

PHYSIS
by
Godric Liddell

- Order of Nine Angles -

Physis
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PHYSIS - THE NEW MAGICK [Part I]

The essence of the magickal or Occult world-view is the connectedness of man and his surroundings - to earth, sky, stars and sun. Man can experience (usually by intuition) the forces of the cosmos. These forces are subtle and their understanding depends mainly on empathy.

Essential to this world-view is a representation of the many energies which run through the cosmos and man must be both logical and scientific in the sense of being rational. This representation is traditionally in the form of the seven-sphered 'Tree of Knowledge' with man, because he possesses the divine faculty of consciousness (and thus thought), the link between microcosm and macrocosm.

Man's goal is increased consciousness through development of thought and intuition. The goal is symbolized by the seven stages of magickal initiation. By evolution of consciousness man partakes, and makes possible, the evolution of the cosmos itself - and this because of the nature of consciousness. This evolution of consciousness is the journey, for an individual from the unconscious through the ego and the self to the divine.

Such an increased consciousness brings Wisdom and Wisdom is only possible through the achievement of harmony which in itself is only possible if both mind and the body of the individual are developed in accordance with the laws which govern the cosmos. To ignore the body - concentrating only on the mind as all so-called Occult bodies have done hitherto - is to bring disharmony.

True Magick (i.e. Natural Magick or 'Physis' enables the individual to develop that empathy with life and the cosmos which is the prelude to increased consciousness.. thought and its creation logic, enable that empathy to be understood as it must be understood if Wisdom is to be attained; without thought and logic empathy soon becomes superstition. Physis involves the development of a mind and body harmony through the rigours of physical discipline (a type of Martial art) and the intellectual challenge of the Star Game. The aim of Physis is quite simply to produce the next stage of human evolution - Homo Galactica.

PHYSIS - Part II (STRENGTH AND WISDOM THROUGH ACTION)

The very essence of Physis is motion. This is the opposite of most systems aimed at creating vital energy ('pneuma') - an expression of 'physis') where stillness is the aim.

Physis is a Western tradition, rooted in the Hellenic civilization, and as such derives from, and is suited to, the psyche of the West. By nature, we of the West are, and always have been, at our best, fiercely competitive and given to explosions of physical energy. Our instinct is to seek to know (like Faust), to overcome by the power of will all obstacles. Despite what other systems preach, there is nothing actually wrong with this, or with the spirit of adventure which makes us quest for things like Occult knowledge.

To be healthy is to be true to one's Destiny. It is a principle of life that while the Destiny of every individual is unique, destiny has its genesis in the civilization or culture to which one belongs. Thus, in order to understand one's destiny one must understand the civilization to which one belongs - its traditions, myths but perhaps more importantly its spirit. This is one of the functions of genuine esoteric teaching - to reach the essence of destiny hidden by outward appearance.

For us in the West, the way to create and enhance vital energy is through striving to achieve a goal. What this goal is, depends on the individual, and what is important about the goal is that it is striving to achieve it, via developing will and knowledge, that creates energy and enhances the life of the individual. Every Initiate will have their own goal - a long term one. Yet every Initiate must develop as well short-term goals in harmony with this. Such short-term goals, which enhance the following of the seven-fold way that leads to one's destiny, usually develop from Physis Training. These goals, and the striving for them, are the essence of Physis.

Thus, if the primary interest of an Initiate is magick, then the short-term goals could be conducting ceremonial ritual with the intent of creating magickal power and/or establishing some form of working occult group to practice magick.

If the primary interest of the Initiate is the Martial Arts, then the short-term goals, conducive to the overall aim (mastery of the art), might be specific training targets - e.g running a 4 minute mile, cycling 25 miles in under an hour or learning to master a specific weapon.

As such goals are achieved, then new ones are formed, and the striving begins again, until, as a result of such striving the individual is made aware of Destiny. Then there is stillness and the understanding of how the essence that is physis, which is timeless and still, is revealed through the motion and change.

There is no motion or vitality without stillness and there is no stillness without the profoundest motion. The striving for achievement that is the seven fold way is a means to this understanding.

