

The Call of Isis

By: Olivia Robertson

CHAPTER 6 **INITIATION OF THE MOON**

We are seated in the library of the castle, in group meditation. Group meditation is more difficult, I have found, than directed trance. For in directed trance the psychic traveller is in constant touch with the Operator, and receives guidance. At any moment, if the experience becomes too much, he can be brought back. But some who have had successful trance experience find, when left to themselves in meditation, that unpleasant, even horrific visions can come to them, resembling waking nightmares.

And it is an ordeal for someone, untrained except through studying a few books, to sit alone and in silence, allowing hidden depths of consciousness to unfold. If some expansion of consciousness should occur, this can prove overwhelming.

A half-way stage between directed trance experience and solitary meditation, is group meditation. Here the travellers set forth together in shared imagining, concentrating on a chosen area for contemplation. Then comes the silence during which each individual treads his chosen path alone. But, at the end of a stipulated time, say ten minutes to half-an-hour, the leader of the group calls the wandering souls back. Symbolism is unravelled, and points of cross-reference discovered. It is diversity within a framework of unity.

When I lead a group, I describe the same imaginary Temple or garden that I use in individual work for one person. I invoke Deity, and ask for the aid of Helpers. I then describe as vividly as I can the chosen scene, and ask my fellows in the circle to imagine this themselves. Beyond the Temple or garden, I say, is a pleasant landscape. Here each person may go forth on his chosen path, seeking guidance and inspiration. As some may enter deep trance, I stipulate that at the end of a certain period of silence, my voice will call them back to the set scene, in which we will send forth healing thoughts for others.

It was in group meditation in the library that Fiona gave us her report of the Temple of the Moon. Our library is an oblong room, lined with books, and the furnishings are golden, light brown and green; It is on the second story of the Castle, with a battlemented balcony overlooking a terrace, and the long sombre line of the yew walk. In the evenings, when we had our meditations, the shadow of the old part of the castle lay lengthily aslant the lawn; and the woodpigeons and the rooks would call from their wilderness beyond the yew walk. The members of this particular group of sessions were Alexander, Valentine, Hari - an Indian Vedantist, Nicholas, and Fiona herself. Nicholas was taking his turn at being group leader, and so sat in the East, robed in white. However he did not remain there in Fiona's visions. In her first report she said Nicholas disappeared, and his place on the caned high-backed chair of honour was taken by a Moon Lady. This Lady had raven hair, silvery skin and wore a crescent Moon head-dress. The rest of us remained in her vision, and she assumed that Nicholas must be walking around outside somewhere. We were dressed, she said, in a mixture of Egyptian and late Graeco-Roman attire. She saw a strange young man as Gate-keeper at the Western door, who wore brown leather and held a sword. He knocked on the ground twice to begin proceedings.

My brother Alexander was facing the Lunar Priestess in the West by the door. He was dressed as an Egyptian, Fiona said, and held a staff with two points at the top. I was seated on the Lady's right, and was wearing a neat wreath of gilded leaves, and was busy writing notes. I did this in the earth library anyway! Valentine, Hari and herself were wearing Greek-style costume, We seemed to be an eclectic lot, rather as we were in daily life, I thought. I could imagine a liberal minded group of Graeco-Romans at the time of the decline of the Roman Empire, practising Egyptian-type rites in a pleasant temple attached to a white marble villa.

For the visionary Temple in which we sat was large and circular, according to Fiona, and was made of white marble. The floor was checked like a chess-board, black and white.

The Moon Priestess, during each vision, would first walk around the circle, sprinkling something like mica or powdered silver out of a little pot hanging at her waist. She would look at us as if to see how we were. Then we would group ourselves around a cauldron in the centre of the room, with a small fire burning in it. The Lady would sprinkle purple powder on to the little fire that made it spurt into flame. We would watch closely, waiting. At last, at the climax, from the fire would glide a golden serpent. The ritual would end as it had begun, with the Gate-keeper knocking on the ground, this time once.

None of us knew what this could be about; but we enjoyed the glamour of Fiona's description. I said that Fiona was building us a nice white Flying Saucer in the form of a band-box white Temple, and that we all took off in this for a psychic trip, duly returning in time for supper!

