

Hermeticism & Freemasonry- Commonalities & Influences
Originally presented to Templum Sion Lodge of Freemasons Oct 1, 2005
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The following was presented originally in MS PowerPoint and spoken to unscripted but recently updated. Notes were gathered together after the lecture and translated from the PowerPoint presentation for the benefit of those who were unable to attend or for the benefit of interested Brethren or people who may wish to study the subject.

What is, if any, the influence of Hermeticism on modern symbolic Freemasonry? To be sure there are people that have no idea of what Hermeticism even means let alone possible inference or influences. This presentation is not meant to cover every nuance of the subject, nor can it, given the very limited amount of space available. The history of the subject of Hermeticism goes back to the remotest of times, before recorded history gave rise to the basis of Western Civilization. To state that Hermeticism was the product of ancient Egypt might be simplistic and too convenient given that its roots probably lie esoterically in far older Mesopotamian, Indo-Chinese or pre-antediluvian civilizations far older than recorded time. Hermeticism may be equated to the terms "Western Hermetic Tradition", the "Underground" or "Western Esoteric Stream" which all speak to the many occult and perhaps not so occult traditions and influences upon Western European Civilization.

The word Hermeticism is based on the personage of the Greek demi-moon god Hermes, who was considered an intermediary between heaven and earth- he is often spoken of as a messenger or civilizer who brought humanity knowledge- the art of building, measuring the earth (surveying), medicine, writing and language, mathematics and geometry, astronomy/astrology and the measurement of time. Each culture has a unique and corresponding name for Hermes Trismegistus or "Thrice Greatest". In Egypt the equivalent is Thoth or *Dejwty*, to Moslems he was Idris, to the Jews he was the Patriarch Enoch who is central in associated degrees of the Royal Arc or Cryptic Rite Freemasonic ritual, he was Mercury to the Romans and Agastya to the East Indians. Among the Greek Hellenes, the related word *Herma* means 'a boundary stone, crossing point' which suggests that Hermes is the spirit of crossing-over. "As such he was seen to be manifest in any kind of interchange, transfer, transgressions, transcendence, transition, transit or traversal, all of which activities involve some form of crossing in some sense. This explains his connection with transitions in one's fortunes, with the interchanges of goods, words and information involved in trade, interpreting, oratory, writing, with the way in which the wind may transfer objects from one place to another, and with the

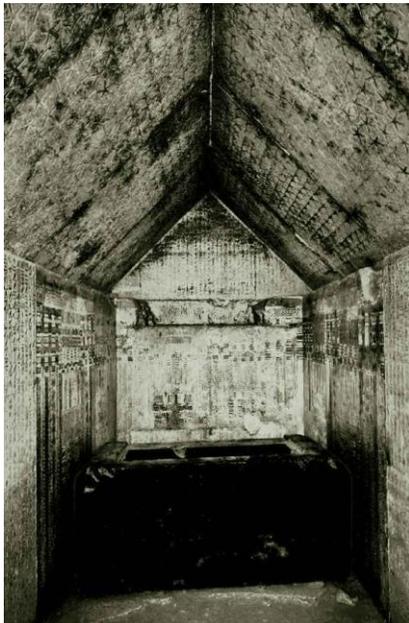


transition to the afterlife." The sciences of alchemy and magic are also attributed to Hermes/Thoth. According to legend Hermes is said to have provided the wisdom of light in the ancient mysteries of Egypt. "He carried an emerald tablet (apparently discovered by Alexander the Great), upon which was recorded all of philosophy, and the caduceus (the modern medical symbol of two serpents intertwined upon a winged staff), the symbol of mystical illumination. Hermes Trismegistus vanquished Typhon, the dragon of ignorance, and mental, moral and physical perversion." Hermes is also referred to as a trickster (the Norse god Loki) sometimes forcing growth upon those who don't necessarily wish to change or grow. Surviving Hermes Trismegistus is the wisdom of the Hermetica, books that have profoundly influenced the

development of Western occultism and the more mythical Emerald Tablet which was said to date from the time of the Flood and was seen on display in Heliopolis after Alexander the Great liberated it from the Tomb of Hermes south of the Egyptian Temple at Siwa. Thoth is typically found depicted as an ibis headed man or even sometimes represented as a baboon like figure (seen left)



