and key.

By the time the candidate completes the three stages of the Temple of the Quest, he should be on Probation. He is then ready to advance to the fourth stage, the Temple of the Rose and the Cross. Once accepted as the chela of a Master he can go on to the fifth stage, the Outer Temple or Temple of the Dawn, followed by the sixth stage, the Inner Temple or Temple of the Star. These are the degrees to be worked by the members, and above them is the seventh stage, the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Masters of the Light, the governing body of the ER. Beyond that is the Great Hierarchy. It was emphasized that the ES was mainly for young people, and that wherever possible all the officers should be young people; with the passage of time and the disappearance of young people from the TS generally, it can be presumed that this is no longer the case.

Various officers represent different bodies and qualities, although their titles derive from several languages - thus "Artifex" and "Agni" and "Ethna" work together - and some of them sound distinctly quaint. It is noted that all participants need to have a sound knowledge of At The Feet of The Master, "the



teachings of which the Rituals of these degrees are largely destined to emphasize".

The rituals themselves have a distinct Leadbeaterian, if such a term might be used, feeling about them, and include copious references to and quotations from At The Feet of The Master, in addition to numerous modified Anglican hymns. "O Trinity of Burning Light" and "There is a King of Glory" are found, together with some appropriate original material drawn from The St Alban Hymnal of the LCC. Oaths are sworn on a copy of At The Feet of The Master and a silver star, and once admitted to the Temple of the Quest members are invested with a "symbol of the Dawning of Light upon the darkness" which they wear around their necks, openly in the Temple, and concealed when in the world. Leadbeater found that the occult effects of these most powerful of all occult rituals were very pleasing and felt they accomplished a blending of two streams of angelic assistants, and emanated highly potent evolutionary currents upon the world.

Following Leadbeater's death, Arundale succeeded him as Grand Master, thereafter a conflict arose as to who should succeed Arundale. Both Mrs Arundale and N.Sri Ram laid claim to the title. The current Grand Master is Radha Burnier, who is also President of the TS and OH of the ES. She has progressively begun closing the Rite down.

#### 14. An Esoteric Womens Rite

Leadbeater also used the ES as a vehicle for his interest in "work for the World Mother". The esoteric "work for the World Mother" was initiated by Leadbeater in an inner group of members of the ES in Sydney in 1925. Leadbeater also sought to establish a further esoteric group: a feminine equivalent of the Christian Religion for the revival of ancient womens mysteries. He claimed that a form of "apostolic succession" from the World Mother was transmitted through him to four young women among the "Seven Virgins of Java" whom he "consecrated" as the female equivalents in this feminine religion of bishops in the masculine Christianity. Jinarajadasa commented in an ES document of 1948

Though the original four consecrated by the Holy Mother have lost interest in the work, nevertheless the succession given to them has been passed on, though for the moment it remains in abeyance.[82]

And Jinarajadasa foreshadowed

a secret organization confined to women only, working through one or more rituals under their officers, which the World Mother will use as a special channel of Her forces for the world. Such a secret organization will not be confined

to women of one race or faith only; it will be for all women, provided they qualify themselves, as is the case with all secret organizations. If such a ritual body is to be Her channel, it must begin with those on whom She has conferred Her "apostolic succession"....When those who have the "succession" inform me that they have begun the work, then will be the time to make an announcement to the E.S.[83]  
The feminine succession of this group continues to the present within the Adyar TS, although with even less publicity than the ER.

#### 15. The Adyar ES After Mrs Besant

On September 20, 1933, Annie Besant died. Leadbeater succeeded her both as OH of the ES and as GM of the Egyptian Rite. George Arundale followed Besant as PTS. Following Leadbeater's death on February 29, 1934, Jinarajadasa succeeded as OH of the ES and George Arundale as GM of the ER. Jinarajadasa was succeeded as OH by N. Sri Ram (who was also PTS), who was succeeded by I.K. Taimni, and thence Radha Burnier (who subsequently became, and is, PTS).

#### 16. Herbrand Williams and an ES Schism

A curious by-way of ES/ER history occurred in 1934. Captain Herbrand Williams, an eminent member of the TS, a priest of the LCC, a Co-Mason, and a member of the ES and the ER, announced that he had been given instructions about the future of the ES and ER by the Master the Count. On June 4 he wrote to George Arundale, as GM of the ER of the Ancient Mysteries (as it had by then become to eliminate the word "Freemasonry" from its title). Williams claimed that the Master the Count was concerned about a Pledge which had been imposed on pupils in December, 1932, and on the present rituals of the ER; the Master (via Williams) seemed concerned at the ascetical strictness of the pledge, including the prohibitions on alcohol and sex outside marriage. As for the latter, the Master (via Williams) believed that "All healthy young people need sex experience, and they should be free to find it for themselves in their own way." The Master the Count was also unhappy with the removal of the Masonic element of the ER. And the Master did not like revisions to the ritual undertaken by Arundale.

George Arundale responded promptly to this claim of Mahatmic direction, and by a letter dated June 29 suspended Williams' membership of the Rite, being prepared, however, to reinstate him if he withdrew his previous claims. Williams responded with a further message from the Master to the effect that He (the Master) had been so angered by Arundale's action that he now "has suspended occultly the Egyptian Rite throughout the world", and withdrawn all the spiritual powers of Arundale as Grand Master or

any lesser officers. Noting that Jinarajadasa, as Vice Grand Master of the ER, had supported Arundale's actions, Williams reported that the Masters Morya and the Prince had also "partially suspended the ES in like manner, depriving it of Their Presence and of all occult validity".

Williams then circularized his messages and copies of the correspondence to members of the ER and the ES, offering them the choice between him, and the Arundale/Jinarajadasa leadership.[84] It would appear that the vast majority chose to reject the latter day messenger, and Williams quietly disappeared from Theosophical history.

### 17. The Adyar ES: Arundale and Beyond

In 1935, Arundale, as PTS, declared that the Society consisted of:

1. the official and general membership of all who join, free, independent;
2. The Esoteric School to which is admitted those who seek to fit themselves to share with the Elder Brethren the "sweet but heavy burden of helping the world";
3. The Elder Brethren, the Inner Government of the World.[85]

Since the time of Sri Ram's Outer Headship, the Pledge of the ES includes an affirmation of desire to work for the TS, acceptance that "physical life must be pure and clean, as laid down in the Rules of the School", belief in the "truth of the main teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy", and a promise of secrecy regarding EST papers. In addition, the applicant is required to state:

I recognize that H.P. Blavatsky was a Messenger of the Great Brotherhood and that this School which she founded, is under Their protection. I recognize Annie Besant, C.W. Leadbeater and C. Jinarajadasa as her successors in the Headship of the School under Them. I accept N. Sri Ram as the present Outer Head of the School appointed by Them.[86]

It is unclear at what point in ES history the identification of members' occult status ceased to be given out; sources within the ES agree that it continued under Jinarajadasa but differ as to whether it was continued by Sri Ram. Certainly, Sri Ram issued directives both for the ES and the ER that members of those organizations "should not be presumed to be necessarily in the occult stages to which these stages" of the groups may be said to correspond. Unlike his predecessors, Sri Ram declared:

It is not advisable, in the interests of the Great Work to which all of us are pledged, that the real status of any one in relation to the Inner Government should be known to those

who are not concerned with it.[87]

#### 18. Geoffrey Hodson and the ES

A powerful influence on the Adyar ES, if not what might be described as an ES within the ES, derived from Geoffrey Hodson (1886-19 ), who joined the TS in 1912, the ES in 1913 and was "placed on Probation" in the "rush" of 1925. Hodson claimed to have been appointed an "accredited agent for Us" by the Masters, declaring that he received direct inspiration from the Masters M, KH, DK, The Count, Serapis Bey and Jesus. He identified, and claimed specific inspiration from a Master not widely known in the TS tradition, Polidorus Isurenus. [[88]

In 1946 Hodson established an esoteric group, the Sun Ritual Group, in New Zealand.