The best form of striving is one that involves exertion of the body towards its limits and an intense concentration that goes beyond word, technique or style. The secret is to move, to exert the body with an inner stillness. If this is done, vitality arises of itself. Everything else is easy.

A TRAINING PROGRAMME

Daily:

2-3 mile run: or 10 miles cycling

Bodily exercises (suppleness/co-ordination), 15 minutes

Weekly:

Practice playing the Septenary Star Game - for at least 2 hours

15 mins "blindfold walking"* (Outdoors as isolated as possible)

6-10 mile run; or 30 miles cycling

Monthly:

Playing the Star Game to a conclusion with an opponent.

Endurance test a) walk 20 miles in 5 hours and b) run 15 miles or cycle 50 miles

Note 1: *Choose spot some distance away: blindfolded slowly walk to it, repeat (develops awareness of surrounding energies external to oneself).

Note 2: This is an example programme - the times/distances etc should be adjusted to suit the individual.

Note 3: fuller training programmes will be given in later issues of BALDER including Speed Training and The Nine Movements etc.

In the ancient world magic was essentially of three types: the first may be described as 'elemental' (or 'demonic'), the second as shamanistic, and the third as empathic.

Examples of the first type have come down to us in such works as the "De Mysteriis" of Iamblichus (a 'neo-Platonic' philosopher, died c.333 e.v. who wrote many works about Pythagoras) and in many magickal papyri (mostly of Egyptian origin or influence) that have survived. From the viewpoint of the history of magic (particularly the elemental type) these papyri are of exceptional interest. They were published in three volumes by Karl Preisendanz in 1928, 1931 and 1942 under the title "Papyri Graecae Magicae" Die griechischen Zauberpapyri". Copies of the third volume are extremely rare: at the time of writing even the British Library does not have a copy although there is one in the Ashmolean at Oxford. (*1)

The elemental/demonic type of magic is based in a belief in gods and demons, and the task of the sorcerer is that of learning to know the various demons, their powers, the 'spells' and charms which make him/her capable of controlling them. In origin, as the historical evidence shows, this type of magic derives from Egypt and Sumeria. For a long time, it was the most widely practiced form of magic in the West and Near East. At first it was not regarded as 'demonic' as we now understand that term - the 'demonic' element was a later development deriving from the Babylonian and then the Persian (for this latter, Zoroastrianism), this development being in essence a division of 'cosmic' and thus magickal forces into 'good' and 'evil' in the [sic. Ed]. The idea that magic is a means of defence against 'evil' spirits (and thus the use of those spirits or demons) is essentially Babylonian/Persian, and it was this later form, together with the shreds of the original Sumerian/Egyptian tradition, that was grafted onto the Hebrew qabala (and thus the Old Testament theology) to form the 'Grimoire' magic of the Middle Ages. It was this mish-mash which was 'revived' by Francis Barrett, Levi and the Golden Dawn. One of the features of this type of magic is the 'word of power' - others include the magic circles, barbarous invocations and magical weapons/amulets.

One of the essential differences between this elemental/demonic form of magic and shamanism is that the sorcerer/sorceress protects themselves from the demons and spirits by various charms, spells, circles or chants, whereas the shaman identifies with them via dance, music, song, potions/drugs and a temporary loss of personal identity. The shamanistic type is essentially the oldest form of magic, and is only really possible where a community or folk/tribal identity is strong, the shaman being an important part of its community/folk tribe. The functions of the shaman are quite simple - they discover what is hidden, foretell the future and sometimes heal and advise.

The third type of ancient magickal tradition, the empathic, flourished during the Hyperborean Aeon and had as its centre the culture of Albion (c. 5,500 - 3,500 BN: after which there was a slow decline; the 'Druids' represent the last part of this decline). This type gave rise to the early legends about 'Apollo' and the mystery cults of Ancient Greece as well as to the legends of the Druids and 'Merlin'. Its basis was an intuitive understanding of the cosmos - using the foundation of the septenary - a sympathy with the energies of the cosmos and the Earth. The cosmology underlying this approach gave rise to both

'Homeric' theology and, later, to the Vedic gods and Scandinavian Teutonic Mythology. That is, these later forms represent the original spirit of the 'lost' empathic tradition - a spirit in complete contrast with both the elemental and shamanistic approach (see ms 'The Homeric Gods').