The Hermetic Corpus of ancient writings or 'Hermetica' found its way to Florence in 1460 CE by the monk Leonardo of Pistoia who was an agent of the ruler of Florence, philanthropist and scholar Cosimo de' Medici who himself founded a new Platonic Academy- a group of intellectuals and mystics who drew their inspiration from ancient Pagan philosophy. Their translation in 1471 by Marsilio Ficino influenced a huge explosion of Renaissance thought. The list of people who credited the works of the Hermetica read like a who's who of the greatest artists, philosophers and scientists- Roger Bacon, John Dee, Paracelsus, Agrippa, Isaac Newton, William Blake, Kepler, Copernicus, Leonardo Da Vinci, Botticelli, Milton, Victor Hugo and psychologist Carl Jung. The Hermetica is acknowledged as a cornerstone of western culture. As in Alexandria a thousand years before the Renaissance viewed science, art, literature and religion as part of a unified whole to be studied together. All the world was opened up to legitimate study and investigation, the Dark Ages were over. However the new culture challenged the authoritarian Roman Catholic Church and in 1492 with the aid of the King of France the republic of Florence was crushed. The Florentine scholars spread across Europe and in less than 200 years the Renaissance has spread across Europe when a taste for all things Italian- art, sculpture, literature and philosophy- became predominant. a scholar named Isaac Casaubon published an analysis of the Hermetica which showed that they were not written by some sage in a distant past but rather by scholars in second or third century Alexandria. Casaubon was a brilliant scholar and with encouragement of the Christian status quo his damning criticism was accepted. When Casaubon wrote his study very little was known of ancient Egypt. Egyptian hieroglyphs were not translated until two centuries later. Consequently many modern scholars now believe he was wrong to see the Hermetic treatise as a second century invention. The Hermetica's true age came to light more recently when the Pyramid texts of Unas (sarcophagus chamber seen left) and Saqqara, circa 2,375 BCE, were translated and found to be identical to those of the Hermetica which suggested that the Hermetica may indeed contain wisdom of the Pharaohs which scholars in the second century Alexandria reworked for a contemporary



readership.

Over a hundred years before Plato the Greek sage Pythagoras travelled to Egypt to discover the hidden wisdom of the world. He travelled for 22 years in temples being initiated into the wisdom of the ancients. According to the Greek scholar Diogenes Laertius, Plato purchased three books of Pythagorean doctrines based on Egyptian wisdom that he adapted into his work the Timaeus.

The similarities between the two are striking but not surprising given that Plato was directly influenced by Egyptian wisdom.

Until only recently the Pyramid texts were viewed as primarily royal funerary texts used in the ceremony of a dead Pharaoh to aid him on the journey to the afterlife. However, it has become increasing mainstream to understand these writings as mystical texts used in ritual that the *living*



king is exposed to in order to expand his consciousness¹. The king making ceremonies bear an uncanny resemblance to the circumambulatory rituals of the Freemason and we must become acutely aware of these new interpretations and indirect influences. As the recent academic studies of Jeremy Naydler, *Shamanic Wisdom of the Pyramid Texts* point out “the fundamental underlying pattern in the Pyramid Texts is one that can be found in all initiatory traditions: it is that of death and rebirth”². “The king is transformed into the falcon, inwardly identifying with the solar principle as he soars to the heavens...but before he can join Ra in his sun boat, he is required

to heal and reconcile the opposing forces of Horus he is required to bring into harmony the opposites of creativity and destruction, of order (Horus) and the wild, primal, but ultimately unproductive energies of Seth.”³ Early Egyptologists had little cultural awareness of shamanic or hermetic knowledge based upon a primarily and quite limited academic view, however recent interpretations and understanding tell of us a living corpus of literature that embraces concepts of sacred knowledge and soul reconciliation.

