



teozofija v sloveniji



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## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CEREMONIAL

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Prispevki k raziskovanju zgodovine Teozofskega gibanja - v izvirniku

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The primary purpose of Ceremony should be understood and never forgotten by those who participate in it. It is this: to present to the perceptions a visible sign or symbol of an inner or spiritual state; and conversely, by exhibition of this symbol of a state, which is order and harmony, to induce a like state in the inner nature.

Ceremony means ordered procession, or harmonious progression. If this is not a sign, or symbol of a condition existing in the inner or true nature of those concerned in it, then it is an empty and artificial form.

If the inner state exists, then the calming of the outer perceptions, through the order and harmony presented to them, causes them to release their hold on consciousness, and allows it to withdraw inward towards its centre, which is order and harmony itself.

This inner harmony *does* exist in every nature, but the obstacles to its attainment are many and great. Therefore the neophyte who seeks to overcome them must learn, to understand something of their nature, before he takes to his use any vehicle or instrument as a means of hastening his progress, or of breaking a path for himself.

Ceremony is one of the many vehicles, or instruments, which the neophyte in occultism *may* use, and which the disciple and initiate Brother *does* use to further his progress. Mark well those words, that it is something *to be used*. It cannot be *used* until one has learned to understand its purpose, and can wield it with knowledge and strength. One must know the path one travels when using it as a vehicle, else it will end by taking you, you know not whither, and plunging you in the mire. Or when using it as a tool, one must not simply hold it in one's hand and stand still rejoicing in its possession as a child may do with a spade or axe too heavy to use, but whose brightness and newness pleases it; because if one does that it will prove not a help but an anchor holding one still. Neither must one, given certain strength, wield it blindly to dig, or hew a path, because the path he digs thus will prove but a circle leading him back to where he first stood.

Those participating in ceremonies, no matter how simple, must understand that the forms observed have a true value only in as much as they symbolise, or objectify states, or conditions of the TRUE MAN, who stands beyond forms. Therefore the WILL and DESIRE must not be centred *upon* the

forms, but upon that which the forms objectify. The senses, which are the outer instruments of the True Man, *are* enthralled, or held STILL in the forms, but the consciousness must retire towards its unshaken centre.

If the consciousness remains with the *stilled* senses, centred *upon* the forms the result is not good, but very evil. The state then becomes nothing more than the lower hypnotic state, or that of the entranced, or semi-entranced medium. The consciousness in this state becomes fixed, or paralysed, as that of the common hypnotic subject, or unconscious medium, while in addition the senses disport themselves among the forms in a pleasurable rhythm. This is the first, or lowest, form of danger which the uninstructed may encounter in participation in ceremonial.

The second danger is that, while the senses remain enchained, the consciousness, withdrawing from them, slip, or “jump” as it were, to the next plane — the Emotional (astral) plane. Waking consciousness is thus lost, and one slips into the DREAMING state — the Astral World. But in saying this it must be understood that an uninstructed individual knows that change has occurred. Experiences come to him in this state which he believes are objective visions, discerned by the waking senses. They are not discerned by the waking senses. The senses which perceive the subjective worlds, the Vth and VIth spheres – or what others prefer to call the Astral and Mental Worlds — are not the faculties with which this earth plane is perceived.

The vast majority who participate in ceremonial without initial training and knowledge are ministering to the Emotional (astral) nature only. This Astral World is a world of colour and form, more illusory, because more complex, than this world of waking senses. True wisdom is not found there, nor yet in the VIth — the Mental World — which is also one of special form. Wisdom is found only on the VIIth, the world of pure colourless light, which is all form, and yet no form.

The True Occultist has one object only, and that is the cultivation of Spiritual Perception. He seeks to view this world with the eyes of the Spiritual Man. He does **NOT** seek to view this world in any subjective state, either dreaming, or deep-sleeping. In such states he is experiencing other spheres. He experiences them with senses appropriate to them, and those senses are not more – but often very much less – perfect, in relation to the spheres to which they belong, than the imperfect senses, with which we view this sphere of waking consciousness. Those other spheres are as much illusions of the senses as this one.

