Contents

Introduction . . . . . *vii*

PART ONE:
KEY CONCEPTS, 1

The Great Work 5

The Universal Force, the Tao, Polarity,
and the Four Elements 6

Magick and Mysticism, or The Left and Right Eye 10

The Siddhis or Magical Gifts. 15

Esoteric Anatomy, the Chakra System, and the Aura 17

Qabalah 20

Alchemy. 25

Astrology and the New Age 27

Divination and the Tarot. 30

The Astral Plane 34

PART TWO:
SYMBOLISM, THE LANGUAGE OF MYSTERY, 37

Animals and Spiritual Beings 40

Objects. 59

The Word: Formula of the Spirit 77

PART THREE: SECRET SOCIETIES AND HOLY ORDERS, GATEKEEPERS OF HIDDEN WISDOM, 85

Freemasons 88

Magicians, Mystics, and Alchemists 92

Warriors 110

PART FOUR: LUMINARIES AND SEERS, TORCHBEARERS OF SECRET KNOWLEDGE, 119

Legends and Gods 122

Medieval and Renaissance Masters 137

Sages of the Enlightenment: The 18th Century 142

Magi of the Occult Revival: The 19th Century. 146

Modern Adepti: The 20th Century 152

Conclusion 159

Further Reading. 161

☿ ⊖ ⛢

O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adoreth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I.

—*Liber XV* by Aleister Crowley

Thou wilt ask, What is the new regeneration? or how is that done in man? Hear and see, close not thy mind, let it not be filled by the spirit of this world with its might and pomp. Lay hold upon thy mind and break through the spirit of this world entirely; yield thy mind unto the kind love of God; make thy purpose earnest and strong to overcome the pleasure of this world and not to regard it. Consider that thou art not at home in this world, but art a strange guest, made captive in a prison; cry and call to him who has the key of the prison; yield thyself up to him in obedience, righteousness, humility, purity and truth.

—*Confessions of Jacob Boehme* by Jacob Boehme

. . . you are about to penetrate into the sanctuary of the sublime sciences; my hand is about to raise for you the impenetrable veil which hides from the eyes of common men the tabernacle, the sanctuary wherein the Eternal has lodged the secrets of nature, kept for a few that are privileged, the few Elect whom His omnipotence created that they may SEE, and seeing, may soar after Him in the vast expanse of His Glory and deflect upon mankind one of the Rays that shine round about His golden Throne.

—*The Most Holy Trinosophia of Comte de St. Germain*,
translated by Manly P. Hall

Introduction

Have you ever taken a good look at a dollar bill and wondered what all those strange symbols mean or why there's so much writing in Latin, a *dead* language? Have you been too embarrassed to ask your grandfather about why he always wears that ring with the big *G* on it, or what that letter means to him? Do you have friends who regularly invite you to a ritual or ceremony that they claim will instruct you in the meaning of life? Are you searching for the invisible brotherhoods that have shaped the history of the world by using magic, alchemy, and other secrets only known to the upper echelon of humanity? Let's just say that if you are interested in these subjects (which can be safely assumed due to that fact that you are reading this book), you should take heart in the fact that these mysteries have been laid out before you intentionally, in the hope that you would strive to solve them for the betterment of yourself, and all humankind.

Secret knowledge can be hard to come by. Isn't a secret, after all, information that someone knows and purposely withholds or obscures from the sight of others? In the case of spiritual enlightenment, why would anybody actively stop interested parties from beholding the Kingdom of Heaven? The recurring literary and historical themes of the slaughter of innocents by tyrants

fearful of a new era, and the stories of saviors murdered by the very people they had come to liberate might shed some light on the matter. In the case of the mystery tradition, secrets are not usually pieces of information being withheld by someone, but rather levels of consciousness that are hidden from our normal mental state. In most cases a secret is really just the acquisition of a new point of view. But learning to love instead of fear what you do not understand can be a long, difficult process—and perhaps some things are better kept as secrets.