Hodson's influence in the Adyar TS and associated groups was considerable: he was called upon to provide clairvoyant investigations of a variety of subjects.

The ES within the Adyar TS today continues in the Besant-Leadbeater, rather than the HPB tradition. Some ten per cent of members of the TS are said to be members of the ES.

#### 19. The Point Loma Esoteric School

Within what has been generally known as the Point Loma TS a separate ES tradition developed.

#### 20. Katherine Tingley

Judge died on March 21, 1896, without having left a clear direction as to his successor as OH of the ES. However, a pamphlet dated March 26 was sent to EST members by the School's Council informing them that Judge's private papers indicated that "the future of the School was not left to chance, nor to our mere judgment", and that "They contain astonishing revelations concerning our late Outer Head and definitely prove that he was far greater than superficially appeared"; they promised a further communication. The pamphlet was signed by 8 members, including E.T. Hargrove, James Pryse, Joseph Fussell and Claude Falls Wright.[89]

An ES meeting was held on March 29 at which the English Theosophist Ernest Hargrove advised that Judge had left information about his successor as head of the ES. A pamphlet, dated April 3, was sent to members of the EST stating that a new OH had been chosen according to directions left by Judge, but that the name was to be kept secret for one year. The pamphlet

stated that "The Outer Head is known to and is in communication with the Council", but was not one of the members of the Council. A new form of pledge was introduced, and the Book of Rules was amended. The Council affirmed that it had received "unmistakeable proof" that the new OH was "in direct communication with Masters, with HPB, and with the "luminous youth" or "Rajah" as that Adept has been variously named." [90]

Members were given 21 days within which to decide whether or not to accept the new OH. Accompanying that pamphlet were the minutes of a meeting held at Headquarters on March 29 at which extracts had been read from the diaries of WQJ referring to the new OH who was not named but specified by ::, or called "Promise".

Press and public speculation led to the revelation that "Promise" was Katherine Tingley (1847-1929), and her name was not kept secret for the foreshadowed year.[91] By the 1986 Convention in New York it was an open secret within the Theosophical Society in America, and it was on Mrs Tingley's suggestion that Hargrove was elected President of the Theosophical Society in America. At the same convention it was announced that the Masters were preparing to found a School for the Revival of the Lost Mysteries of Antiquity. Subsequently, a circular was sent to ES members informing them that the Masters were also initiating a humanitarian crusade and seeking funds.

Tingley's position was promoted strongly by Hargrove who circulated to the ES details purporting to come from Judge's occult diary and accounts of Mrs Tingley's early childhood in which voices and visions, later complemented by psychic powers, were offered as evidence of her discipleship. The New York Tribune of May 18, 1896, made public Mrs Tingley's position and published an interview with her. Three days later a formal notification was sent to ES members, enclosing a copy of the New York Tribune article.

Tensions and eventually open conflict developed between Hargrove and Tingley effectively over control of the organization. This led to the resignation of Dr Keightley as President of the Theosophical Society in England and of the English EST Council. Tingley openly campaigned against Hargrove's re-election at the February 18, 1898 convention, and by the time the convention took place moved for major changes in the constitution: the Theosophical Society in America effectively became the Universal Brotherhood with Mrs Tingley as "Leader and Official Head" ruling with a Cabinet, but possessing ultimate authority for life and without provision for appeal. [92]

Hargrove and his followers met after the adoption of Tingley's proposal, declared the changes illegal, and reaffirmed the original 1895 Constitution of the Theosophical Society in

America. This effectively established a rival Theosophical Society in America, and took some 200 of the original members of the Society. Hargrove's TS and its ES will be considered later in this paper.

On March 1, 1898, Hargrove sent a circular to as many members of the EST as he could contact; this included the text of ES letters between Hargrove and Tingley. Much has subsequently been made of these letters (particularly by the ULT authors of The Theosophical Movement) and there is little doubt that an objective reading of them suggests that Hargrove (and others) organized a campaign to install Tingley as OH as "a sort of neutral centre around which we could congregate", in part because of her mediumistic gifts, and that the claims regarding Judge's relationship with her and foreshadowing of her succeeding him were either fabrications, or based on an unjustified interpretation of what Judge had actually written.

Hargrove wrote to Tingley that "by Order of the Master you have ceased to be the Outer Head of the E.S.T. in the interior and true sense. The Outer Head to follow you has already been appointed by the Master". [93] He stated that she had been replaced by a new (unnamed) OH. The whole issue became the centre of organizational, journalistic and legal battles, all of which, for practical purposes, Mrs Tingley won and continued to lead the Theosophical Society in America and the ES.

Tingley prepared her own Book of Rules for the ES, but otherwise the material published by the ES under her leadership was the same as that used by WQJ.

Tingley herself claimed to have been working on esoteric and occult matters with Judge for two years prior to April, 1896, and to have been appointed by him as his successor. [95]

## 21. Gottfried de Purucker

Katherine Tingley died in 1929, and, like Judge, had failed to provide clearly for the appointment of her successor; however there was no dissent when Gottfried de Purucker (1929-1942) was elected or when, some months later, he laid claim to occult approval of his appointment. [96]

Under de Purucker the title of Theosophical Society was reinstated. De Purucker became head of the ES as well as Leader of the Theosophical Society; however, unlike WQJ or Tingley, de Purucker expanded and developed the teachings of the ES, and saw the publication of his ES teachings between 1929 and 1942.

De Purucker taught that there were 7 degrees of Initiation, of which 3 were included in the ES. The Theosophical Society was the

"outer court". The ES was composed of

- I The Esoteric Section, or the Eastern or Oriental School[ES]
- II The Katherine Tingley Memorial Group [KTMG]
- III Those who were "put in personal communication with the Blessed Ones, our Chiefs", known as The TD ("Third Degree").

De Purucker spoke regularly at ES group meetings, and his talks were recorded and published. For example, between 1929 and 1933, his question and answer meetings resulted in the publication of 63 pamphlets containing the text of his teachings.[97]

In July, 1934, de Purucker decided to issue a new set of ES instructions in booklet form, embodying the teachings, but not in question and answer format, and formed a committee for that purpose. In January, 1936, the 63 booklets were withdrawn from circulation, and the ES Bulletin informed members of the proposed new material. The twelve booklets finally produced contained material based on

- the 63 booklets
- unpublished stenographic reports of de Purucker's meetings in the USA and Europe
- letters from de Purucker in response to ES questions
- extracts from the ES Instructions of HPB and the ES pamphlets of WQJ and KT
- passages from de Purucker's esoteric writings
- answers from de Purucker to questions raised by the compilers
- a large amount of new material specially prepared by de Purucker (this constituted more than 50% of the text)
- illuminating quotations from the Mahatma Letters and other works

The text of each booklet was read by the compilers in the presence of de Purucker, who made corrections, alterations and deletions. Original copies were preserved which contain the original manuscripts citing a source for every line.

Dr de Purucker's ES teachings were finally published in a series of booklets:

- I Chelaship: its nature and tests
- II The Esoteric or Oriental School
- III Space and the doctrine of Maya
- IV Galaxies and solar systems: their genesis,

- structure and destiny
- V Hierachies and the doctrine of emanations
- VI Invisible worlds and their inhabitants
- VII The doctrine of the sphere
- VIII Gods, monads, life atoms
- IX Correlations of cosmic and human constitutions
- X The hierachy of compassion
- XI Death and the circulation of the cosmos: I
- XII Death and the circulation of the cosmos: II [98]

De Purucker's oral teachings to the groups, including the KTMG, were transcribed, and were originally available only to members. Most have, however, subsequently been published, in edited forms by the Theosophical University Press as Dialogues of G De Purucker [99] and Fountain-Source of Occultism [100]. Original and annotated forms of the twelve ES booklets have been published by the Point Loma Press. [101]

The KTMG met between the end of 1929 and de Purucker's death, and its teachings were published in stenographic note form from No 1 to No 35.

