

GOOD HEAVENS TODAY



PRIMITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS
AND MODERN MAGICAL TRAINING
Hermetic Order of the Temple of Starlight®

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PRIMITIVE CONSCIOUSNESS AND MODERN MAGICAL TRAINING

Ina Cüsters-van Bergen

Often people wonder about the use of magic in modern times. The first question they wonder about is that they regard the use and the believe in magic as something of a long past area of development of humanity. Then of course they are surprised to find out that in our time and age, in western countries well-educated people not only believe in the effectiveness of magic but also practice it, and even teach it. Is magic based on superstition or is there a reality behind its practice. Does magic has its use in a modern society? What do I need to do to get it to work for me?



These are often the questions with which seekers approach the modern temples and magical schools. They are willing to give magic the benefit of the doubt because otherwise they would not have applied at all. The first thing a magical school needs to do these days is set straight what magic is and what it is not. Students come with Hollywood images in their minds, the last episode of Charmed or Buffy the Vampire Killer. They hope by weaving their magical wands miracles will come down like a lightning flash.

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The Roots of Magic

Magic developed in primitive societies. It is difficult to trace back when it actually developed. In the oldest primitive rock paintings we see that magic already played a big role hunting tribes. We are talking about societies of at least 40,000 BC. This means that magic developed before writing, and writing developed from magic. It is one of the great inventions, which developed from magic. And maybe you can imagine what impact the development of writing had in ancient societies, when you think about the development of Internet in modern days.

From the period after the invention of writing –and we are talking now about 3,200 BC in Sumeria- we can follow the development of societies and the development of consciousness of the ancients and compare this with ourselves today, because we have documents that explain their way of thinking.

Alive and divine

The spirit of primitive people worked entirely different from our modern conscious mind. They did not have a central consciousness. All layers of consciousness were 'open' and projected outwards. Trees and birds were spiritual entities, and the entire natural environment was full of unseen forces. Written language developed from images and symbols, which were a representation of the forces our ancestors felt around them. Written language is in its first stage of existence a development from the cave paintings, which were used by primitive hunters to help them magically to capture animals and get control over their natural environment. The first paintings were magical tools and so were the first letters. Letters which form words developed from drawings of objects of the natural environment. The first written texts are written in a language of picture symbolism. The ancients used cave paintings to focus. So when a primitive tribe wanted to hunt an ox, the ox was drawn on a wall. The picture not only represented the ox, it was the call sign for the ox to appear in flesh. Pictures, and later the letters that developed from these pictures were thought to be so powerful that in the old kingdom of Egypt we find that a letter representing 'snake' or 'lion' was cut into two pieces and a little knife was drawn to prevent the lion to manifest itself as a result of drawing the picture.

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The Gods are raw powers

Try to imagine yourself in a world without a feeling of “I am” in which unknown forces influence events. You do not ‘fall in love’ but the goddess Hathor influences you. Images and ideas came directly from the ‘higher planes’, in the form of energies, which manifested in the environment surrounding them and these were translated into images, sounds and associations, which explained their environment and their experiences. An ancient Greek person would not say ‘I am angry’, but rather something like ‘I am under the influence of Ares’. This does not mean that he took no responsibility for his actions. That is a modern concept the primitive brain would not even grasp. They experienced themselves in the middle of a field of chaotic and divine forces, and they tried to get an understanding of those forces by picturing them, talk to them, pray to them and make sacrifices to them. In this way the gods came into being and they pictured them and gave them human qualities to get a better understanding of those force fields. They categorised similar forces together in association chains, and in this way the gods got their attributes, their sacred plants, the animals connected to them. But by doing this they did something else as well; they developed a system in which the powerful subconscious layers of the mind could be influenced and educated.