At the turn of the last century, there was secret society fever. Everyone, it seemed, was a Freemason, Rosicrucian, or even an emissary of the Mahatmas of the Himalayas. This may have been simply a reaction against the industrialization of the world and the insistence of science on removing miracles from the existence of humankind, as many historians suppose. Or maybe the spiritual forces that govern life on our planet were communicating something: that science and religion were the two hands of reason, and a new age of their harmonious co-operation was to bring about the next phase in the building of the New Jerusalem. I can imagine that the later supposition seems a little far-fetched to most people. Yet, when we read the writings of modern quantum physicists, they sound less like the enemy of the mystic and more like his little brother—who has the right idea, but just hasn't been around long enough to test it all out. We have a long way to go until we as a species embody "The Method of Science, The Aim of Religion." Luckily, though, we are at the very genesis of what many wise men and women believe to be a new epoch in human evolution, and the possibilities are indeed limitless.

Throughout history, spiritual seekers of all persuasions have endeavored to connect directly with their ideal of being, labeled by some as divine. *Gnosis*, the Greek word for "knowledge," is the direct knowledge or personal contact with this divinity. There are many branches on the tree of occult knowledge, but the trunk of this tree, which unites all these seemingly contradicting worldviews, is Gnosis.

To search for secret knowledge is to journey into the soul of humanity, for what is more deeply buried or obscured than the very center of ourselves? The word *occult* has, in modern Western society, dark and sometimes evil connotations; however, it simply means "hidden" or "secret." Any knowledge or method that is not easily perceived or obvious may be called occult. It will, for many, bring to mind images of black robes, ritual sacrifice, and communion with dangerous spiritual forces. This popular image of occultism has distracted many from the central reason for, and tenet of, the initiated secret tradition that in many ways has not changed since the dawn of civilization—that Man can become God. In order to delve into the sometimes forbidden and unseen Spiritual World, the seeker must be armed with courage, love, and an iron will. Perhaps one of the great paradoxes of what has been called the sacred science is that the very thing for which you are looking, is actually essential to finding it.

PART ONE

Key Concepts

Occult sciences are necessarily eccentric, for so soon as they cease to be eccentric, they cease to be occult.

—*The Paradoxes of the Highest Science* by Éliphas Lévi

When you begin to explore the secret tradition, it doesn't take long to realize that you haven't just stepped onto a field of study, nor even a universe, but a multiverse—where symbols and methods that share the same name do not carry the same meaning, and nothing seems to inherently correspond with anything else. The masters of this invisible college seldom agree on everything—from the exact positions of energy channels within the body to the existence and function of nonphysical entities such as angels and demons. And then there's the discussion among believers in preternatural beings as to the existence of such a thing as nonphysicality, or whether these beings are repressed psychological impulses or independent life forms.

Just as no two people are exactly alike, yet can share natural similarities betraying a common ancestor, so the occult systems of the world are neither uniform nor entirely estranged. The nexus point that connects these divergent and sometimes contradictory dimensions of inner space is you. The occult

theory of correspondence assures you that "As above, so below," yet you are the bridge between these two realms, as well as the ultimate judge of what constitutes them and the meaning they will have in your personal development.

Beginners will gain much in their study if they acquaint themselves thoroughly with the instances in which the masters agree and afterward endeavor to understand their reasons for disagreement. The foundation of the secret tradition lies not in its knowledge, but in its use of knowledge. The most valuable import of occultism is not what or where the first substance is, for the secrets of our shared spiritual heritage are said to be everywhere. The occult tradition's merit and relevance to the pilgrim's progress lies in its method. Following a clear methodology, keeping a record, and testing your results against the findings of others elevate the soul's desire for greater light from the stasis of doubt into the realm of investigation and, as a result, direct experience.

The sacred science is only sacred insofar as its end is the realization of human evolution, and only science as long as it evolves along with the discoveries it facilitates. The following are what can be called key concepts of the secret tradition, being both technical and philosophical ideas that may be found on most branches of the tree of occult knowledge.

The Great Work

There is, however, one form of miracle which certainly happens, the influence of the genius.

—*Magick, Liber ABA: Book Four* by Aleister Crowley

The path of spiritual attainment is called the Great Work. In alchemy its completion is the creation of the philosopher's stone, and in magic it is called the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. It is the manifestation of genius, which can lead the world on its next great adventure. The Holy Scriptures and sayings recorded by the saints are all utterances of the genius.

Success in this quest is the raison d'être of the Western mystery tradition and all sincere religious faiths. The ambiguity with which they describe the Lord is intentional and practical, as are the injunctions against idolatry. The unknown must remain so until we experience it directly. Any conjecture may color our view and defile the holiest and most pivotal moment in our lives. This principle is also the foundation of science, being the proper method of all exploration—spiritual or otherwise. It is through this experience that the religious reformers of the past have been prepared to overturn the table of culture when the food set upon it had become rotten and poisonous.