De Purucker died suddenly and unexpectedly On September 27, 1942. By a letter dated January 25, 1935, he had left specific instructions regarding his successor: the successor was to "emerge" within three years after de Purucker's death, and would be recognized by "the proper proofs of spiritual leadership". During that three years, the Society was to be ruled by a Cabinet. If no leader emerged, the the Cabinet was to elect a leader. De Purucker stated explicitly that anyone who claimed Mahatmic or esoteric communication or power was disqualified from being his successor.[102]

## 22. Colonel Conger and the ES

However, no successor emerged, and the Cabinet elected Colonel Conger. The ES continued without an OH, and de Purucker had made no provision for a successor to be appointed, but, at ES meetings he had given directions on the matter, and these had been published in a confidential ES circular: if within three months after de Purucker's death or disappearance no-one could give "the proper proofs of spiritual leadership", "then you will know that you have failed". The ES was meanwhile administered by a Council.[103]

However, Conger began to make claims to this position. He claimed that in June, 1945, Tingley had told him the Master M had directed that he be her successor. He also claimed that KT had reported a vision by HPB of seven leaders who would care for the Theosophical Society until she could come again, and that he was to be one of those.



At a meeting of the ES on December 21, 1945, Conger claimed to be the OH of the ES, stating that he was a "Messenger" and that "The Masters sent me to tide over the situation". The Cabinet divided between those who accepted this claim (including John van Mater and Grace Knoche) and those who rejected it (including Henry Edge and Emmett Small).[104]

On December 25, ten leading members of the ES (including Small, Harrison and Edge) presented Conger with a statement of protest against his claim. They noted that de Purucker had left no instructions regarding the appointment of an OH, that the Cabinet elected him Leader but not OH (and, indeed, could not elect him OH). They went further: they challenged Conger to demonstrate knowledge of an inner degree of the ES, not generally known within the membership of the Society or of the ES, of which they were members and of which, if he had been appointed OH by the Masters, he would also be expected to have knowledge. Conger declined to do so.[105]

A controversy developed between Conger and his supporters, and those who denied his claims. At a meeting between the leading dissidents and Conger on January 6, 1946, Conger was told that according to the rules of the ES established by de Purucker, the OH must be recognized by the members of the higher degree, whose special responsibility (according to de Purucker) would be to recognize the new OH. They asked Conger why, if he was the new OH, he was not aware of this. Conger argued either that de Purucker did not leave such instructions, or was not in his right mind when he did so. The leaders of the "special Esoteric Group" wrote to Conger formally advising him that they did not recognize him and would not discuss with him the "insignia majestatis" by which they would know the true OH.

In March, 1946, Conger demanded the resignation of the dissidents; they declined to comply, were dismissed and ordered to leave the Society's headquarters forthwith, although for many of them it was their home, and has been so for years. There followed a purge of dissident members. Many of these - including Iverson Harris, Boris de Zirkoff, Emmett Small, Sven Eek, Cardinal Le Gros, Judith Tyberg, Geoffrey Barborcka, L.G. Plummer, Elsie Benjamin - continued significant Theosophical work outside the Society. It seems probable that the majority of members of the ES within the Point Loma Society rejected Conger's claim: certainly, a list was gathered by Boris de Zirkoff of 126 who did so, and there were plans to re-establish the ES independently of Conger and his Society, with an International ES Council. Among those who rejected Conger, and who was also a member of the higher degree, was the Australian John Prentice.[106]

Conger announced the appointment of a new Cabinet, and at a

meeting on April 4, 1946, Conger announced the closure of the ES "by the Master's direction", and declared that esoteric activities were now "forbidden by the Master". However, in October, 1946, a circular was sent out announcing that ES activities were to be resumed, and that those wishing to take part must sign and return a pledge, whereupon they would receive de Purucker's ES instructions.[107]

Conger died on February 22, 1951, after many years of illness, and left a witnessed document appointing William Hartley as his successor. However, Hartley's attempt to assert his claim led to a fight, verbal and physical, at the meeting of the Cabinet following Conger's death, and the Cabinet, encouraged by one of its members, James A. Long, unanimously refused to recognize Hartley. Hartley subsequently established a separate Society which will be considered later in this paper.

Long subsequently announced that "the Leader took possession of that office when he prevented the Cabinet from considering Mr Hartley's claims" and when asked to whom he referred said "I am speaking of myself". Only one member of the Cabinet rejected this claim. Long stated that he was the proper leader, and that the Hartley document - although genuine - was written by Conger at the direction of the Master M as a "terrific test" for the Society. At a meeting in Sweden later that year he commented that "anyone who believes anything a leader says about his successor is a damn fool". Long claimed to have met with the Masters, and to have died, as far as his personality was concerned, on the day of Conger's death, when he took on himself willingly the "karma of every FTS of this Society".[108]

### 23. James Long and the ES

Long claimed that de Purucker had stopped giving out teachings about 1939, and that there had been no new instruction after that year even in the ES. Long finally closed the ES, saying, enigmatically, "the esoteric has now become exoteric, and the exoteric esoteric".[109]

Following Long's death on July 19, 1971, he was succeeded by Grace Knoche. The Society's constitution now includes a clause which states that the Leader holds the "one supreme office in which shall reside paramount authority".[110]

### 24. Ernest Hargrove and the Esoteric School

Following the death of W.Q. Judge on March 21, 1896, Ernest Temple Hargrove appeared to lead the campaign to bring Katherine Tingley in as his successor, but shortly afterwards broke with Tingley, and resigned as President of the Theosophical Society in America in 1898, and led a breakaway of some two hundred members from the Society which Mrs Tingley then headed.[111]

The Society which Hargrove established, and then led, had its own ES, and he wrote to Mrs Tingley telling her

by Order of the Master you have ceased to be the Outer Head of the E.S.T. in the interior and true sense. The Outer Head to follow you has already been appointed by the Master.[112]

In 1908 this Society became "The Theosophical Society with Its Headquarters Based in New York", and published The Theosophical Forum and The Theosophical Quarterly. The Society remained active until it underwent "indrawal" in 1935.

The ES was administered from December, 1898, by a Reference Committee consisting of A.P. Buchman, J.D. Buck, George Coffin, C.A. Griscom, Charles Johnston, Archibald Keightley and William Ludlow. The identity of the OH was never made known to the members, although ES documents prepared by him or her were distributed to them. These included Aids and Suggestions (following the 7 papers previously issued by Judge) and Subsidiary Paper D (follow Judge's Subsidiary Papers A, B and C).

In September, 1900, the Reference Committee proposed four courses of study for members:

The First Course provided a comprehensive knowledge of Theosophical philosophy by means of studying the exoteric Theosophic works in the light of E.S.T. Instructions 1, 2 and 3.

The Second Course taught a more advanced philosophy based upon The Secret Doctrine and other metaphysical work with the study being based upon the E.S.T. Aids and Suggestions.

The Third Course will use Instructions 4, 5 and 6 of the E.T.S. plus other papers to be issued to the School plus some unpublished letters of the Master K.H. The emphasis in this course was to compare the above with the Upanishads, Veda, Puranas, Bible and other sacred texts.

The Fourth Course was to be based upon the devotional side of Theosophy and was to study Light on the Path, The Voice of the Silence, Letters That Have Helped Me, Through the Gates of Gold and other devotional texts. This course was intended to lead to the development of the Inner Man.[113]

An Examining Board sent examination papers to members, and assessed the results.

At the Theosophical Society Convention held on April 30, 1905, it was reported that the School had moved from the phase of Instruction under HPB and WQJ to that of Discipline under the present OH.

The School appears to have followed the Society into its period of "indrawal" in 1935.

#### 25. The Temple of the People

In 1898, Dr William H Dower and Mrs Francia La Due (known as "Blue Star") and some disciples broke from the Syracuse, New York, lodge of the Theosophical Society in America, claiming that they had been recipients of communication from the Masters via "Blue Star", and founded the Temple of the People.[114]

They eventually settled in a community they called Halcyon near Pismo Beach, north of Santa Barbara in California in 1903, where they established a cooperative colony in 1905 under the title Temple Home Association. The cooperative colony more or less broke up as a result of internal problems in 1913, but the Theosophical community continued, and does so still.