The third type of magic which has variously become known as Physis and the seven-fold way, requires no 'words of power', no 'spells', and no surrender of personal identity. There is, rather an enhancement of that personal identity. Further, the empathic approach sees the cosmos as a unity - only divided for the purpose of classification/understanding - and not as a conflict of 'moral forces'; that is. A divination [sic. ed] into 'good' and 'evil'. (This point of view is very important and shows the conflict between Physis and those systems, like Nazarene belief and the qabala/elemental magic [including its modern forms] arises from a fundamentally different approach to the structure of the cosmos; it also shows and explains the affinity of the seven-fold way with 'Homeric' values and Scandinavian Teutonic Mythology.)

Essentially, Physis is a way of living rather than a specific technique or otherwise: it is a mystery in the original sense of the term. Originally, mystery meant an involvement with the physical/real world and not; as it later came to mean, a flight away from the world. (qv. The use of the word in Aristophanes, and the Greek 'mystery' traditions). The 'tels' or aim of Physis is essentially the same as that of those mystery schools; man or woman become divine through knowledge by following a Way - through catharsis, Initiation (what the Greeks called 'myesis') and the various further stages of self-understanding often symbolically and dramatically represented.

In a very important sense, the seven-fold way is a practical involvement in the world (qv. The Grade Rituals and the tasks of the Grades). In many ways, it can be seen as a 'modern' development of the empathic tradition (*2). Of all the traditions, the empathic is the only one to guide us toward and beyond god-head; both within ourselves and outside of ourselves.

Notes:

*1) Since this was written, the texts have been published in England.

*2) For further details see other MS, esp. 'Notes on Esoteric Tradition'; 'Nature, Magick & Worship': 'The Norse Gods and the Septenary Tradition'

PHYSIS Part V
SOME NOTES ON TRAINING

I: PRACTICAL

Location:

The best location is out of doors in an isolated spot: hills and areas near streams, lakes and forests are to be favoured. Harmony in one's surroundings encourages the mindfulness which is essential to strengthening one's vital energy - 'physis', the essence of Being - and thus the achievement of that harmony wherein the cosmos is revealed and

Destiny achieved. The best time for practice is early morning - in one hour after sunrise.

Duration:

Each session should last between half an hour and one hour, and ideally be undertaken every day, although three times a week is sufficient in the early stages.

Practice: begin each session with a warm-up exercise undertaken in a relaxed way. This may be a short (1-2) miles slow run, followed by a short period of stance meditation during which the mind is concentrated on breathing - imagining the energies of Gaia flowing through the body and vitalizing it in a relaxed, mindful way. If it helps, imagine the energies being absorbed through the feet (which should be bare) with each slow intake of breath. Practice of Physis Forms can then be undertaken. The session should end with a mindful bow, expressive of reverence for Gaia and the essence of being beyond.

Mindfulness:

This is achieved via breath control through slow movement - as e.g. in kinhin and blindfold walking - and will be practiced under supervision.

General: The purpose of Physis Training is to increase the vital energy of the person - this is a very gradual process and benefits will be noticed only after some time of constant practice, depending on the individual this may be weeks or months.

PHYSIS Part VI
PHYSIS TRAINING NOTES

THEORETICAL:

The student will after learning the Star Game and the Septenary system study the relation between the Martial Art Forms, the alchemical substances, the seven-fold way, and the two forms of time.

The Short-Form represents the four elements (e.g. North is water and is symbolically represented by the Chalice: South is Earth, symbolized by Pentacles) and the Long-Form the nine angles, that is, the nine combinations of the three alchemical substances which are themselves represented by the pieces of the Star Game in their causal and acausal aspects.