What several influences are involved in the Western Hermetic Stream? There are many:

- Shamanism
- Magic/Wicca
- Alchemy
- Neo-Platonism
- Hebrew Mysticism- Kabbalism
- Gnosticism
- Christian Mysticism
- Muslim Sufism
- Rosicrucianism
- Freemasonry
- Theosophy
- Golden Dawn
- Psychology- Carl Jung

Each of these topics are a huge study unto themselves and all are related and evolved from ancient Hermeticism though admittedly Shamanism itself may form the basis of all religions and belief systems that may date back 35 -40,000 years, indeed to humankind's remotest times⁴. In this case Hermeticism and Shamanism may be synonymous and only be separated by cultural

¹ See *Shamanic Wisdom of the Pyramid Texts- the Mystical Tradition of Ancient Egypt*, by Jeremy Naydler.

² pp.312

³ pp.313

⁴ For more reading see *Supernatural-Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind* by Graham Hancock.

definitions or interpretations. The word 'Shaman' derives from the ancient Siberian and means he or she 'who knows' (very similar idea as the Gnostic).

"Deus est sphaera infinita cuius centrum est ubique, circumferentia vero nusquam.
 God is an infinite sphere, the centre of which is everywhere and the circumference nowhere."

Hermetic quote

Entering the "centre" is not so much about what is "better", on top, which came first, but rather like a venn diagram in which a series of overlapping circles may be seen and one may ask how do these interrelate? Magic- not the kind depicted in Harry Potter films- should be seen as an integral part of Hermeticism. It is a science supported or practised by a Magi (or perhaps by a practising Wiccan) and should not be considered satanic or sleight of hand Las Vegas style stage illusionism. Seen above is a Renaissance version of Hermes as the magician or Magi (much like the Egyptian Priesthood) who is the intermediary between the sun and the moon, light and dark and the mysteries of illumination. Magic in the Hermetic or Shamanic sense may be seen as ceremonial with ritual practises employed for intentional and specific reasons within a spiritual context. Basically 'magic', shamanism or healing has three components: 1) The natural universe and all that is in it is viewed as a living thing; 2) Interconnections and correspondences exist between everything (as in the Hermetic maxim "as above, so below"); 3) The Magi or magical practioner has access, connection and influence to several realms within nature.

In Idris Shah's (recommended reading) *The Sufi's* states that "both the Sufis and the alchemists claim Hermes as an initiate of their craft." Many Sufis, including al-Farabi, Geber, and Roger Bacon, among others, were described as "Hermetic" or "Illuminist." Alchemy, from the term Khem (the original name of Egypt) meaning black, was reputedly invented by Hermes. Seen left

	<i>nub</i>	Gold.
	<i>asem</i>	Electrum.
	<i>hat</i>	Silver.
	<i>χomt</i>	Copper.
	<i>men</i>	Iron.
	<i>teht</i>	Lead.
	<i>chesbet</i>	Blue Stone, or Enamel, or Sapphire.

are Egyptian alchemical symbols. Alchemy in its gross interpretation was concerned with the transmutation of metals and compounds. Found upon the Egyptian Famine stele on Sehel Island are chemical formulae's for producing artificial stone, as well 'alchemical" formulae for artificial stone has been found in four-thousand year old excavations in Mesopotamia. However, the higher alchemy was seen as being concerned with the transmutation of the gross or primitive aspects of humans to that of the golden state or state of perfection, the living god-man operating in concert with the universal principles of the Supreme God and His creation. Rosicrucian alchemists sometimes referred to the Philosophers Stone as the "Telesma" which meant a self-perfecting physical presence similar to our scientific principle of genetics being responsible for natural evolutionary development.