The Subconscious Mind

Humanity reacted on those vibrations and developed with help of the higher planes a spiritual system. They were technically not as far developed as we are nowadays, but that does not mean that they were less intelligent. They concentrated their entire intelligence on developing systems by which they could influence those powerful layers of the mind which we call ‘the sub consciousness’, to which they were exposed every minute of the day, and which they experienced more consciously than we do nowadays. They were not only learning how to sew crops and domestify animals, but they ploughed and planted their own brains as well and domestified themselves. And from these processes the first cities came into being, the first organised countries and the first stable cultures.

The fact that we do not pay much attention to these subconscious forces does not mean that they have disappeared. These layers can still be found within our consciousness and they are gigantic forces, they are still a fertile ground

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for development when we learn how to handle them. When we look at a problem we look at it from all sides. We think about the problem and we follow the trace of logic and think about all the sensible things we could do to solve the situation. And of course a lot of problems can be solved in this way. We can also feel about a problem and experience all the emotions, which are connected to the situation we want to solve. We can even go through and from thinking to feeling about a problem and make a decision about the outcome of that thinking process. But we neglect a very powerful undercurrent, and that is the river of images and associations that are connected to what we call the 'subconscious' nowadays which we call 'childish' and of whom we say 'it is just fantasy' or 'just a dream'.

The hidden Powers of the Mind

How powerful this part of us is becomes clear when because of certain courses the pressure in the subconscious mind builds up like in a pressure cooking pan and the lid is blown off; a person gets psychotic. This undercurrent is always active, whether we are aware of it or not. The subconsciousness is not only the 'trash can' of suppressed traumatic experiences, but it is also the hidden source of all the undeveloped talents and the motor behind some very powerful automatic healing processes. It is the area of consciousness where we can sleep a night to solve a problem, it is the area which can be influenced by hypnosis and autohypnosis, it is the area where the placebo works when the mind has responded to a powerful suggestion, it is the area where according to the ancients the Gods existed, the area we now call 'archetypical'.

The subconscious brain is like a little child; it is fond of images and stories. But by treating it like a little child and not taking it seriously we are throwing away the child with the bathwater. Nowadays we suffer from the fact that the great religion in the West who had to be the guardian and teacher of these ancient spiritual systems developed itself as a monopolist and ruled like a dictator for several hundreds of years. As a reaction to this suppression comes the cry 'God is death' and the churches gradually loose their power over society. Science develops itself gradually as the new religion, closely followed by Economy. Now, I am not degrading the wonderful gifts that science has given to society, and the understanding of the powers of economy has brought material wealth to the lands in the west. But we are also sacrificing to these new religions. We sacrifice the dignity of our animals, we sacrifice our natural environments. We sacrifice

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silence, beauty, and the experience of Mystery and nowadays we are even sacrificing the bonds with our own children by handling them over to crèches in very early stages of their lives because we now need two people who work to pay for the mortgage of the house. We are sacrificing our social lives and our time to play and rest to pay for the new car and the Internet computer.

Cultivation of the Soul

But what is left when we would take that away? There is emptiness on the other side. We are not taught to experience our values. We are not taught to cultivate our inner lives. We are not taught to arouse that sense of Mystery and drink from the Source of Eternal Youth. The ways of the churches and religious sects are looked upon with suspicion, because when you deliver yourself into those hands you lose your independency, you get 'brainwashed' and become a victim to the moods and views of the leader.

At the same time people who are looking for the Mysteries of the Mind turn away from both the churches and society and let themselves float on the hypes of the New Age movement. In this area pearls can be found but also a lot of nonsense is sold for a lot of money. There are no norms for quality, and like in a lot of areas of modern life people want to buy their enlightenment quick. They don't want to work towards it, but they want to buy the ingredients, mix it with hot water and drink it like instant coffee; and the commercial 'initiation' is born.

Spiritual Craftsmanship

On the other hand the spiritual society suffers from the idea that true spirituality has to be offered for free to be truly spiritual. This comes from the idea that spiritual systems educate the non-material values and that a true spiritual leader thus has to live in poverty to be a living example for this idea when he wants to be taken as a serious representative for a worthy system. Adapting this idea would mean that spiritual teachers have to have another profession to earn their money to make a living. And this would mean that we lay the development of our inner lives in the hands of

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amateurs. We don't want an amateur psychologist to meddle with our minds, so why would we want a spiritual teacher to be an amateur?