The community and other associates meet weekly for Sunday services in the House of the Masters. The Temple has always been led by Guardians, initially Dr Dower, Mrs La Due (died 1923) and Mrs Dower, and, since 1968, Harold Forgonstein.

The Temple appears to have developed a set of teachings, on the basis of inspiration from the Masters, which were not generally available. In recent years, a number of books containing Temple teachings have been published. [115]

#### 26. The Theosophical Society of New York

The Theosophical Society of New York was founded in 1899 by Dr J H Salisbury, which had been involved the Theosophical work with Judge, in association with Donald Nicholson and Harold Percival (editor of The Word). Affiliated with the group were Laura Langford (Mrs Laura Holloway) and Dr Alexander Wilder. [116]

It maintained its own ES, of which little has been traced.

#### 27. William Hartley and the Point Loma Esoteric School

Arthur Conger left a document appointing William Hartley (1879-1955) to be his successor as leader of the (Point Loma) TS; the Constitution at that time provided that "The Leader shall appoint his Successor" (Article V section 4).

Hartley was born in Yorkshire, England, and worked as a clerk; he joined the TS at Liverpool in 1904, and moved to Point Loma in 1925, where he served as Treasurer of the Homestead (1925-41) and the Theosophical University (1934-50), and as General Manager of

the Headquarters at Covina (1947-50).

However, James Long claimed he was the true successor, and was able to assert his claim. Hartley was forced out of the Society, and founded a separate TS, within which he established an ES.[116]

He emphasized the need to "Keep the Link Unbroken", and the "Succession of Teachers", and his organization listed the leaders as HPB, WQJ, KT, GdP, Conger and Hartley. Following Hartley's death, the Society's headquarters moved to Holland where D.J.P. Kok became Leader. He was succeeded by Herman Vermeulen, the current Leader.

#### 28. The United Lodge of Theosophists and the Dzyan Esoteric School

Robert Crosbie (1849-1919) was a member of the Theosophical Society at Pt Loma, a former associate of Judge and a strong supporter of Tingley. Crosbie left Point Loma in 1904; the reasons for his leaving are the subject of dark and fascinating hints by the successors of both Pt Loma and Crosbie, but, in fact, resulted from Crosbie's claim to have received communications from the Masters. The claims were rejected and he was expelled from the Society and ordered to leave Pt Loma.[117]

An anonymous author in The Theosophical Quarterley said of Crosbie:

[He] was a gentle, pleasing personality, was very psychic and took his psychism seriously, which, of course, impressed the feeble-minded.[118]

The same author recalled that Judge kept Crosbie "in check" and that after Judge's death, Crosbie claimed to have been a chela of his.

Crosbie affiliated briefly with Hargrove's Theosophical Society in America before establishing the United Lodge of Theosophists at Los Angeles in 1909. The ULT has traditionally, and vigorously, disclaimed any formal structure or leadership, and (through the anonymously authored The Theosophical Movement) denounced both Adyar and Pt Loma: "Completely innoculated with the virus of "apostolic succession" both the fragments of the parent Theosophical Society rapidly degenerated." [119]

However, following Crosbie's death ULT (as always anonymous) writers emphasized the esoteric importance of his work and his "succession":

Robert Crosbie preserved unbroken the link of the Second

Section of the Theosophical Movement from the passing of Mr Judge in 1896, and in 1907 - just eleven years later - made that link once more Four Square amongst men. In the year 1909 the Third Section was restored by the formation of the United Lodge of Theosophists.[120]

There is always one Witness on the scene. After the death of Mr Judge, Robert Crosbie kept the link unbroken.[121]

However, in real terms, the ULT has always possessed a power structure and leadership as strong - indeed, arguably stronger since its existence is concealed - than any other Theosophical Society. Indeed, a 1938 court case held that the ULT was a business belonging to the then leader, John Garrigues. The Parent Lodge of the ULT in Los Angeles has always been the de facto power centre; following Crosbie's death in 1919, he was succeeded by John Garrigues, and after his death in 1944 by Grace Clough.[122]

Within the ULT a separate ES, claiming continuity with that of HPB, was established in 1909 with the title "Dzyan Esoteric School", which it claimed was the proper title of the Second Section of the Theosophical Society. Indeed, the original charters issued by HPB to lodges of the ES did have that title at their head. The DES claimed to be on "the original lines" of the ES under HPB. It taught that HPB remained the Real Head of the School, and whenever she was referred to, capital letters (including She and Her) are used.[123]

The first DES group was established in Los Angeles by Robert Crosbie in November, 1909, and extended to San Francisco in 1911, by which time it had only 11 members. By 1923, however, the DES had extended to other major cities in the USA. In 1928, B.P. Wadia (who resigned from the Adyar society in 1922 as a result of the Leadbeater scandals), after seven years work in New York and Washington, established groups in Europe and India, and became the Eastern Agent or Secretary of the DES.

The DES works through Eastern and Western Divisions, and has both group and corresponding members. Its work is said to be the preservation of the teachings of HPB and WQJ. Its claim to continuity with HPB's group is said to be supported by the fact that Crosbie alone noted that the true name of the group was meant to be DES, not just ES.

Applicants for membership must be members of the ULT for at least 3 months, abstain from alcohol and drugs, but moderate use of tobacco is permitted. Members are required to meditate for half an hour each day, and may not belong to any other occult or esoteric organization, Freemasonry excepted. No-one is asked to join; intuition should lead a member to ask about such a group.

Members are not expected to deny the existence of the DES, merely to avoid discussing it. The DES is divided into local Groups, each with a President.

The DES teaching documents are, essentially, those of HPB as used by WQJ, with an additional "Preliminary Memorandum" written by Crosbie, and its own book of rules. The DES issues the Probationer's Pledge, the Preliminary Memorandum, the Book of Rules, and Instructions I to VI, together with Suggestions and Aids I to IX.[124]

#### 29. Franz Hartman and the Esoteric Rosicrucians

Franz Hartmann (1838-1912) was, briefly, a key figure in the early history of the TS, and a prolific writer on occult subjects. He had been born in Bavaria, studied medicine, and joined the TS as the result of correspondence with HSO. He arrived at Adyar on December 4, 1883, remaining there until he sailed with HPB for Europe in 1885.[125]

Following the Judge division in 1895, Hartmann aligned himself with Judge, and later, with Tingley, being appointed as President of her German Section in 1897. But later that year he broke with Tingley and established his own International Theosophische Verbrüderung in Munich, of which he became Corresponding Secretary (HPB's former title, and one which the other Societies have never subsequently filled). This organization is still active.

Hartmann was particularly interested in the Rosicrucian tradition, and claimed to belong to a small Rosicrucian group, the teachings of which he reflected in some of his works.[126] He was also one of the founding figures in the Ordo Templi Orientis, and was associated with a number of unorthodox Masonic organizations.[127] He founded an Order of the Esoteric Rose Croix and maintained an esoteric tradition within the ITV.

#### 30. Rudolf Steiner and the ES

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925) first contacted the Theosophical Society began in 1899, but it was not until 1902 that he joined the Society. [128]

In his Autobiography Steiner says he deplored the Theosophical Society's ES, and joined it only to find out what was happening within it. His view of the ES and of HPB changed over time, and he came to thoroughly disapprove of the Eastern yogic approach of the Theosophical Society and the ES under Annie Besant.[129]

In 1902 Steiner became General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society. On May 10, 1904, Annie Besant appointed him Arch-Warden of the ES in Germany and Austria. [Spiereburg, 1986:160], and he led the ES in Germany from 1904-1914, although

breaking from the Adyar Theosophical Society in 1913.[130] The popular perception that the break related solely, or even principally, to the adventism being promoted in the Theosophical Society by Annie Besant was not correct; tensions between Steiner, both as a western-oriented occultist and as an occult teacher, and Mrs Besant, as an eastern-oriented occultist and as a rival occult teacher, had been developing over a number of years.