By working with Telesma alchemists attempted to accelerate human evolution, to affect nature and work with divine power and through it. Not submitting to mere evolutionary development but rather working intellectually and intentionally towards a revolutionary development was their purpose. It was known that "the stone becomes purified consciousness" and while the vast majority of souls personalities may be extinguished soon after death and recycled as different people, the adepts ambition was to survive this dissolution and if he/she should incarnate again, do so by deliberate choice, not through bondage like everyone else. Alchemical distillation, the process of higher purification and the elevation of higher consciousness was to become free of genetics and astrologic influence, breaking the cycle of death and rebirth bonding to divine forces and freeing oneself from mechanistic or archetypical influences. If one didn't know any better this sounds very similar to Buddhist practices, teachings and initiations.

Neoplatonism was the last of the great schools of pagan philosophy. It was a synthesis of Platonism, Aristotlism, Stoicism, and Pythagoreanism, which provided an esoteric interpretation of classical Greek Paganism⁵, it incorporated philosophy, mysticism, theosophy, and theurgy (higher occultism). In Neo-Platonism human beings are born from the stars and choosing a life on earth, souls descend. In this process they forget their divinity even though some residual memories permeate which is the source of our striving for perfection. For three centuries it served as a last bastion of Pagan (meaning- *country dweller*, an oft used insult in ancient times) wisdom and esoteric philosophy in an increasingly dominant, political and hostile Christian dominated empire as witnessed by the burning of the Library of Alexandria in Egypt. Even after the light of Classical Learning was extinguished, the Neoplatonic current remained, undergoing metamorphoses into Christian Mysticism, Islamic Philosophy and Sufi Esotericism, and Judaic Kabbalism.

For Plotinus, and his predecessors Plato and Pythagoras, spirituality meant the ascent from the lower sense-reality to the higher spiritual reality. Like twentieth century scientists such as Albert Einstein, these ancient Greek mystics derived meaning and purpose from the contemplation of the natural world. But instead of contemplating the wonder of visible physical reality, they contemplated the wonder of the invisible spiritual reality which they saw as the cause and ultimate meaning behind the physical reality. Plotinus believed that man should reject material things and should purify his soul and to lift it up to a communion with the One.

Similarly the influence of Hermeticism on early Christianity is beyond a doubt. In 1945 the works of Hermes were discovered among the scriptures belonging to the Gnostic Christians of the first centuries CE. Early Christian communities possessed many copies of the works of Hermes. Ancient Egyptian tombs were inhabited by Christian hermits such as St. Pachomius, founder of the first monastic communities. The walls of the tombs are covered in hieroglyphics ascribed to the great god Thoth which describes spiritual rebirth into the knowledge of God. In such places Christian Gnostics (Gnosis meaning “knowledge” or “to know”) poured over the Hermetica.

“Through Gnosis we are purified of diversity and experience the vision of unity. Those who have realized Gnosis know the source and the destination. They have set themselves free by waking up from the stupor in which they have lived, and become themselves again.”

Valentius, *The Gospel of Truth*.

Hermes describes the mind of God as the oneness which unites all things in the universe, seen and unseen. The literature teaches that the mind of the human being is made in the image of God’s mind. If we free our mind from the limitations of the physical body we can experience God directly. We were created with this specific purpose in mind, this is the spiritual goal of humanity and to reach God we must expand our awareness. This transcendental view is not isolated to the Gnostics but comes from and through the Hermetic stream and all its subsequent evolutionary iterations.

But how can all of these streams have anything to do with an 800 year-old ritually based world-wide fraternity of operative builders of monastic orders that later became a symbolic brotherhood with its curious architectural metaphors? What does Hermeticism, alchemy and Shamanism have to do with architecture? Is modern Freemasonry, a fraternity with its basic three degrees of initiation and its many additional degrees simply a club that raises money for communities and advocates social good? If you take a serious look at the history, purpose and ritual, as it has developed through the centuries and couple this with a basic understanding of Hermeticism then it becomes abundantly clear that Freemasonry even today remains a deeply spiritual oriented

⁵ For a complete understanding of the various influences of paganism, Gnosticism and ancient initiatory rites on early Christianity read “*The Pagan Mysteries*” by Timothy Freke & Peter Gandy.