Spirituality is a training of consciousness

A spiritual teacher has to be a professional and a guide who shows you how you can develop the higher powers of your own mind. Who does not make you dependent on him, who does not use his students to caress his own ego. A person who has walked the road himself and who knows the pitfalls. Someone who knows how the system works. It has to be somebody who is able to translate the ancient techniques to modern terms so that they become accessible to the modern mind. He has to be able to show you the road so that you come in contact with those ancient powerful areas of the brain yourself, so that you get access to the wealth and powers of those parts of yourself and can put them to good use in your own life.

This was the idea behind the ancient system of initiations. In order to get initiated –and that also meant to teach others how to develop the powers of the mind- one had to undergo a training that took years and that started often in early childhood. An initiation is not a favour granted from one friend to another. An initiation also cannot be bought. You can buy somebody to perform the 'trick' for you, somebody who got hold of an initiation ritual or ancient symbols. But that does not mean that you are truly initiated. The most innocent outcome of an initiation too early is that nothing happens at all; in a worst case scenario an initiation given too early blows the lid off the pressure cooker. Initiation is not a goal; it is a process, in which there are stages that can be recognized by other initiates.

When a certain state of the mind is achieved an initiation ritual can be done to give the mind access to deeper layers of the mind. An initiation ritual is both recognition of a stage in development and a kick in the but. And above all; working towards an initiation is a lot of work, and the big surprise after having received the initiation is that you discover that the workload has doubled.

The Highways of the Mind

The value even nowadays of an ancient magical spiritual training is that it puts people into contact with the 'higher areas', the leading highways of the mind that inspire and cause development. But a word of warning is needed here; working

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with the ancient techniques without knowledge of how these powers work is like touching a high voltage wire in the innocent assumption that they are just a thread. You can chew off more than you can bite, some people are very sensible to the ancient spiritual exercises, and it can be a risk to dabble with the powerful forces of the subconscious mind. But when the exercises are done in the right sequence and in the right tempo they are perfectly safe.

In order to come in contact with the hidden powers of the subconscious mind we have to put ourselves in the state of mind the people had when they cultivated those powers, because they were the specialists. They lived with those powers every day and got to know them very well, and cultivated working with them. The ancient mystery systems are developed in the Golden Age of cultural and religious development; the times of the ancient Mystery Schools. We have to train our minds gradually to get used again to get access to these parts of our brain in a safe way. And this means work. It means that you start to raise the little child of your subconscious mind and give it a proper education. You have to take it to school and teach it the alphabet of the language of the unconsciousness; symbolism. Every symbol is a container of power; the only thing you have to learn yourself is how to unpack it. It still contains the same amount of power as the first rock paintings had for the ancients, and the first letters, which formed from symbols. We did not lose this primitive part of the brain; it has just sunk to deeper areas of the mind.

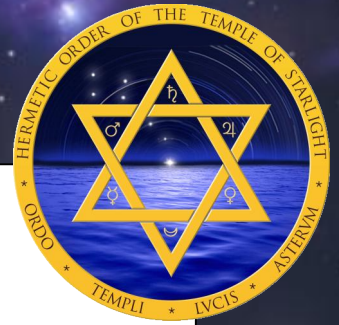
This type of work is not done with the logical side of the brain, but by means of the association chains which the subconscious mind will form by itself when it gets a little bit of training. And gradually the language of the ancient initiates throughout history and from all religions will start to make sense. Through meditation on symbols, through the unfolding experiences in ritual, by making use of the fact that the child in your mind loves to play with beautiful toys like wands, chalices, robes and all the other paraphernalia the subconscious mind will start to respond to your questions and will bring up adequate answers from the deepest layers of your mind. It will unfold gradually and start to produce mysterious images with hidden layers of meaning, which will gradually turn into true visions and ecstatic experiences. These are the true treasures of spiritual development, because it means that regardless of whatever situation you are in, you can always feed on the beauty of the Higher Planes. You are educating the little child of the subconscious mind towards the full power of the Higher Self; the Holy Guardian Angel and you work towards a conscious contact with this force field.