In undertaking the Forms in a mindful way the individual is undertaking what may be termed 'a rite of cosmic renewal' because the faculty of consciousness which only we of all Earth-dwelling beings possess is, by the type of consciousness achieved through mindfulness, returns the individual to the primal chaos where pure energy resides. The Forms take the individual beyond the appearance of opposites to the essence of Being.

Such a returning is known by many names according to various traditions - it is similar to the Buddhist 'nirvana', the Taoist 'tun-wu', the existential 'authentic existence' and is represented in the Western esoteric tradition as the Philosophers Stone, the primal Gnosis.

This achievement is usually a slow process, a natural Alchemy, and involves the seven-fold way to the very end. With its achievement, the Forms, and all the theory behind them, become irrelevant.

PHYSIS PART VII MARTIAL ART OF THE WEST

The purpose of a genuine Martial Arts is not only to create within the individual a certain harmony of body and mind, but also to extend the capabilities of the individual. To do this requires an ethos or spirit and every genuine Martial Art has its own distinctive ethos.

The ethos of a Martial Art is a re-presentation of the Destiny of the folk community to which the individual belongs and a genuine Martial Art (such as the Japanese Way of the Sword) cannot exist outside such a community. Essentially, a Martial Art produces warriors, and such warriors, if they are to be true to the ethos of the Way which produced their skill and prowess, might fight as servants of that ethos.

Every individual is a product of those psychic forces that shape both the conscious and unconscious, and to be healthy and fulfil the promise of vitality that lies latent within, individuals must be true to the spirit of their ancestors, for to grow in the future one must first root oneself in the past. This fundamental truth is mostly forgotten today with the result that rootless individuals fall prey to all manner of enervating ideas devoid of authenticity. An inner harmony - the key to development of Martial Arts skills as well as the key to extending one's real vitality - results from following the ethos of the folk community into which the individual is born, and fulfilling, or trying to fulfil its unique Destiny. It is one of the purposes of a genuine, living Martial Art to reveal this ethos and Destiny since these provide the link between what may be termed the microcosm of the individual and the macrocosm of the 'pneuma'/Ki/vital energy.

What passes for 'Martial Arts' today is mostly sport - techniques which while sometimes spectacular are lacking in spirit and devoid of deep personal meaning because the original and genuine purpose of a Martial Art is to produce warriors, study of a particular Way or tradition is a way of life rather than an interest occupying a few hours a week. Consequently, genuine Martial Arts traditions attract very few individuals - except initially.

To work in harmony with the ethos of one's folk community and to understand its destiny is the only means whereby the authentic Destiny of each individual - their innate potential - can be realized since the destiny of every individual is inextricably linked to that of their folk, unfashionable as this is today. Thus it is impossible, for example, for a European belonging to the civilization of the West, to master fully the Japanese Way of the Sword for such mastery implies the individual committing himself through his deeds and way of life to the Destiny of Japan: a participation in Shinto and Bushido which is impossible for an outsider - and which even most Japanese find most difficult since the advent of Western influence. Thus, the conflict in

the last century [1800's] between the 'League of the Divine Wind' and those who favoured or accepted Western influence in Japan - and the League was right, enshrining as it did the true ethos of Japan, a circumstance understood for instance by Yukio Mishima (qv. 'Runaway Horses' [Mishima's 1967 Novel]).

The ethos of the West has been described as Faustian - as a will to exploration and has given rise, intellectually to science and technologically and practically, to the conquest of the world by Europeans and European technology. In essence, the ethos of the West may be said to represent a noble, conquering attitude to life grounded in exploration. The way of Physis represents this and captures through its techniques the inner harmony essential for personal development as well as teaching what may be called the Warrior code of the West.

Physis is a hitherto secret Western tradition which emphasizes the development of intuitive awareness or empathy as a mean to martial arts skill - in contrast to most other schools (especially those of the East) which depend mainly on repetition of technique as the way to mastery.

This empathy is created through self-awareness (vide 'Grade Rituals') as well as by study and the achievement of set, physical goals. It captures stillness through motion and exertion.

One of the more important aspects of Physis is in revealing not only the genuine ethos of the West but also in showing how an individual can fulfil their own destiny and that of the West.