institution that serves to reconcile human beings psychologically and spiritually from their separated state and educate people who would otherwise be lost to gross materialism and blinded by religious dogma. The early Freemasonic French rituals of the 18th century speak of a ritual that is not practised today. Only select individuals are allowed into the sanctum sanctorum or inner sanctum [referring to the interior of King Solomon's Temple in Jerusalem] of the Mysteries of Freemasonry. The three degrees yield to an additional 5 catechisms where in one discourse the *Catechism of the Masters* the master states: "...Our occupations also have as [their] objective the works of the Supreme Architect, we contemplate their perfections & in the great edifice of the Universe, & the admirable structure of all sublunary bodies, we carry our thoughts from there until we make a dwelling within ourselves for that great Architect, whom the Heaven & and the Earth cannot contain. We build for him, by the hand of virtue, a sanctuary in the depths of our heart. We invite Him with loving cries, redoubled a hundredfold, to come & honour it by His presence; he yields to our prayers, *he unites with us, he deifies us* [italics mine]..." quite a transcendental and surprising statement given the restrictive political and limited religious views of the time.

Deification of the initiate is nothing new as we see from the fundamental patterns in the Egyptian Pyramid texts speaking to such activities as the Sed Festival and its important "secret rites". The practise of dismemberment and restoration is symbolic of the king's rebirth as a god. The climax of the sarcophagus chamber coronation rites symbolizes the mystic union of the king with Ra and Atum he becomes a living spirit (*akh*) an enlightened being such as those rites undergone by Thutmose III who had the *akh* power bestowed upon him in an initiatory experience (the Coronation inscription ceremony at Karnak Thutmose III describes transforming himself into a falcon and then being taken up into the Akhet (the place of renewal in the Underworld or Dwat) where he communes with the sun-god Ra and becoming infused with "akh power". Modern symbolist Freemasonry emulates a universal human journey with its candidates who circumambulate about the Lodge from south, to west to east. This is an initiatic ages old symbolic journey from youth (south), through maturity (west) through the north (the place of death or the underworld) to the east (the place of light, enlightenment and rebirth). This defines a non-western idea of cyclic time, not reflective of linear time. Modern Freemasonic rituals speak of the importance of finding transcendental truth at every one of its ritual Lodge openings. We find the junior officer is asked by the Master of the Lodge why he leaves to go towards the west? To which he replies he seeks for that which was lost. He is asked what was lost to which he replies the genuine secrets. The Master asks next, where do you hope to find those secrets that were lost and the reply is in the centre. But the centre of what we may wonder? The answer is simple the centre is the transcendental self. The secret of living, dying and what may come afterwards lies in penetrating the sacred centre found within each of us. According to the rituals of modern symbolist Freemasonry the real secrets were lost when the mythical and enlightened architect Hiram Abiff was murdered. But all is not lost for in the degrees the builder is raised to a new and perfected state with effort and knowledge of the seven liberal arts and sciences. This mythical and symbolic resurrection is duplicated in almost all cultures who practised the sacred Lesser and Greater Mysteries. The dying and resurrecting god-man has been represented by Osiris in Egypt, Dionysus in Greece, Mithras in Persia, and Jesus who became one with the Christ spirit⁶ and now we find a modern parallel in the metaphorical Hiram Abiff who is represented by every candidate who is initiated into the Third Degree of Freemasonry. In every case the candidate as they progress through the degrees professes their desire for light. In light one is liberated from ignorance and one escapes the earthly bonds of the profane or uninitiated a mainly Hermetic idea. In the third degree, considered the final and 'highest' degree in Freemasonry, a telling passage delivered by the Master of the Lodge (who represents the wisdom of the east) explains to the newly made Freemason that "...you stand on the very brink of the grave, into which you have figuratively descended, and which, when this transitory life shall have passed away, will again receive you into its cold bosom. Let the emblems of mortality which lie before you, lead

⁶ For more on this read *The Pagan Christ* by Canadian author, journalist, Phd of New Testament studies at the U of T Tom Harpur.