Even while Steiner was leading the ES of the German Theosophical Society with Annie Besant as OH, his teachings were idiosyncratic and fundamentally Christian (what one commentator called "Johannine Christian"), Rosicrucian, and Freemasonic as distinct from the Eastern teachings promulgated by Mrs Besant (and Leadbeater). His teachings included material on cosmology and anthropology, mantrams, breathing and visualization exercises. His ES meetings were more ritualistic and explicitly religious than elsewhere in the Theosophical Society. He claimed that the Masters M and KH spoke through him at meetings.

Steiner's teachings on the nature of the occult path were initially published in his Theosophical Society days: Theosophy published in 1904 [131], Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment published in articles, 1904-5, and as a book in 1909 [132], and Occult Science - An Outline published in 1910 [133] which included the sort of occult exercises that had been published in Theosophical circles only in secret ES papers.

### 31. Steiner and Esoteric Freemasonry

Steiner believed that the higher degrees of Freemasonry were the exoteric manifestations of the real occult fraternities, and he claimed that HPB was a member of a lodge associated with those higher degrees [134] but that she was subsequently expelled [135] and later occultly "captured" by a form of ceremonial magic by members of the lodges to prevent her betraying particular secrets [136]. Some of Steiner's ES material on Freemasonry has been published as The Temple Legend. [137]

Steiner was a member of a number of marginal Masonic orders, including some headed by John Yarker. Within Steiner's ES there was, for a time, a separate Masonic group, the MD or Miisraim-Dienst (Rite of Misraim), deriving from Steiner's link with Theodor Reuss and the Ordo Templi Orientis. [138] Steiner was a member of the O.T.O., although this fact is often denied by his latter day followers, and held a charter to operate a Chapter of the Order. [139] Although the OTO was ritualistic and concerned, ultimately, with sexual magic, or tantra, the M-D worked through regular meetings for lectures, and improvised rituals prepared by Steiner, and was unrelated to the work of the OTO.



Following World War I, when the M-D was interrupted, Steiner disbanded the group, but it continued, and continues, to a small extent in Northern Germany.[140]

### 32. The Esoteric Classes of the Anthroposophical Society

Following his separation from the Theosophical Society and the establishment of the Anthroposophical Society in 1913, Steiner developed formally that idiosyncratic occult system which he had been informally developing during his time with the Theosophical Society. His teachings emphasized occult training to enable the human being to progress through three stages of spiritual development, using imagination, inspiration and intuition.

Three grades of esoteric training were proposed: the Michael Class, the Sophia Class and the Christ Class.[141] Steiner founded the Michael Class, or First Class, in 1923, in part to revitalize Anthroposophy. However, Steiner's death in 1925 left the movement without a spiritual leader to take it beyond the "First Class". Steiner left no provision for a successor, and the Society generally teaches that he was a unique teacher who cannot and will not be succeeded.

General membership of the General Anthroposophical Society, the exoteric organization, is open to all. Membership of the First Class, or School of Spiritual Science, is open only to dedicated Anthroposophists who have been members of the General Society for at least two years. They are pledged to secrecy, meet regularly in local branches to work through the 34 set lessons of esoteric meditational training. They are led by "readers" who have their own group. Between 10 and 30- per cent of Anthroposophists are said to be members of the First Class.[142]

In 1947, Marie Steiner began publication of the teachings of Steiner's Esoteric School; English translations of parts of this material was published between 1948 and 1954.[143] It is, however, often emphasized that a true understanding of Steiner's teachings can only be obtained through a reading of his original material in German.

### 33. Alice Bailey and the Arcane School

Alice Bailey (1880-1949) was introduced to Theosophy and the work of HPB after meeting two elderly women she described as "personal pupils" of HPB in 1915, and shortly afterwards joined the Theosophical Society. She lived and worked for a time at the American headquarters of the Theosophical Society, Krotona, then located in Hollywood. She was admitted to the ES in 1918, and when seeing the portraits of the Masters in the ES Shrine Room at Krotona for the first time, recognized the Master KH as someone who had visited her when she was a child. [144]

In 1919 she met Foster Bailey, then National Secretary of the Theosophical Society in USA, and became editor of the Sectional journal, The Messenger. She taught classes in the Secret Doctrine for many years.

Mrs Bailey came into conflict with Theosophical Society authorities over her claim to be in communication with and to be a disciple of the Master KH. She also came to feel dissatisfied over the dominance of the ES over the Theosophical Society, and the conflicts aroused by claims of spiritual status.

In 1919, Mrs Bailey claimed to have made contact with a Master, whom she identified only as "the Tibetan" who asked her to undertake the writing of books at his direction.[145]

In 1920 at the culmination of the major conflict in the Theosophical Society in the USA between the pro-ES (led by Warrington) and the non-ES (led by Foster Bailey and B.P.Wadia) she and Foster Bailey had their employment with the Theosophical Society terminated and were directed to leave Krotona. They moved to New York, where they were married; this marked the beginning of Mrs Bailey's independent work, initially with a Secret Doctrine class in 1921. Once she had established herself independently as a teacher she attracted a number of members of the Theosophical Society and the ES in the USA. These included Richard Prater, an associate of WQS and a pupil of HPB, who sent his own Secret Doctrine class to study with Bailey, and passed all his ES papers to her.

Bailey believed that HPB had originally intended to call her esoteric group "The Arcane school", and it was this title which Bailey adopted for her own work when she established the organization in April, 1923. She believed that she had perpetuated the "true Theosophical lineage" descending from HPB, and that this was symbolized by her receiving both the papers of HPB's ES, and also being given the photographic plates of the Master's pictures which had been given by Colonel Olcott to Miss Sarah Jacobs.

Mrs Bailey later wrote:

[Richard Prater] gave me the esoteric section instructions as given to him by H.P.B. They are identical with those I had seen when in the E.S. but they were given to me with no strings attached to them at all and I have been at liberty to use them at any time and have used them.[146]

Mrs Bailey saw the Arcane School as a latter day equivalent of the ES:

The Arcane School is not a school for probationary

disciples. It is intended to be a school for those who can be trained to act directly and consciously under the Masters of the Wisdom. There are in the world today many schools for probationers and they are doing great and noble and necessary work.[147]

At that time, at least, the ES had a rule proscribing membership in the ES to members of the Arcane School.

The Arcane School involves no pledges, initiations or undertakings of obedience; it provides training through correspondence. Mrs Bailey taught that she succeeded HPB, being taught by DK who had been the pupil of KH:[148]

Following Mrs Bailey's death in 1949, Foster Bailey led the School; he was succeeded by his second wife, Mary Bailey, on his death in 1977.

#### 34. T.H. Martyn and the H.P.B.E.S.

As a result of controversy and conflict resulting from the Leadbeater scandals, the Liberal Catholic Church and the "Coming" in the TS in Sydney, Australia, T.H. Martyn (1860-1924) led the establishment of the Independent Theosophical Society (ITS) and a "Back to Blavatsky" movement.[149] Martyn came into contact with Theosophy around 1890, and met Olcott when he visited Sydney in 1891. In that year he joined the ES, and become Corresponding Secretary for Australasia (that is, Australia and New Zealand). Mrs Besant replaced Martyn by Leadbeater as Corresponding Secretary, and, eventually, suspended and expelled Martyn and a number of his colleagues from the E.S. for disloyalty in their criticisms of Leadbeater.[150]

The ITS was formally established on October 29, 1923. Plans had already been established to set up an independent ES in the HPB tradition, with "the old papers in their original form which H.P.B. issued to her pupils" being obtained from Mrs Alice Cleather, who had visited Sydney in February, 1923. Both Mrs Cleather, and Mr Basil Crump, who had accompanied her, were ardent supporters of HPB and vigorous critics of Mrs Besant, Leadbeater and the movements associated with them.[151]

The H.P.B. Esoteric School became "one of the secrets of the I.T.S." [152]. The School issued its own papers, mainly copies of those put out by HPB's ES. One new paper gave a history of the HPBES, and put forward its claim to a succession from HPB via Alice Cleather. New members of the ES at first received HPB's Preliminary Memorandum and a paper on meditation by W.Q.Judge, which they were to study for six months. An older member of the ES was assigned as a mentor, and a report was required after six months. Thereafter, further papers would be sent to the member.