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Hermetic language

When we read the texts from the ancient initiates we have to be aware of the fact that language is used differently. The past societies had different associations with certain words and they had a totally different perspective of their environment. For example in Egypt we are told by Egyptologists that it is a dead-culture. I don't want to deny it fully, because the dead were treated with all respect and with an enormous amount of effort the Egyptians took care of the fact that they would arrive in the after world and being taken care fore. But if we read the word 'dead' in the ancient documents we have to be aware of the fact that it had a much broader meaning for them than it has for us now. The source of the difference is that same consciousness that works through symbols and connects one thing with another. They had access to fewer words than we have now. They did not need a word for 'microwave' because there existed none. Language developed slowly but this meant that one word had more meanings and often layers of meaning. Death was regarded as being not present in the 'here-and-now'.

The Bodies of Light

In the old languages we find that their view on consciousness differs from ours. They made a gradual distinction between change, sleep, trance, death and illumination but for all these states of mind they used the word 'death'. The differences between these states would be indicated by using the words for the magical bodies, in the Egyptian tradition they are called Ka, Ba, Akh, Bennu and so on. In the ancient Jewish tradition they are the Ruach, the Yechida, the Neshamah, the Chajah and the Nephesh. They indicated depth of being 'not here and now', the depth of the meditation state, and by this indirectly the level of development of the initiate.

An example of the different worldview of the ancients is by looking at how they treated their dead and how their ancestors remained a part of the society. When someone of our loved ones is dead we would say that we still think about them. Some people even in our culture claim to become visited by their dead relatives, but modern psychiatry regards this phenomena as 'widows hallucinations'. But the Egyptians would tell you that they were visited by the Ka of the ancestors, and they did everything they could think of to make these visits possible. They offered food and drink to their dead ancestors, and they made false doors in the mastaba's in order to make it possible for the Ka's to find a way to the earth.

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Concepts of Reality

In modern magic we tap into those old layers of consciousness. Think about your dreams. We say 'it was just a dream'. But the individual in his dreams has a subjective experience, which is just as real at that time during sleep as what we experience during the day. The experiences are as real as going to the shop, but on another level of our consciousness. And this is what we have to relearn ourselves again; to take these experiences seriously and shifting between the planes of consciousness. Then we can make a full profit of the powers of the Undercurrent and put them into full use for the sake of the full development of the individual soul.

'Magic is the Art of changing Consciousness at Will' wrote Dion Fortune. The benefit of changing your consciousness is that you become able to change streams in your undercurrent of the sub consciousness that block you in your development. This is the goal of High Magic; this is what is meant by the Great Work, to make of yourself the best person that you can become by unfolding your talents. This did not change over the years. It still works for everyone who wants to put the effort in.

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Ina Cüsters-van Bergen is the Magister and the Director of Studies of the Hermetic Order Temple of Starlight®. She teaches the Western Mystery Tradition. Ina is a so called Cosmic Mediator and a Third Degree Initiate. She is a very experienced practicing ritual magician. Her lineage comes from the Golden Dawn via Dion Fortune, W.E. Butler and Dolores Ashcroft-Nowicki.

Ina is a trained psychiatric therapist, sociotherapist, and healthcare manager. She is a certified NLP practitioner. She designs all her training modules in such a way that they integrate modern therapeutic systems and archaic magical systems such as Qabalah and Ceremonial Magic into one system. In this way your spiritual practice increases emotional, mental and spiritual health and growth.

Ina is the author of the Solo Magical Training of the Hermetic Order of the Temple of Starlight, called 'The Order of the Exalted Land' and the author of the book 'The Temple of High Magic', ISBN-13: 978-1-59477-308-2

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Ina teaches spiritual Ceremonial Magic through intensive training weekends all over Europe.

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