Approaching Occult Studies

The Occult—what a loaded term! It means so many different things to do many people, that the dictionary definition just doesn’t suffice. And if that isn’t bad enough, just try figuring out where to start your research; assuming one even has an interest in the subject. Adding to this are the confusing terms ‘Esoteric’ and ‘Spirituality.’ Are these different subjects or different approaches to the same subject? Does this form some sort of approach to religion or is this separate from religion altogether?

As this can all be so overwhelming, and it is yet followed by the larger issue: how to get started. And even worse, where can on go to get accurate information on the subject, so as not to waste much time and energy? One will quickly find that it is necessary to seek out some sort of teacher or advisor to get started on the right foot. Yet the problem here is that so many so-called gurus may not themselves, have any idea of what the actual Western Mystery Tradition really holds and may be victims themselves of so many fads and fantasias; even themselves having but a prurient or shallow interest and only seeking vain ends.

One is forced to wonder, is the Occult just a means to women, wealth and power? And further, does one need a teacher or guru and whom to trust? With all these misdirected teachers out there, one can’t help but find the blind leading the blind. And for many, the first stop on this confusing ‘magickal mystery tour’ will be through pop fads and Pagan groups. So note here, Paganism and Witchcraft are not Occult—just populist religion for a small and growing movement of people disenfranchised from Christian culture.

After you get through all of this and you’re read to read your first book on the subject, you’ll find the book not only deals with one small aspect of the Occult, but it is also loaded with terms and phrases that you’ll need to look up in order to understand the ideas being presented. It’s here that you’ll begin to see the need to learn to read without comprehension. You’ll also find references to other texts, which then you should read; taking you back and forth from book to book. There is simply no escaping this; the subject is just too vast to possibly do otherwise.

All this misdirection is almost completely unavoidable, and one simply has to jump in and play the trickster’s game, as this is the most mercurial of endeavors. You’ll find yourself having travelled dead-end paths; you’ll meet social deviants and other maladroit miscreants with no way to avoid them. Yet believe it or not, they will bring valuable lessons with them. It is the way of Mercury—the god of Magick.

So let’s get some basics down here. The Occult; meaning ‘hidden’ is a label for the Western Mystery Tradition. This has also been called Magick; a word that means wisdom. Its wisdom has been considered ‘esoteric’ knowledge about the true nature of man, the world, spirit and God—thus, a spirituality and science that has also, since been given the label ‘Scientific Illuminism.’

For many, the scientific knowledge begins with Pythagous and his mystery school, the slogan of which as ‘Know Thyself’—a loaded phrase. Others take this back further to Egyptian and even pre-Egyptian mystery schools. Later, this was codified into what is today, called the Qabalah—a system of Gnosis and revelation built on culture, science, the humanities and religion or a mythopoeic paradigm.

This whole subject has always been shrouded in mystery for what some have claimed to be good reason—that its knowledge is dangerous. But the danger is not what one would think. The suggestion that one would obtain power that might be abused, though generally assumed, is absurd on the face of it. Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, as it has been said. So that if anyone had ever managed to acquire supernatural powers, they would inevitably be corrupted and a reign of omnipotent evil would hold this planet in a permanent and unyielding grip.

This superstition, even that any supernatural force exists at all, is another example of the trickster at play. And this power, being considered so evil has kept the mystery of the Occult shrouded in taboos of Satanic horror and absolute evil. These taboos were created by Christian culture to keep people focused on the state religion, which itself, is a superstitious model used to garner political power. So, the real danger is that you will free yourself from the state machine and become a heretic—one who thinks for oneself.