The basic archetype for this fulfilling - which represents Being and by which we affirm life joyfully in accord with the spirit of our ancestors and the Destiny of our folk - is the warrior who strives through directive action to create the conditions and type of power by which Destiny may be fulfilled. The most important aspect of Physis, however, is to show how individuals may live according to an ethos - just as Chozan Shisai showed how the Way of the Sword could be lived.

Such a way of living involves the individual in a certain amount of daily practice or training of the body in order to maintain vitality and in living in accordance with the Destiny. This destiny may be creative in the artistic/scientific sense or involve action of a more direct kind - but in all that they do, individuals following the Way of Physis will be guided by the enthusiastic spirit of conquering nobility.

Outwardly, the future of the West lies in the exploration of Outer Space: galactic colonization, inwardly in re-discovery of the ground, or harmony, behind the outward appearance of our ethos. This ground - i.e. 'Physis' is a consciously developed empathy giving rise to a new type of individual.

PHYSIS PART VIII
MARTIAL ART OF THE LEFT HAND PATH

According to tradition, in the past candidates who sought either entry into an established Order or group, or who sought individual instruction from an adept of the Left Hand Path, first had to prove themselves through trial by combat.

In established groups, the Guardian of the Temple was the adversary and Physis as Martial Art is believed to have developed from the training that these Guardians received to enable them to undertake this task. The fact that candidates were usually defeated by the Guardian was a salutary lesson for them just as their acceptance of combat was a necessary proof of their desire to join.

As a Martial Art, Physis is quite simple, being merely a sequence of moves which enable the individual undertaking them in the right manner to achieve a harmony of body and mind - a type of consciousness where spontaneous action is possible. It is this spontaneity that is the secret.

The correct attitude of mind which creates the spontaneity is achieved by slow concentrated movement. Through concentration, the individual draws to themselves those hidden (or 'occult') energies that pervade the world and the cosmos and which are variously named Physis, Tao, 'pneuma', spirit or Ki. Slow, deliberate movements in a sense 'distributes' this energy around the body and enables action without thought.

Physis contains no 'grades' no complicated series of Forms, no secrets: it is simply a pointer to something beyond itself. This 'something' lies within every individual and once it has been discovered, Physis (and all techniques) are irrelevant. Just like 'Traditions'.

Physis contains no techniques of self-defense, no methods of attack, no disabling blows or kicks, all these arise of themselves provided spontaneity is achieved and provided the individual is fit and supple enough of body.

Physis is essentially of the Left Hand Path because it is an individual (or 'anarchic') way: a means to discovering the Chaos within, and it is structure-less because of this.

Techniques of Physis

Ideally, you should perform all techniques barefoot and out of doors, in loose clothing. Set aside about half-an-hour each morning or evening and for about three weeks practice the simple movements given below.

Before this, undertake some simple exercises to increase suppleness - such as arm-swinging, squats, trunk circling. These should not be strenuous. Also, begin some other activity which will increase your general level of fitness - running and cycling and swimming are ideal. The aim of all this is to give you that pleasurable glow which such activity can produce - if not overdone!

To begin, stand with feet slightly apart, hands by the side in a relaxed way and imagine drawing energy up into your body through the

soles of your feet. Draw in energy with every breath, which should be slow and regular. Continue this for several minutes.

The following movements should then be performed - slowly, to form a continuous whole, without breaks. Although the movements may seem complicated (when described here at least!) they are in fact simple and easily mastered.

From the initial position the left foot is brought forward with knee bent as the left arm extends outward with elbow bent, wrist turned and level with face, the hand above the knee. The right foot is moved slightly, pointing straight ahead. The weight should be slightly greater on the left foot. The fingers of the hands should be slightly curved.

The right foot is turned to face behind while the body weight is shifted (via the hips) to lean the body and turn it sideways through ninety degrees. As the body turns, so does the left foot, through ninety degrees. The right arm is extended, slightly curved, so that the hand is above the head but several feet from it while the left arm is brought in so that the hand is near the navel. The right knee is bent.