The HPBES appears to have faded out after the unexpected death T.H. Martyn on October 9, 1924. The loss of Martyn led to a rapid decline in the ITS, but, in ever declining numbers it carried on until 1959 when its last remaining members joined the Adyar TS as a separate lodge which continued until the 1970's.

### 35. C.W. Leadbeater and Homosexual Tantra

Throughout much of his Theosophical career Leadbeater was subjected to rumour and allegations of sexual immorality. [153] Initially, Leadbeater was accused of teaching masturbation to adolescent boys, though this was quickly extended to include teaching masturbation to pre-pubescent boys, and to giving some form of "indicative action", though the precise meaning of that euphemistic phrase was never explained. In later years he was further accused of committing sodomy with his pupils, and of engaging in mutual masturbation with them.

Some of the allegations he admitted. In the 1906 "trial" he admitted that he had taught (as opposed to condoning) masturbation.[154] He also admitted that this might have occurred with pre-pubescent boys, and boys who had not actually sought his advice on sexual matters. Further, it might also have involved "indicative action", including touch. This seems to have so shocked the Committee that far from endeavouring to clarify what was meant, they promptly changed the subject. There were a few amongst Theosophists who acknowledged Leadbeater's sexual teachings and defended them in a way which suggested there was more to the teachings than popularly assumed.[155]

Leadbeater taught a sexual technique, other than masturbation as understood in the 1906 enquiry, to a highly select group of his closest pupils.[156] In simple terms, Leadbeater taught this group of boys that the energy aroused in masturbation can be used as a form of occult power, a great release of energy which can, firstly, elevate the consciousness of the individual to a state of ecstasy, and, secondly, direct a great rush of psychic force towards the Logos for his use in the spiritual development of the world. Leadbeater declared: "The closest man can come to a sublime spiritual experience is orgasm". [157] During masturbation, the mind should gradually be elevated towards the Logos, and, in Leadbeater's words, "as soon as the seed can be felt in the tube", the consciousness should be so exalted that the great release of physical and psychical energy is directed to the Logos or to an image of him.

This occult knowledge of sex was regarded as too dangerous to give to the average person, or, indeed, to the average pupil. It was reserved for the specially chosen, who were sworn to secrecy, and told that they were justified in not telling the truth about this highly occult matter. Leadbeater's sexual teachings were presented as so secret and sacred a matter that a dual standard of morality - that of the ordinary man, and that of the spiritually evolved occultist - applied. It was even said that one of the boys told police that he would kill himself rather

than give evidence against Leadbeater. [158] The select pupils, on rare occasions, engaged in a group ritual masturbation which was intended to send out especially powerful emanations. [159]

Some of Leadbeater's critics within the TS were convinced that he was teaching sexual magic, or tantra, which they automatically equated with black magic. They chose not to make this claim public for fear of the damage it would do to the movement, but they circulated privately within the TS documents arguing the case.

The two principal exponents of this view were E.L.Gardner, the eminent British Theosophist, and Rex Dutta, an English Theosophist, who produced his own Theosophical journal, Viewpoint Aquarius. The horror with which these two, and those who agreed with them, viewed any suggestion of tantra was based on HPB's teaching that it was practised only by the most debased, and black, of occultists, the duggas. The differences between schools of tantra, and the theory behind them was generally ignored, or misunderstood by the Theosophical critics. [160] Any form of occultism which involved sexuality, let alone homosexuality, could only be evil.

Leadbeater's sexual teachings link him with two movements which developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first appears in aesthetic and religious circles, and focussed on the glorification of a spiritual relationship, with sexual implications if not sexual involvement, between a male Teacher and a male Pupil.

The term "Uranian" was coined, as Timothy d'Arch Smith notes, by those who advocated "boy love" in this period. Many of the Uranians were characterized by a retrospective longing for the days of classical Greece, when the Teacher-Pupil relationship, including a sexual relationship between an older and a younger man, was held to be the pinnacle of culture. [161] Leadbeater, of course, made frequent references to his own last incarnation in ancient Greece, as the pupil of one of Socrates' disciples.

But Leadbeater's sexual teachings did not only link him with an aesthetic and religious movement; they also related directly to an occult and magical tradition which employed sexual activities to produce "power". It is commonly believed that the oriental tradition of tantra (or, more accurately, traditions of tantra) represents the only such use of sexuality in religion. This is not so, and in the West sexuality had been employed in a variety of religious and magical contexts.

The magical use of masturbation is known in some traditions of both Eastern and Western occultism. The aim was usually to heighten the consciousness of the practitioner and focus and stimulate his magical power, culminating in the release of energy

at the point of orgasm.

Assuming that Leadbeater was teaching some form of sexual magic, it would be of importance to identify possible sources. Did he simply invent theories and practices which happened to fit into pre-existing schemes? Or did he have contact with groups or individuals from whom he learned them? Leadbeater claimed at the 1906 "trial" to have learned the principle of systematic masturbation as a means of overcoming moral lapses in an Anglican organization but, having made this startling statement, refused to give any further information about the matter.

The only Anglican organisations to which he is known to have belonged seem most unlikely sources. It is possible that, through his link with the Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament, a controversial (at the time) body which attracted many eccentrics of the ritualistic variety, he came into contact with some (probably informal) group of Anglican "boy lovers". Certainly, the Confraternity was alleged to have immoral associations as far as its critics were concerned, the ideal of celibate clergy leading to general assumptions of sexual immorality, usually with women, but also with boys. [162]

However, if Leadbeater's sexual teachings cannot be traced directly to a religious organization, it may be possible to trace them to two sources of influence: oriental tantra, to which Leadbeater was exposed in India, and (directly in later years, but perhaps indirectly in earlier) to an occult organization specifically concerned with sexual magic. This was the ordo Templi Orientis (the Order of Oriental Templars, generally known as the OTO), to which reference has been made previously in this paper.

The OTO was divided into nine grades or degrees, with a purely administrative tenth degree. These generally followed a semi-Masonic model. The first six grades were conferred ritually, the first three being similar to the first three degrees of Masonry. The next three were based on interpretations of Masonic symbolism. The seventh, eighth and ninth degrees concerned sexual magic, but were conferred without ritual, the initiates simply being given written instructions. The eighth degree taught an autosexual technique - called by one commentator on the degree "magical masturbation" [163] - and the ninth heterosexual magic based on the traditions of Bengali tantra.

Although it is possible to see similarities between the teachings of the OTO and Leadbeater, there is no evidence that, in his early Theosophical days, he was a member of the Order, or had even heard of it. There is, however, evidence that, following the visit to Sydney of James Wedgwood in 1915, Leadbeater may have become a member of the OTO. The probable link between Leadbeater

and the OTO is the mysterious figure of Vyvyan Hereward Rowden Deacon (1895- ), a descendant of the poet, Robert Browning. [108]

Wedgwood, greatly interested in the fringes of Masonry, was a close friend of John Yarker, from whom the founders of the OTO received a charter in 1902. Wedgwood himself was admitted to the OTO in 1912 by its Outer Head, Theodor Reuss, at Yarker's request, and was attached as an honorary member to the Holy Grail Lodge in Munich. [164] After Yarker's death in March, 1913, his widow was supported by a small pension granted to her by the Co-Masonic Order, of which Wedgwood was Grand Secretary. While it cannot be proved beyond doubt, it seems likely, given that the evidence for the more clearly magical teachings about sex come from the post-1915 period, that Leadbeater was initiated into the OTO, probably by Wedgwood (who initiated him into Co-Masonry, and brought him into the Old Catholic Church), perhaps with some involvement by Vyvyan Deacon.

There is no evidence that Leadbeater's informal sex magic group continued beyond his death, and its very existence has been vigorously denied by most within the Adyar TS tradition.