Exercise of and consequent development of the senses proper to other planes helps in no way towards true wisdom in this world. They are not the Spiritual Senses which belong to the TRUE MAN. *They are, like those proper to this earth, the senses necessary to the evolution of a particular aspect of the True Man.* Those who practise True Occultism seek only to achieve True Manhood. When the Spiritual eyes and ears are open, when the man knows and speaks TRUTH, when he can stand upright in his full grown manhood in the Master’s presence, then and then only will he see the true world, *which is the synthesis of its seven aspects which we call spheres.*

The Lesson contained in the above may not be clear to the neophyte, therefore it must be pointed out. It is this, that in every conscious effort, by the use of any method whatsoever to retreat from his outer relative aspects, he must retain his waking consciousness. This is not sensuous consciousness, but *is the central consciousness of the eternal “I” carried back in unbroken continuity to its motionless centre.* From that centre alone is truth seen.

To do this is a tremendous task, hedged with terrible difficulties and dangers. Because it is so, the warning is ever given not to plunge into it unprepared or uninstructed, or to impose blind confidence in those who profess to show on short and easy paths. When you have acquired the strength to travel, then the Teacher who is always waiting patiently, though unseen and unrecognised, will grasp your hand and lead you onward.

To forget the body, or both body and Emotional Body, and slip into the dreaming, or the deep-sleeping state, is not difficult. We do it every night by the processes of nature, unknowing what we are doing. We can learn to do it, as soon as we have developed certain powers of concentration, or by the use of some of the many arts — of which ceremonial is one — which inhibit waking consciousness. But the experiences we get in such ways are not helping towards the goal. It is easy to see, that one may retire to some spot remote from the world and spend a lifetime in Astral experiences, but yet find oneself as helpless and unwise as a child driven by some cataclysm into the waking world. But it is otherwise when the Spiritual Consciousness is awake. When it is our worlds may crumble about us, but we will remain serene in unshakeable wisdom.

It is taught, commonly, that by the use of ceremony a certain force can be brought into our world. This is true, but there is little understanding concerning what takes place. All force manifesting in the world has its ultimate source in the Universal Spirit, the centre of all things, and of everything. This force is, in essence, absolute good. But are its manifestations all good? If not, why not?

The answer is this and it should not be hard to understand by those who have given even a slight attention to the Philosophy of existence. Spirit in any aspect, that of consciousness, force or any other, cannot manifest apart from a base or vehicle. This vehicle, or contrasting medium, is in the primordial manifestation universal substance — the root of matter. In later manifestations the vehicle, or vehicles, are the FORMS which Consciousness, according to its location, gives to matter. Force then manifests through one form or another, and the shape it takes is conditioned by the form which it appears through. The universal electric fluid is present everywhere, but it is not apparent, except through one instrument or another, which evinces the power in this form or that.

Universal force operates through forms. Those forms may be of any character from plant to man and upward to highest Archangel. And those forms are one and all conscious entities, or centres of consciousness, their nature being dependent upon the plane in which consciousness is centred, they are the instruments through which force does its work. From this it will be seen how and why the hierarchies of so-called spiritual entities are said to be “CREATORS” of the manifest worlds. But they are not truly creators any more than an electric bell is the creator of the sound it produces. Man in his sphere of consciousness is the creator of the world about him, exactly as higher entities are the creators of man and his world in higher aspects. The difference between man and those who are specifically called creators or builders is simply, that man is without conscious knowledge of his function, as a creative instrument, and his will is diffused and works not as true will, but according to the wanderings of his Desire nature; whereas the higher kingdoms are conscious of their function, as instruments of the Divine Life, or Force (the terms are synonymous in this connection), and their will, which bears no comparison to anything which man can conceive under this name, but is simply a directive faculty, acts wholly in harmony with Divine Law.