The body is turned clock-wise through ninety degrees as the left leg is swung round and the left elbow moved backwards as if to strike. As this is done the right arm is drawn in to near the navel and the balance shifted to the left foot. The right foot should be so placed that at the completion of this move only the heel is on the floor.

The right foot is set down and the whole body brought downwards toward the ground by bending the knees but without turning the body itself. The left arm is drawn in, the right is extended upwards and outwards.

The body is then brought upright, as the left leg is moved forward (about forty-five degrees) and bent to take the weight while the left arm is brought upwards, elbow bent, the forearm almost vertical and the hand a few feet from the face. The right arm is drawn in, the hand below the chin.

The body pivots off the right foot through ninety degrees while the left arm is drawn in, the right extended with hand above the head and a few feet away. The left leg is then lifted as if to kick while the left arm is brought forward. The left thigh should be below the horizontal.

The left foot is lowered while the left arm is brought across the body and outward to the left side as the toes of the right foot are lifted and weight transferred. The right arm is brought in near the stomach. The left foot turns about forty-five degrees. The weight is taken on the right leg, knee bent, the left arm drawn in and the right extended above the head and a few feet away.

Finally, the body is turned so that the position is the reverse of the starting one.

This sequence of nine moves is thus in the order:

7	1	6
4	9	3

The aim is to undertake the movements in a relaxed and mindful way, breathing slowly. Should it be desired, the sequence can be repeated several times. The movements should flow into each other, without pause. Practice should make the individual movements, one continuous movement, like a slow dance. Do not worry about getting each movement exactly right - fluidity is more important.

If this is done for the period suggested above, set/hang two balls of wool from a straight tree branch, overhead beam or something similar, at a distance apart slightly greater than your outstretched arms. Set them swinging slowly in opposite directions and stand sideways or between them. Without turning but simply bending your body, strike with your hand at one ball and then immediately, with the other hand, at the other so as to hit it. To begin with, set the balls at eye level, then lower it to the level of your hips, and repeat. If this is too easy, have someone stand near and shout either "right" or "left" in their own time when you are prepared. If they shout 'right!' hit the right ball first, then the left. The shorter your reaction time, the better. Another variation of this is to use coloured balls, the helper shouting out the colour.

Further Techniques

Another technique which may be used is to set into the ground eight wooden posts, arranged as in the figure above: that is 1-8. the object is to strike each post in sequence with hands or foot according to the movements listed above. As you strike, exhale. Gradually increase the speed at which you do this until it is a burst of energy. Aim to control this energy, though, through the movements and strikes.

This technique should be used only after the foregoing has been undertaken and in the slow manner indicated.

Once you are satisfied with technique, abandon them if you wish and create your own sequences of movements. Be sure, though, to undertake each movement in the slow, mindful way, as this is really the key to spontaneity, or action without thought. Faster techniques (like with balls or posts) really only draw forth what has been cultivated through an inner stillness - and if there is a 'martial arts secret', it is this.

PHYSIS (Part IX) NOTES ON TRAINING

General:

Training should ideally be undertaken at least twice a week when practice of the Forms should be done together with some 'kinhin' and a little meditation. Fitness training (such as running, cycling, etc) should be undertaken at least three times a week in order to maintain the fitness necessary for specific Martial Arts training.

Once a week (usually at the end of one of the Forms practice sessions) a short routine should be followed designed to improve the speed and power of blows, blocks and kicks.

Alertness Training:

This is based on 'programming' of the self through assessment of a situation - that is, a cultivated but relaxed awareness of one's surroundings.

In any situation, one should be alert for changes - and anticipating and choosing a response consciously. For instance, one is seated in a room. Exits are noted, as are people. One prepares for any eventuality (such as an attack) and then decides to respond if the situation changes quickly or radically - the responses (such as moving forward to attack should someone rush through the door) are then filed mentally, and one remains relaxed.

This is not as complicated as it sounds - after some practice it becomes instinctive and throughout one is relaxed and capable of responding very quickly indeed. The crucial factor is learning to be aware of one's surroundings - and being prepared to react without thought. One can do this because beforehand one has already consciously decided on what one is going to do. This deciding takes a certain experience and will soon become instinctive and almost instantaneous.