Particularly compelling were the later sessions in which Fiona reported that the scene was changing. I was reminded of my favourite 'Through the Looking-Glass,' when Alice began to move from one square to another. For some time Fiona had reported seeing a mysterious curtained door in the East. Later she had glimpses of a long dark passage . . .

As this resembled a shift into deeper trance of an individual percipient, I was aware that our whole group might well be entering another level of awareness. Instead of the usual silent Gate-keeper Guide, Fiona reported seeing a mysterious bird. He was snowy white, she said, with a golden beak and golden legs.

In our final session, she found herself in the dark passage and, through a narrow window, she had a glimpse of the Priestess of the Moon sailing away in a long black boat on a deep blue sea. She was rowed by bronze-coloured men with gold head-bands, like Egyptians. The Priestess raised a white arm in salutation. We had left the Temple of the Moon.

It was only after many years that I realized that we ourselves in that group had moved from our preoccupation with the psychic world, into the more intellectual sphere of the Occult. From passive mediumistic experience we were moving into a more active participation in the esoteric field.

Yes, but had we successfully passed a lunar initiation? For not one of the three Worlds, the physical, the psychic and the spiritual is more important than the other. Man has a tripartite being, body, soul and spirit, and a weakening of one of these leads to unbalance, even a fall back into an earlier stage. For a person can be successfully developed in one sphere, have a brilliant intellect - and yet be lamentably deficient in emotion. Yet emotion well used is the fuel power of the will.

Another sort of unbalance manifests in an emotional person who lives in a Wagnerian state of turbulent passion, without the controlling power of the mind. As for a lack of artistic appreciation in someone otherwise clever and feeling, this can lead to such unattractiveness that the person can even make goodness and knowledge seem boring.

Of course each individual takes life's initiations in a different way, and in different order. A tidy way is to control the emotions by the mind, and from there develop cosmic consciousness. In my own case I began with mystical experience and from there I tried to interpret through the 'sun level' of the mind; and finally realized the extreme importance of the emotional 'astral' sphere of the moon.

The final result must be the same: in one's own unique way to synthesize the three worlds within oneself and from thence to relate successfully to all those whose lives in any way touch one's own, whether human or animal, plant or the elements themselves.

Nonetheless, although many prefer to start with the Spirit or with the mind, most people with whom I have worked feel that they cannot deal with either of these states, without first dealing with their feelings. And, when in trance, this takes the form of a birth experience through the element of water.

I have not observed the need for birth experience in women percipients; but each man I worked with, young or middle-aged, found himself as a small boy in his beginning trance experiences. The little boy would be poor and dirty and lost. At first when this happened I thought it might be a case of reincarnation. But the subsequent adventures were so clearly natal, that I had to face the fact that these men were bent on being born again in a more satisfactory manner!

To take the experience of Owen. Having begun as the poor Arab boy and grown into a youth, guided by the Lady of the Water-jar, suddenly in one of our sessions he began a new trend. It was the Lady of the Doves who for him brought Ordeal by the element of water; though for him the ordeal was not very unpleasant. He found himself as a youth standing by a pool, and the Lady of the Doves was facing him across the water. She told him to undress and bathe in the pool. As he was modern in outlook, Owen was puzzled by the action of the Lady as he undressed and stood naked. She covered her face with her great white wings - and I felt here the Moorish influence of the veiled face. Perhaps the gesture had a deeper symbolism. Then Owen entered the pool . . .

Now I could feel, as he lay on the library couch, that Owen was entering into a deeper state of trance. There was the usual altered rate of breathing. At these times I myself had a curious feeling of dual consciousness, as if I were not only sitting in the darkened room with my notebook, but was also projected into the trance vision, helping to shape and guide if need be.

"I've got right under the water!" said Owen. "I've gone through the bottom of the earth. Now I am crawling down a very narrow black tunnel. It is very narrow. I can hardly move. But I've got to move on. Strange . . . I have become a baby."