you to contemplate your inevitable destiny, and guide your reflections to that most important of all studies, the knowledge of yourself...."⁷

What does this have to do with architecture? The ancient builders of Persia, Egypt, Greece, Rome and then later the Monastic builders sought to impregnate their architecture with symbolic devices or build with sacred geometric proportions that would affect people who would live, work or worship in their interiors. These are 'living' books of wisdom or more, transcendental devices built not only for practical purposes but for transcendental reasons as well. One only needs to meditate in the Kings Chamber of the Giza pyramid or step into Chartres cathedral or walk the sacred Mayan temple ball court of Chichen Itza to feel the power these sites are imbued with. Very few structures today are built with the intention of raising people's vibration or consciousness but Hermetic principles of sacred architecture (proportion etc) are very evident for example in the 20th century structure of the Manitoba Legislature designed by classically trained architect Frank Simon. Much like the Chinese practise of Feng Shui transcendental architecture is meant to affect the energy within the body. Ancient builders and designers as well as modern ones are aware of these principles and employ them to bring heaven and earth closer together reflecting the ancient Hermetic maxim "as above [in the heavens] so [will we build] below".⁸

Prof. Gilles Quispel, Prof. Emeritus of Utrecht and Harvard comments on an unknown hermetic work *On the Ogdad and Ennead* that "this work shows without any doubt that the Hermetic believer was initiated into several grades before transcending the sphere of the seven planets and the heaven of the fixed star (the Ogdoad). Then he would behold the God beyond and experience Himself. It is now completely certain that there existed before and after the beginning of the Christian era in Alexandria a secret society akin to a Masonic Lodge. The members of this group called themselves 'brethren,' were initiated through a baptism of the Spirit, greeted each other with a sacred kiss, celebrated a sacred meal and read the Hermetic writings as edifying treatises for their spiritual progress." Thus we find that the modern rituals of Freemasonry do indeed contain aspects of something far older and far deeper than until now has been only speculated upon.

Brother Chic Cicero, principal of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn summarizes and synthesizes the different but yet similar streams of Hermeticism: "The legend of Osiris, who was an "ordinary" god (if you can say such a thing) until his death, dismemberment, and resurrection is a kind of model or pattern for the candidate of the Mysteries -who "dies" to an old way of life, is symbolically "dismembered" by the initiatory process of self-analysis, and is "reborn" to a new spiritual way of life. Osiris is the perfect deity to symbolize this process, because in addition to being a magical process, this is also a psychological as well as an alchemical one. In analytical psychology this "Osirian" process is called analysis, confrontation (with the shadow), and self-realization. In alchemy it is known as separation, purification, and recombination. In magic it is referred to as purification, consecration, and union. All of these terms are used to describe the same basic purifying experience. In the Outer Order of the Golden Dawn, the student must examine his or her own inner workings-separating ("dismembering") by defining and analyzing the various components of the psyche. The initiatory process works to purify and consecrate these psychic components until at length they are recombined, reunited, and realized ("resurrected") in a more exalted or spiritualized Whole." The same model could be applied to the sacred rituals of Freemasonry, Shamanism and even Buddhism.

⁷ The Work, pp-118-119, 1996. Canadian Freemasonic ritual.

⁸ For a detailed overview of sacred architecture see *Talisman-sacred cities secret faith* by Robert Buavel and *Secret Zodiacs of Washington DC-was the city of stars built by Freemasons* by David Ovason.

“The drama of the archtypical life of Christ describes in symbolic images the events in the conscious life –as well as in the life that transcends consciousness –of a man who has been transformed by his higher destiny.”