Technique:

Good technique depends on:

- a) Agility: Is learned through exercises like kinhin
- b) Speed: Is acquired by slow practice of the Forms
- c) Coordination: Is achieved by learning to move without thinking (can be built up through other sports which require fluid movement without thought. Good examples are running, cycling at speed, and games such as tennis).
- d) Concentration: Arises through meditation and moving to sounds/music
- e) Power: Is built by the previous four and learning to strike accurately through the channelling of one's vital energy.

Hints:

- 1) Breathing from the abdomen - to obtain power, attack and exhale (shout may help)
- 2) In combat watch opponents eyes - never weapons or hands.
- 3) Hip Flexibility is the key to fluid and rapid movement.

In combat try to avoid body contact except in blows and kicks or restraining locks. Aim to stay within striking distance and move so as to defeat any attempt by the opponent to grapple. If he moves, circle his movement and strike.

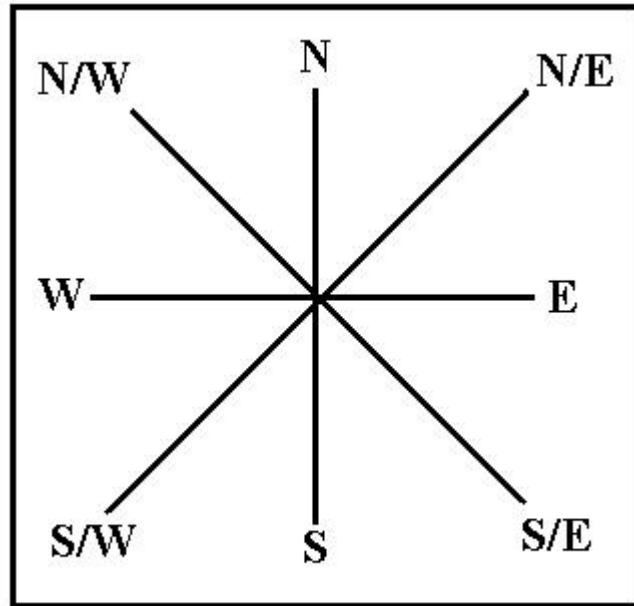
PHYSIS Part X

THE NINE MOVEMENTS OF PHYSIS

The Short Form is based on the four cardinal points, the Long Form on these four, their intersection and the final return to the centre.

Practically, the student is instructed to consider the Short as a defence against four opponents at the cardinal points. Theoretically, the points are related to the four elements (for which see Septenary correspondences).

The Long Form may be regarded as defence against 8 opponents thus:



The Nine Movements of Physis

The student thus learns flexibility of movement through a full circle by initially dividing that circle (or 360 degrees) into eight parts. This division is only an aid to training and helps in the cultivation of mindfulness to one's surroundings. It is the key to awareness in attack and defence.

There is nothing really esoteric in all this - or indeed in any Martial Arts training. What comes to be called 'esoteric' and becomes a 'school' of training is simply the conscious expression of something innate. It is the aim of all genuine teaching to develop within the student an intuitive empathic awareness, and once this is achieved the student 'knows' without thought and understands without learning. Beyond is the development of a style unique to that individual. There is nothing more.

THE MEANING OF PHYSIS

By D. MYATT

Physis is a Greek word which can be translated as "Nature" - it also means the 'natural unfolding' or evolution which occurs in nature as well as the 'character' or 'nature' of a person. In many ways, it is

that harmony or balance which 'holds the cosmos together' in a natural way.

The ancient Greeks had a concept of living and an approach to the gods which was pagan - they believed that a proper life (I am writing about pre-Platonic views here) was a balanced one, that the relationship of the individual to the gods was important. This relationship of the individual to the gods was important. This relationship was not based on concepts of sin nor on a morbid denial of life and its pleasures. Rather, it was based on respect - the individual respected the gods and believed the respect (and thus personal fortune) of the gods could be obtained or given if the individual strove to achieve excellence. It was considered unwise to be excessive - in anything. The Greek mystery cults went further and believed that life could be enhanced - and immortality attained - by living in a certain way and performing certain rites. Central was also a pragmatic view - that the cosmos possessed a natural order - which could be understood if one thought hard enough or observed it for long enough or if one attained an insight into it.

