**Path of the Adept**

This path is not for everyone. It is for those who have come to realize that an inner world exists. This world is as real as the world we see, hear, feel, and touch. This inner world far surpasses in importance the external world of manifestation.

The ability to recognize the difference between these two worlds is the first clue for recognizing one who is on the path of Adept ship. The Adept understands that the outer world is unreal, an illusion. Only the inner world is real and true.

Adepts may be found playing many roles in the outer world. They are very much like actors. Adepts act out these many roles only because of another life they live on an inner plane which is both concurrent and coherent with the outer plane. The adept may be more accurately described as artist rather than actor. The adept knows that the outer life is unreal, merely an illusion. Nevertheless the Adept plays it well and conscientiously.

Each experience in the outer world has an inner lesson to advance the disciple. These experiences are opportunities to develop courage, endurance, wisdom, and other similarly desirable characteristics.

The greatest obstacle the Adept has to overcome is the immense and incessant pressure of public opinion, especially the opinions of the spiritually ignorant and the unenlightened.

How exactly does the Adept differ from the ordinary person? Fundamentally, it is a difference in attitude. The Adept lives to gain neither position nor honors. Rather, the Adept lives in accord with the principles of an inner world, principles unknown to the uninitiated. The disciple is always trying to develop some virtue such as love, for example, or patience, or tolerance.

Not all Adepts retire from the world, though some may. More likely, an Adept may be found mingling in the outer world and its various activities.

The invitation to become an Adept is only to those who desire to receive it. These are seekers of truth. They shall find the secrets of the Masters.

On the physical plane we consider the age of the body. On the spiritual plane we consider the age of the Soul. The Soul on the path begins to show signs of advancement in intelligence, emotional maturity, and spiritual power. This advancement has little or nothing to do with the worldly age of the personality.

What constitutes initiation as an Adept? Understand that it is an "inner" initiation. It's the opening of a door to the inner world, symbolically to represent "the opening of the doors of the mind". What constitutes this opening? Simply, it is the realization that there is another life to live other than this ordinary worldly life. This worldly life seems to pale next to the inner life to which we are suddenly attracted.

This realization may be called by different names. The Hindus refer to it as viveka (discrimination). Christians refer to as conversion. This latter is an apt word for the experience. It is a turning around of one's life, a change in direction. In the words of one of the Christian apostles: Set your affections on things above, and not on things of the earth.

Initiates begin by learning not to be swayed unduly by their emotions. They keep their expression governed by their mind, not by their feelings.

Next, they begin to bring the physical, astral and mental bodies in line. The astral is dominated by the emotions. The mental is the causal element of our being.

The initiate's consciousness becomes open to continual expansion. Yet, regardless how inclusive the consciousness becomes, the initiate never loses his or her individuality. This is the nature of the spiritual, an expanded consciousness and a well-grounded individuality.

The Adept comes to understand that matter is not evil, but merely an expression of Spirit. Matter may be said to be evil only when it hinders us on our way, when it becomes an obstacle to our enlightenment. Just as a knife may be said to be evil when we cut ourselves with it. Thus the disciple prays to be delivered from the false, the impermanent, and to be open to the true, the permanent, and the real. Each set of expressions is a set of synonyms for the same thing.

The initiate, accepting the invitation to become an Adept, prays with all his or her heart to be led from darkness to light. He yearns for knowledge of the path and the higher planes of existence to which it leads. Gradually, he realizes that each plane is quite out of all proportion and superior to the one below it.

Finally, the initiate desires to overcome death and to obtain the immortality in which the Adept firmly believes. Death to the Adept is a door into a higher and fuller life. We were not meant to live for all eternity in our present personality, but to evolve into a form more grand than we are yet capable of conceiving.