## 36. Conclusion

Theosophical history has involved an ongoing tension between the exoteric and the esoteric, between the literary society and the occult fraternity, between lecturers and gurus. The tension had its origins in a tension between HPB and HSO.

This tension has impacted on the possibility and the method of serious historical research into Theosophical history. [165] Given that a great deal of the real power and therefore the real history of Theosophy has been associated with the esoteric movements within the exoteric organizations, the historian who cannot access data on, and take into account, the esoteric is researching and writing at least partly in the dark. If the real reasons for an event, as opposed to what might be called the "public relations explanation" relates to esoteric rather than exoteric issues, the historian without access to the esoteric material will, at best, arrive at an inadequate and incomplete explanation. If information is withheld or concealed in ES archives, with not even catalogues available to the historian, much Theosophical history is necessarily partial and restricted.

Wherever esoteric groups flourished within the Ts, they did so under the inspiration of charismatic leaders; the enthusiasm and energy stimulated by the leaders almost inevitably vanished with their deaths and, the source of authority, the guru, gone, the chelas were left directionless.

Esoteric groups allowed for hidden, unaccountable and unreviewable power structures, an inner and secret de facto government within what was generally represented as a democratic and public association. It also promoted a great deal of what Lady Emily Lutyens called (on the basis of her personal experience in the Adyar ES) "spiritual snobbery".

Theosophical history, like that of other groups within which esoteric circles developed, is also the history of inner groups and outer groups, of organizational power and esoteric power. It is also the history of a preoccupation with status and the power of (to use Alice Bailey's term) "glamour".

The esoteric within the exoteric was and is a problem and a danger because its purpose and its power has never been formalized, clarified or defined, is usually concealed, and often denied.

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## The Egyptian Rite

Dr Gregory Tillet

In part to compensate for the de-esotericization of the US under Mrs Besant's Krishnamurti enthusiasm, Leadbeater developed a new esoteric organization designed to be the most secret, the most exclusive and the most powerful occult group in the world. He gathered together a group of girls from the Dutch East Indies, chosen by Leadbeater during one of his visits to Java: Paula Hamerster (daughter of Albertus Hamerster, Co-mason and Liberal Catholic priest), Hilda and Eleanora van der Stok (daughters of J.E. van der Stok), Lillie van Thiel (daughter of Matthias van Thiel, Co-mason and Liberal Catholic priest), Marietje and Leoni van Gulik and Hannie Vreede (daughter of Adrian Vreede, Co-mason and Liberal Catholic priest). The girls were sent to The Manor by their parents, willingly or otherwise, in 1927-8, and remained there with Leadbeater until he moved to settle permanently at Adyar early in 1929. They were known as "The Seven Virgins of Java", and were related in Leadbeater's scheme of things to the World Mother, who would manifest her special force through them, to the powers behind the LCC and Co-Masonry, and to the still-surviving idea of the World Teacher. The girls were treated as having particular occult status, given blue robes and opal rings, opals being associated in Leadbeater's occultism with the World Mother.<sup>1</sup>

The girls were all trained in Co-Masonry, and rigidly drilled in ceremonial by Leadbeater's secretary, Miss Maddox. Eventually, despite their youthful years, they were all elevated by Leadbeater to the highest grade of Masonry, the 33rd Degree, and were all made members of the ES. They were to be involved in the establishment of the "Egyptian Rite of Ancient Freemasonry", which remains a secret inner group with the TS (although now known as the "Egyptian Rite of the Ancient Mysteries"). Potential members were required to be members of the TS and the ES, and to be Co-Masons, although these requirements seem to have been liberalized in recent times. Although the Egyptian Rite (or ER, as it came to be known) now has few members, it continues to work throughout the Theosophical world.

Leadbeater planned that the ER would draw together the angels associated with Church ceremonial, and those of Co-Masonic working, and in this he claimed the encouragement and inspiration of the Master The Count, who assisted in the drafting of the rituals. The rituals were originally compiled by Wedgwood, since he was said to have a special relationship with The Count.<sup>2</sup> However, Leadbeater did not like the results, and submitted them to Arundale for revision. The final work was said to constitute "the most powerful occult ritual in the world", and the seven girls were kept busy rehearsing their parts in it to ensure that they were perfect for the day when the ER could be inaugurated in the Co-Masonic Temple at Adyar. This was done in 1929, after the ES had been re-opened. A formal charter for the ER was issued by the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Rite of Memphis at Palermo (Italy) which was, at the time,

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<sup>1</sup> The General Episcopal Synod of the Liberal Catholic Church recently approved the placing of "consecrated opals" on altars of Our Lady.

<sup>2</sup> There is an interesting example of history repeating itself here. In 1912, Mrs Besant, together with James Wedgwood and Marie Russak, established a new esoteric group within the TS: The Temple of the Rosy Cross. It was a ritualistic group concerned with ceremonial and symbolism, and with an adventist theme. Mrs Besant claimed the ritual had been composed under inspiration from the Master the Count; the more mundane author was Wedgwood. The Temple was closed down eventually by a direction from the Master the Count via Leadbeater; Leadbeater had never approved of the Temple.

controlled by a Theosophist, Reginald Gambier Macbean (1859-1942), who had become Grand Master in July, 1921 while serving as the British Consul for Sicily. Macbean, originally a 33<sup>rd</sup> degree Masonic of the French jurisdiction, had become a Comason, and had admitted Leadbeater, Wedgwood, George Arundale, Oscar Kollerstrom and Jinarajadasa to the Rite of Memphis. When the Palermo Sanctuary was suppressed by Mussolini, Macbean transferred his rights in it to those five brethren.

The published ER Ritual was formally issued on Christmas Day, 1931, bearing the imprimatur of Mrs Besant as Grand Master.<sup>3</sup> It contained a solemn warning from Arundale, as Grand Secretary, that the ritual was the property of the “S.S.” (presumably the “Sovereign Sanctuary”) and “must be returned on demand and provision must be made for the return on the death of the member”. When not in actual use, the Ritual should be kept under lock and key. Admission was to be by invitation only; “an application would *ipso facto* disqualify the individual making it.” The degrees of the ER were largely based on **At The Feet of the Master**. Subsequent rituals were issued for Temple of the Rose and the Cross, the Outer Temple or Temple of the Dawn, and the Inner Temple or Temple of the Star, together with a volume of rituals for use at meetings when initiations were not being performed.

The Temple of the Quest ritual “may be regarded as a dramatization of the true functions of the various principles and bodies, so externalized that, as in a mystic mirror, the individual sees himself as he is destined to become.” The Temple required eleven officers: Voluntas (the Master), Sapientia, Artifex, Mente, Astra, Etha, Ardua (the Guardian outside the door), Angelus, Agni, Scriba and Rector (the Master of Ceremonies), each with an identifying symbol (for example, Voluntas has the lion, Sapientia the elephant, Scriba a book). Voluntas presides in the East, with a portrait of the Hierophant above him under a Blazing Star. Various Masonic symbols are used: for example, a cube of white marble on the altar, the investiture of candidates with an apron. The ER apron is, effectively, that illustrated in Leadbeater’s **The Hidden Life in Freemasonry** with some modifications (for example, the hieroglyphs at the apex of the triangle are replaced by the letters INRI).

Candidates in the Temple of the Quest approached initiation by stating: ‘I am a wanderer in darkness. I seek the Light’, and then took an oath on a copy of **At The Feet of the Master**. The charge to the candidate declared that he had been “baptized in the power of the Seven Fires and of the One.”

Various “mystic words” were communicated to candidates in the different degrees: for example, in the First Stage the word was Vir (= *vita igne renovator*), in the Second Fas (= *forma animae serva*) and Via (= *vehimur in atum*), and in the Third Stage Vita (= *voluntas intus transformatur amore*). Likewise, various mystic signs were communicated to the candidate: for example, the Sign of Order (the right hand on the heart). Some of the ritual suggested influence from outside Theosophy and traditional Freemasonry. As French notes, the “Sign of the Blazing Star” in the Egyptian Rite (Temple of the Rose and the Cross) is traced in the same way as the “Invoking Fire Pentagram (for Aries) of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn.

