The Mystery Religions of the Ancients

http://www.GnosticStudies.org/Mysteries

Part 1 – Ancient Religions and Mystery Schools

Introduction: The Mysteries and their Purpose

- The Public and Private sides of Religious Forms (the Exoteric and the Esoteric)
- Religious Forms vs. Religious Principles (Religions as Cosmic Formulae)
- Seeking Knowledge ("The greater the effort, the greater the reward")
- Causes and Effects (The Laws of the Universe and the 'Exchange of Energies')

Education and Knowledge

- What is Knowledge?
- The Danger of having Knowledge without Love
- Higher Knowledge and the Mysteries
- The Philosophy of the Ancients ("To lift the soul back up from its fall"[1])

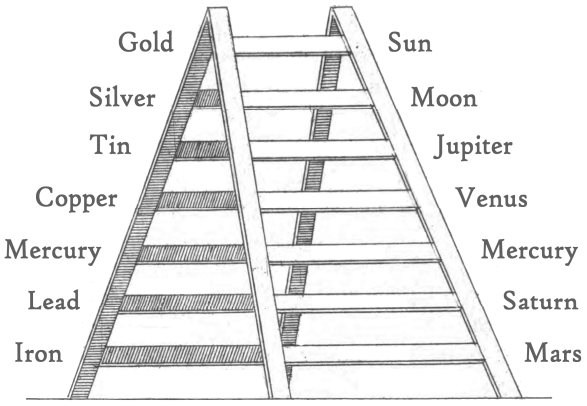
The Creation of the Universe through the Word or 'Verb'

- Examples of Creation from Egyptian, Jewish, Christian and Meso-American Sources
- The Ancient and Modern Understanding of Creation
- The Hebrew Kabbalah and the 'Name of God' (the 'Ineffable Name')
- Higher Knowledge and the 'Language of Nature'

Mystery Schools: Their Curriculum and Method of Progression

- The Goal of the Mysteries (Returning the Human Being to his Original State)
- The Dominion of Nature and of Oneself
- Requirements for a Candidate in the Mysteries (Physical and Spiritual Tests)
- Knowledge and Being (Transformation)
- The Development of Spiritual Force (the 'Awakening of the Consciousness')

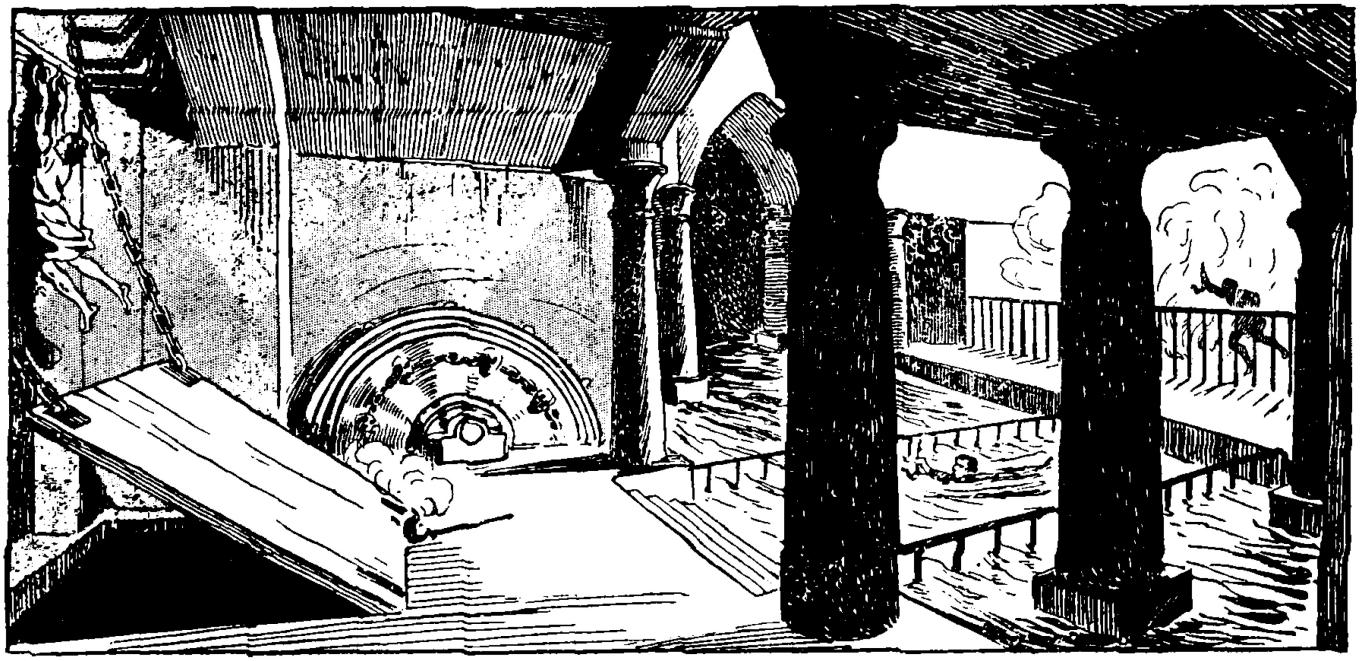
Philosophical Ladder arranged according to Earthly Value



The Ladder of the Soul's Ascension or 'the Marvelous Ladder'

- The Level of Being (or 'the Vertical')
- The 'Permanent Center of Gravity' (or 'Magnetic Center')
- Changing one's Level of Being (or Applying the Teachings so as to Transform Oneself)
  "In order to start being something we are not, we have to stop being what we are" or "We have to stop being what we are in order to start being what we are not."

[1] The ultimate design of the Mysteries, according to Plato, was to lead us back to the principles from which we descended…



Spiritual Requirements of the Mysteries (the Tests or Ordeals)

Dominating Nature meant that the Candidate had to dominate the 4 philosophical elements of Nature: Fire, Air, Water and Earth. These elements had their symbolism and correspondences under which they were concealed:

Element	Animal	Direction	Alchemy
Fire	A Lion	South	Sulfur
Air	An Eagle	East	Azogue or Azoth
Water	A Human	West	Mercury
Earth	A Bull	North	Salt



There was one symbol that combined these 4 symbolic animals together: the Sphinx.

The Development of Spiritual Force (Awakening Consciousness)

Authentic spiritual development is directly related to the 'Awakening of the Consciousness'. JD Buck defines consciousness as follows: "Consciousness is that living, active process, resulting in the growth of the soul, and in the increase of man's power to apprehend truth."

Gnosis explains the Consciousness as: "A very particular kind of apprehension or grasping of interior knowledge which is totally independent of mental activity." One of the foundational principles of the Mysteries is that the human being is 'fallen', lacks something or is incomplete in some way and that (in order to transform himself) the human being must *do* something about his present state.

Out of everything you have heard, the most important idea is that with certain knowledge and certain efforts the human being can develop, he can complete himself. The development of the human being is a process (which is not obligatory at all), and that passes through certain definite stages or steps.

The thing that we lack, that we need to develop, is our Consciousness. Consciousness is a force, and this force can only be developed by overcoming obstacles. If the human being understands the nature of the powers he can attain, it will be clear to him that they cannot be given. These powers must be developed by effort. This is the reason why one must 'buy' everything: nothing is given free. The most difficult thing is to learn how to 'pay'. We must learn how to 'pay' with effort: this is the 'exchange of energies'.