Carl Jung, *The Psychology of Religion East and West*

I would submit in today's world Hermeticism itself should be understood as the principal influence of modern Freemasonic ritual while the Craft is the organizational vehicle that carries it. The complex and diverse study of Western Hermeticism and all its streams, primarily for our own understanding of Freemasonry is critical to a basic understanding of our own selves and in turn our ultimate destiny back to God. All the aforementioned streams rooted in Hermeticism have as their themes: cosmology; death and rebirth; healing, self-realization and union with forces larger than ourselves. Today, it is critical that Freemasons understand and employ these concepts in their work, in their operations, and in any future developments. To deny or to be ignorant of these influences means that Freemasonry simply devolves into a simplistic group of purely social Freemasons who promote a service club mentality- a phenomenon that I would submit has already overtaken much of North American Freemasonry⁹. Members, and not Brothers “do not know, that they do not know” and having “fun” (I would submit a North American Shrine influence), gaining position, collecting titles and jewellery becomes more the norm of “managing” the organization rather than the exception while the core purpose of its deep ritual and its symbolism lies dormant. The implications for the future are enormous. If we do not tend the philosophical and spiritual root –which is the “heart and marrow” (to quote the “Ancient” Freemasons of York who were considered far more spiritual and date their origins to 900 CE versus the Modern English Freemasons of 1717 who changed the Ancients rituals to suit a political end) of the Craft and the reason why Freemasonry exists (its basic mission), then we lose the ability to pilot our organization in any genuine or profound sense. We also risk losing touch with any potential opportunities for intellectual and spiritual growth. Thankfully Continental Europe and South America is far ahead of the infantile preoccupations of Canadian or American Freemasons and ultimately there will exist parallel influences. Despite widespread ignorance, there is a desire to discover the meaning of Freemasonry once more thanks to the popularity of such books as the *Da Vinci Code*, *The Lost Symbol* and films like *National Treasure*. We see tremendous interest in Masonic Lodges like Manitoba's newly founded Templum Sion Lodge of Freemasons who conducts tours of the Legislature, participate in public lectures and provides the public with accurate knowledge about Freemasonry in general and esotericism more specifically. Authors of *Plant Spirit Shamanism* Ross Heaven and Howard G. Charing point to a current humanity (Western Society) that has lost its connection with nature and thereby lost its own sense of purpose: “human beings as parts of nature need to feel their community with the great world soul. Our health, and invariably our feelings of well-being are rooted in this....our nature inspired rituals have dwindled or disappeared, and our connection to nature is weakened. In turn our souls, individually and collectively, have become weak, and despite our great wealth and “power”, many traditional societies regard us as the saddest people on Earth.” We can begin to see the role of Hermeticism with its varied influences including that of Freemasonry has on each of us. In the coming Aquarian Age, a time characterized by communications and true human fraternity, the need to inspire and inform people and to connect within themselves is critically important to a pre and post 2012 world. A time not rooted in gross unrestrained corporate

⁹ Directly related to this –following this presentation at Templum Sion I had a later evening engagement as keynote speaker to representatives of the Eastern Star, or women's arm of the Freemasonic family at the Winnipeg Viscount Hotel. Representatives present were from all over Canada and the United States. My presentation dealt directly with the importance of leadership and its qualities and the importance of progressive organizational development principles and methods. During this presentation one of the comments by one of the participants related to the Eastern Star being a service organization to which I quickly intervened and commented at length of the Eastern Star not being a service club but like other Masonic bodies a unique initiatory esoteric society. Thus I have concluded, with similar circumstances from other presentations I have given, that more and more, Freemasons and the various bodies have lost the principal ideas and knowledge of who they are, why they exist and what the basic concepts of Freemasonry are.

growth, militarism, or consumerist culture culminating in a self-fulfilling prophetic biblical catastrophe but rather a new age for humanity which dedicates itself intentionally to finding balance, caretaking our planet, ending irrational conflict and dedicating ourselves to knowledge and worldwide enlightenment. Hermeticism it would seem, as much as Shamanism or Freemasonry is as critical today, perhaps moreso than in ages past and we all have a role in it.

“There is a world beyond ours, a world that is far away, nearby and invisible, and there is where God lives, where the dead live, the spirits and the saints. A world where everything has already happened and everything is known. That world talks. It has a language of its own. And the way it talks is through nature.”¹⁰

Thank you.

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Suggested Further Reading-

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