As in Freemasonry, the Third Stage represented death and resurrection. The candidate was solemnly dedicated with the words:

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<sup>3</sup> **The Egyptian Rite of the Ancient Mysteries. Temple of the Quest, Issued under the Authority of the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Egyptian Rite of the Ancient Mysteries**, Adyar, 1932.

*Into a body growing pure and strong,  
Into emotions growing calm and selfless,  
Into a mind learning to chose the noble and the true,  
Descend, O King of my life,  
My Higher Self, and use them to thy purpose,  
The service of THE KING.  
O Hierophant of our Rite,  
Lord of Will and Light and Life,  
Upon this my solemn dedication  
I pray Thy Gracious Blessing.*

The candidate having left the Temple, lights are extinguished and the candidate brought back in as the Prelude to the 3<sup>rd</sup> act of Wagner's Tristan and Isolde is played on the organ, and is asked: "Are you ready to tread the Way of Death and Renunciation?" After the conclusion of the initiation, a hymn is sung:

*O Lord of our Rite  
Thy soldier we are.  
We fight for the Right,  
We follow Thy Star.  
O come ye, O come ye, all children of Light,  
And worship His Wisdom, His Love and His Might.*

A further hymn, varying a traditional Christian hymn, concludes the meeting:

*Soldiers of the Starlight, Onward to the fray  
With the Star Triumphant showing us the Way.*

By the time the candidate completes the three stages of the Temple of the Quest – Fire, Form and Life - he should be on Probation. He is then ready to advance to the fourth stage, the Temple of the Rose and the Cross. Once accepted as the *chela* of a Master he can go on to the fifth stage, the Outer Temple or Temple of the Dawn, followed by the sixth stage, the Inner Temple or Temple of the Star. The sixth stage is

*The entry into the Inner Temple itself, the Temple of the Star, the service of which is restricted to members of the Great Brotherhood of Light – from the youngest Initiate to the Masters, Lords, Princes, Rulers of Light; nay, to the very King Himself. These are the Brothers of Light.*

These are the degrees to be worked by the members, and above them is the seventh stage, the Sovereign Sanctuary of the Masters of the Light, the governing body of the ER (originally Besant, Arundale and Leadbeater). Beyond that is the Great Hierarchy. It was emphasized that the ES was mainly for young people, and that wherever possible all the officers should be young people; with the passage of time and the disappearance of young people from the TS generally, it can be presumed that this is no longer the case.

Leadbeater also used the ER as a vehicle for his interest in "work for the World Mother". The esoteric "work for the World Mother" was initiated by Leadbeater in an inner group of members of the ES in Sydney in 1925.

Leadbeater also sought to establish a further esoteric group: a feminine equivalent of the Christian Religion for the revival of ancient womens mysteries. He claimed that a form of “apostolic succession” from the World Mother was transmitted through him to four young women among the “Seven Virgins of Java” whom he “consecrated” as the female equivalents in this feminine religion of bishops in the masculine Christianity. Jinarajadasa commented in an ES document of 1948

*Though the original four consecrated by the Holy Mother have lost interest in the work, nevertheless the succession given to them has been passed on, though for the moment it remains in abeyance.*<sup>4</sup>

And Jinarajadasa foreshadows

*a secret organization confined to women only, working through one or more rituals under their officers, which the World Mother will use as a special channel of Her forces for the world. Such a secret organization will not be confined to women of one race or faith only; it will be for all women, provided they qualify themselves, as is the case with all secret organizations. If such a ritual body is to be Her channel, it must begin with those on whom She has conferred her “apostolic succession”....When those who have the “succession” inform me that they have begun the work, then will be time to make an announcement to the E.S.*<sup>5</sup>

On September 20, 1933, Annie Besant died. Leadbeater succeeded her both as OH of the ES and as GM of the Egyptian Rite. George Arundale followed Besant as PTS. Following Leadbeater’s death on February 29, 1934, Jinarajadasa succeeded as OH of the ES and George Arundale as GM of the ER, having received a document signed by Leadbeater from Perth: “Dying here I consecrate you as Grand Master of the Egyptian Rite of Ancient Freemasonry.” Jinarajadasa was succeeded as OH by N. Sri Ram (who was also PTS), who was succeeded by I.K. Taimni, and thence Radha Burnier (who subsequently became, and is, PTS). Some rivalry existed over succession within the ER; it was claimed by Rukmini Devi Arundale, by N Sri Ram and (from him) by Radha Burnier.

Sri Ram sent a circular to all members of the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> stages in April, 1954, declaring that in future those admitted above the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage “should not be presumed to be necessarily in the Occult stages to which these stages of the Egyptian Rite may be said to correspond.” Sri Ram made certain modifications to the ritual to reflect this change. The question asked of a candidate for admission to the Inner Court was amended from:

*In the Inner Court you have sought earnestly and served truly, winning the recognition of a Lord of Light. Will you, in this Inner Court, strive with all your heart to deserve Acceptance at His hands?*

to

*In the Inner Court you have sought earnestly and served truly. Will you, in this Inner Court, strive with all your heart to serve the Lord of Light whom you deserve to follow?*

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<sup>4</sup> C. Jinarajadasa, **Work for the World Mother**, privately printed, Adyar, 1948:6

<sup>5</sup> *ibid*:23

Burnier, exercising her control over the Rite, closed down all but the Temple of the Quest.

A curious by-way of ES/ER history occurred in 1934, shortly after Leadbeater's death. Captain Herbrand Williams, an eminent member of the TS, a priest of the LCC, a Co-Mason, and a member of the ES and the ER, announced that he had been given instructions about the future of the ES and ER by the Master the Count. On June 4 he wrote to George Arundale, as GM of the ER of the Ancient Mysteries (as it had by then become to eliminate the word "Freemasonry" from its title). Williams claimed that the Master the Count was concerned about a Pledge which had been imposed on pupils in December, 1932, and on the present rituals of the ER; the master (via Williams) seemed concerned at the ascetical strictness of the pledge, including the prohibitions on alcohol and sex outside marriage. As for the latter, the Master (via Williams) believed that "All healthy young people need sex experience, and they should be free to find it for themselves in their own way." The Master the Count was also unhappy with the removal of the Masonic element of the ER. And the Master did not like revisions to the ritual undertaken by Arundale.

George Arundale responded promptly to this claim of Mahatmic direction, and by a letter dated June 29 suspended Williams' membership of the Rite, being prepared, however, to reinstate him if he withdrew his previous claims. Williams responded with a further message from the Master to the effect that He (the Master) had been so angered by Arundale's action that he now "has suspended occultly the Egyptian Rite throughout the world", and withdrawn all the spiritual powers of Arundale as Grand Maser or any lesser officers. Noting that Jinarajadasa, as Vice Grand Master of the ER, had supported Arundale's actions, Williams reported that the Masters Morya and the Prince had also "partially suspended the ES in like manner, depriving it of Their Presence and of all occult validity".

Williams and his associate, Basil Beaumont, then circulated his messages and copies of the correspondence to members of the ER and ES, offering them the choice between him, and the Arundale/Jinarajadasa leadership. It would appear that the vast majority chose to reject the latter day messenger, and Williams quietly disappeared from Theosophical history.

### **A Note on Sources**

The only known published reference to the ER is found in the author's biography of Leadbeater: **The Elder Brother** (1982). More information is found in his PhD thesis: **C.W. Leadbeater. A Biographical Study** (The University of Sydney, 1986). An introduction to the history of the ER was given by the author at a conference on Theosophical History at San Diego in 1992. The most extensive analysis of the ER and its place in Leadbeaterian Theosophy is found in Brendan French's PhD thesis: **The Theosophical Masters** (The University of Sydney, 2000).

The author's collection includes privately published ER material, including its rituals, and additional material was consulted in collections in London. Important information about the origins of the ER was obtained in interviews with one of the "Seven Virgins of Java" (Paula Hamerster), and with one of Leadbeater's assistants (Dick Balfour Clarke) who was actively involved in the establishment of the Rite.