He seemed in no particular discomfort but was concentrating intently on his struggles. I waited patiently. Both of us were puzzled. I did not see why Owen had to turn into a baby, just when he had grown from the little Arab into a young man. I was used to people going down long dark passages, but this seemed more like the heavy and dangerous task of a coal-miner burrowing into the earth. I wondered what Owen was up to, and whether to help. But he seemed determined to press on unassisted. Then he suddenly cried:

"I see the Light."

I was relieved. I was thinking of mundane time, of supper! There was silence; then he said:

"I'm looking out from the mouth of a cave. I'm looking down on a lot of people. They look like early Druids or something like that. The men have long grey beards and wear white robes, and the women have long garments. What they are doing is to hail the four quarters. They are turning to

each quarter in turn to hail the sun; and I am afraid that when they turn in my direction, they may see that I am spying on them. I am afraid of falling . . ."

It was strange that though Owen lay rigid in trance I felt that exciting things were happening to him. Then:

"I fell right down from the tunnel into a cave." He said. "I tumbled down into the midst of them, but they are not angry. They have picked me up. It's all right. They are examining me . . ."

And so through the mediatorship of the Lady of the Doves, Owen felt himself reborn into the world of the Ancients. From then on he continued his adventures as an adult, still faithful to his earliest intention of seeking the Holy Grail. But I felt that already he had psychologically achieved the Cup of Water. He did not again find himself as an unsure boy.

The final apotheosis of Owen's lunar initiation was the coordination of the three aspects of Eve as One. This was near the end of our course of sessions and, appropriately it was the autumn.

"I find myself in a dark cave," he said. "It is very frightening, because here are three shapes in the darkness, which I can only dimly make out as women. When my eyes get adjusted to the darkness I will try to describe them.

"The first one is very young and she is veiled. I can't see any glimpse of her face. The second one is completely wrapped in a black shawl. The third is just a black huddle on the floor of the cave. Ah, now I can see her!" I felt Owen's recoil. "She has the head of a black panther!"

After this not very heartening apparition of the Triple Hecate, Past, Present and Future, Owen became aware of the Sage behind him. One of the women gave the Sage his own Moon Brooch. I wondered if Owen would stop here, and return from trance. But in this event I felt that in future he would turn more and more to some spiritual male Master, and have a very natural prejudice against The Fates, and possibly women generally. He would not have passed his feminine initiation, the transmutation of the emotions.

However, the Sage beckoned Owen to follow him, and they left the cave. I was interested to note that the Three Women came along too, and so were not left plotting in the cave, and so in Owen's subconscious up they all went into a high mountain, the Sage, the Women and Owen. And they stood, all five of them, waiting for the rising of the sun.

Slowly the darkness of night gave way to the first rays of the rose and orange dawn. And as the sun began to rise over the mountain, a golden disc appeared in the sky, and floated down towards them Owen said that a long-haired angel was within this fiery globe. And now a strange thing happened. The three women approached the golden disc as if to ascend into the sky. But first they turned round, and unveiled.

"The first young one," said Owen, "is unveiling her face. And I know her. She is the lady of the well, who gave me a drink from her water-jar. And now the old crone is becoming young. She has thrown off her black shawl. She is the redhaired lady with pearls in her hair, who has the two candlesticks and the golden cup with rubies. And the third one, the woman with the panther's head, she too is changing . . . Now she is a tall and stately Queen with long black hair. They are going upwards, they enter the golden globe, and it rises into the dawn sun-light.

"I am left standing with the Sage. And I hold my staff. I have the right to do so."

So Owen himself achieved the realization that was put into words at the end of his first session in an Arab village:

"Night and Day are one.
Sun and Moon are one.
"All things are One."

His next stage might unfold in good time. But not with me. Few people can attain beyond the sphere of the psychic; nor should they attempt to do so until they have realized consciousness beyond duality. No high-sounding occult school degrees give true degree. This is only gained through actual development; a natural growth from seed to flower. Real growth is true to nature.

Nonetheless, often unexpectedly, we find ourselves on the threshold of a further expansion of consciousness. We hold the dark key of the sphere of Psyche. We control the waves of the feelings. So may we find ourselves before a doorway with the sigil of the sun.