The execution of the Great Work is the fulfillment of prophecy, and the continuation of an ancient dialogue between

Man and God. Establishing a society where this undertaking can be pursued by any who are called to do so is the true jihad, dharma, via dolorosa, and path of the wise.

The Universal Force, the Tao, Polarity, and the Four Elements

All things are concealed in all.

—*Coelum Philosophorum* by Paracelsus

The Universal Force

According to initiated wisdom, prana, chi, astral fluid, and the ophidian vibrations are all terms for a universal life force that permeates and connects all things. The qabalistic texts call it *ChAI*, which means "life." Because of the transcendental nature of this force, also called correspondence or matter, our thoughts can take the form of actions, shaping our world.

Today especially, we are constantly reminded that there are various kinds of energy such as solar, wind, natural gas, coal, bio-electrical, etc. These seemingly different forms of energy are all actually variants of the same phenomenon we call movement. Matter at its most fundamental level is composed of pure energy. That is, it is moving. Science affirms that everything is energy, or can at least be said to have an energetic component. The goal of the ancient philosopher was to learn

how to manipulate and experience matter at this fundamental level. In doing so, they began to read energy as movement.

When we observe movement, what we see are the effects of energy. The process of harvesting energy for electricity is that of converting movements into electromagnetic pulses. A good example of how this works can be found in how we harvest wind energy. The wind moves a turbine that turns a shaft. This shaft goes into a gearbox, increasing the rotation speed, while the generator uses magnetic fields, converting the rotational energy into electrical energy. The mystics suggest we use this same process of energy conversion—except in our power plant *we* are the turbine, shaft, gearbox, and generator used to capture the electromagnetic "winds," in this case being the universal force. The various occult sciences are all methods of harnessing and directing this force toward spiritual light and the development of a civil society.

The Tao

Many volumes have been and will continue to be written about the Tao, which translates as "The Way," and its unlimited manifestations. Of the eternal Tao, however, we must remain silent in the manner of true silence. That is, there is nothing that can be said. Yet in our temporal existence may be found ways that are straighter and paths shorter, that our work may be done in harmony with the magnificent mystery. The Tao that may be spoken of—though limited in scope and virtue in comparison with that of which it is a shadow—remains to the eyes of man a brilliant star lighting his sojourn toward enlightenment. Of this Tao we say that it follows the path of least resistance and

bows lowest, for it wears the greatest crown. All rivers flow to the ocean because it is below them, yet were it not for the falling rains, both would be dried up and forgotten. This mystery of the source, path and end of power, life, and liberty has been called the Tao by many a wise fool, seeking to name the mother and father of names.

Polarity

From the One Universal Life Force arises the polarity of positive and negative. It is one movement in two directions. This first movement is normally recanted in the Holy Scriptures as the initial step in the creation of the world, being the separation of light and darkness or of the heavens and the earth. In the secret traditions, these eternal twins have been known by names such as yin and yang, mercy and severity, right and left, and allegorically as Cain and Abel. It is the work of the Adepti to absorb and harmonize these forces. These two poles are the same in essence; their apparent difference arises from our assumption that our nervous system perceives the fullness of reality rather than only one side on the multifaceted diamond of existence.

The Four Elements

From the primordial swirling of the ancient universe arose duality. Within this duality were further attraction and repulsion, existing as agents of the eventual reintegration of the Many into the One. On the side of the masculine force of propulsion can be found what the ancients called Fire and Air, the elements that they observed as seeming to move from their own

internal source. These they also attributed to the will and intellect of humanity, as well as to the directions of east and south, being the source of light and heat.

Within the negative polarity, which exercises its feminine forces of vacuity, gravitation, and friction, can be found the elements of Water and Earth. These are seen as being passive, acting and being acted upon in a manner that conceals, dissipates, and absorbs. They were attributed to the directions of west and north, the sources of darkness and cold. These four elements form the cross of creation, combining to form the basis of all existence:

Fire: Hot and Dry, Summer, South
Water: Cold and Moist, Autumn, West
Air: Hot and Moist, Spring, East
Earth: Cold and Dry, Winter, North

All that is, is composed of a mixture of these four, with one element dominating, depending on its circumstance of birth. The four elements also correspond with the seasons and the four alchemical degrees of Fire.