[Meditate a little upon WILL. True Will appears to human consciousness as NO Will, because it is not directed in opposition to anything. Human will is manifest only in contrast to something.]

The human instrument therefore becomes the vehicle, or transmitter of Spiritual Life or Force into the world, and this Life or Force manifests only in accordance with the nature of its vehicle. This Force is ever present, transmitted from instrument to instrument — from Archangel to Angel, from perfect man to lower man, in his multitudinous degrees. It cannot flow direct from its source to man, nor yet from the higher angelic kingdoms. From man it can flow into the world, only in the character which man's nature bestows on it. A ceremony, therefore, or any other like art, depends for effect simply and solely upon its effects on those participating in it. If it stills man's outer nature and permits his consciousness to retreat to its inmost citadel, then that man becomes as the Angels are, a simple, willing instrument of Divine Life and Law. But if it merely paralyses it in the body or holds it motionless in the senses, the man becomes a mere obstruction, or a mere instrument of sensuousness, if not sensuality. If, again, it causes his consciousness to withdraw to the Astral Plane, he becomes the conductor of Astral vibrations into the world, in other words, becomes a creator of emotional (or perhaps passionate) atmosphere.

Ceremonies in which untrained individuals of varying natures participate seldom produce any but negative results, because the varying instruments throw the outgoing vibrations into so many varying forms, that they conflict and neutralise one another.

A ceremony is a powerful instrument of good, only to the extent that it aids in a retreat to, or towards, the centre of being in continuous consciousness. To still sensuous perception, astral vibration, and mental activity, is its function, thus allowing the "I" to retreat to its central citadel. To maintain certain consciousness of "I" but to lose consciousness of form is the true indication of motion towards that centre which when reached makes one the perfect willing instrument of divine life and law.

That which has been said is all the neophyte needs to understand until he has passed from neophyteship to discipleship. Western students, however, may have been taught, or may have imbibed false ideas concerning this subject, which the foregoing will not suffice to eliminate. There is the belief among many, that by means of certain ceremonies, "spirits" or phantoms of the dead may be invoked; or that visions of the past or the future may be conjured up for the learner; or that other visions intended to teach him certain lessons, or to submit him to certain experiences in the nature of tests, may be presented to him; and many other like things.

In all such ideas there is buried a spark of truth, as there is in every form of belief whatsoever. But those ideas as commonly accepted are exoteric forms — in many cases so gross as to merit only the name of superstition. Let it be remembered that there is no superstition so gross but that hidden within it is the spark of truth.

Without going too deep into esotericism, which would merely bewilder without illuminating, it may be said that one and all of the phenomena mentioned are produced simply by compelling, or permitting consciousness to shift, its centre from sub-plane to sub-plane. Let it be remembered that in fullest waking consciousness on this plane, our senses do not allow us to perceive anything like all there is. Most persons never experience more than a few narrow sub-planes of the earth plane in any one life. Now a ceremony may be so arranged, as to inhibit consciousness of the everyday and so allow it to centre itself upon others. Thus experiences are widened, and the uninstructed may believe that other

worlds have opened to view, yet all they really see is another aspect of this plane. Put baldly and briefly, the entire effect of ceremony lies in its enthralling, and holding at a standstill one or other sets of perceptions, and thus allowing consciousness to shift and bring others into use.

When it is said that ceremonial can exert an influence over the elemental, or even the angelic kingdoms, something is said which is an exoteric version of the truth. The effect is not on beings apart from and external to man, as the saying forces the uninstructed pupil to believe. The effect is on man's own nature. I will not elaborate, but will simply say that Man being the Microcosm must, as much as the Macrocosm, have in his constitution all the hosts of heaven.

But though I hint at such things, it is not done to lead learners to think that they can deal with them by acquiring a superficial aptitude in the use of ceremony, or any other art.

The occult arts are for the use of those only, who have risen to mastery of their own lower selves.