These things established a framework for understanding genuine paganism in general - insofar as the West and its psyche is concerned. It is better to begin in this way, via the ancient Greeks, since the evidence and the sources are preserved more completely than other 'Western' pagan tradition. It is unfortunate that most modern pagans derive their understanding from myths and legends and practices which are often obscure or incomplete - what is missing is difficult to understand, often being interpreted romantically. Naturally, this approach via the Greeks assumes that there are similarities between the different forms paganism assumed among the peoples of the West at various times - that is, that the variations are different expressions of the same spirit or 'view of the world', an expression which pre-dated the morally abstract religion of the Nazarene and extended from the ancient Albion around the time of the building of Stonehenge to the Anglo-Saxons, the Celts and the Vikings. I believe this assumption to be a valid one - for what is important are not the details of the legends or the attributes of the gods or even the various religious forms and rites, but rather the instinctive apprehension of life and the cosmos which gave rise to the religious forms of paganism in the first place: that which is our collective or 'folk' psyche. Thus we may say that while the paganism of the ancient Greeks and that of the Vikings represent or express this psyche, the abstract religion of Christianity does not.

There is an esoteric tradition which regards ancient Albion (or rather the civilization of Albion which flourished between c. 5,000 BP and 3,000 BP) as the original home of the god whom the Greeks called Apollo and thus the inspiration of the Greeks. This tradition - which names the civilization the 'Hyperborean' in honour of this fact - recounts Albion as inventing the wheel among other things, including agriculture, and possessing a knowledge of and skill in astronomy (evident in Stonehenge and other monuments of the civilization) as well as esoteric crafts. The Druids are regarded by this tradition as being among the last remnants of the decayed civilization.

Whatever the truth or otherwise of this tradition, I believe the ancient Greeks give us the most comprehensive information regarding paganism - or rather, that paganism which is appropriate to those whose

psyche is "Western" [I use this term "Western" with misgivings since today it generally and unfortunately implies that materialistic power structure of European and American states, rather than a definite culture. "European" is no better, and both 'Indo-European' and 'Aryan' are liable to misinterpretation. By 'West' is meant that culture exemplified by Albion, ancient Greece and Rome, the Celts, Vikings, and so on.]

This ancient Greek foundation gives us two important contributions missing from the other traditions - what may be called 'pragmatic' and the 'conscious' expression of our relationship with the gods. The former is exemplified in that essentially rational approach to living which is so typically Greek, the latter in Greek tragedy and some of the pre-Socratic philosophers.

What this amounts to is nothing really new - just another way of viewing what esoteric tradition has established, of sorting out the valuable from the dross, enabling perspective. Essentially, esoteric tradition (call it 'the Occult' for convenience) maintains that we have latent abilities and are capable of evolving still further - of developing higher levels of consciousness. Part of this is in understanding and mastery of the Occult arts - e.g. like divination and 'magick' - and part is in developing an empathy or awareness with and of others and the cosmos. One aspect is the belief that we can attain certain immortality - e.g. by alchemy, be that alchemy a practical one with the production of an Elixir or an internal one with the production of Adeptship and beyond.

This way means, if its potential is to be fulfilled, a certain way of living rather than a 'hobby' or an 'interest' or a 'diversion'. Part of this is an attitude and part of it is observance or participation, usually by some form of ritual or rite. That is, there is an approach to life, which may be intuitive - a 'feeling' about the world, and a desire to do something, participate, or achieve.

Naturally there is in the Occult a confusion and multitude of ways and systems and beliefs, but most of these, deriving from unclear sources, have lost (if they ever possessed) the meaning of essence behind the outer forms: a meaning or essence which the two contributions from the Greeks, mentioned above, explicate most clearly. Hitherto, both the dogmatic and the religious approach to the Occult (evident in the revival of past forms and ways, for example) have failed because the forms and means chosen have seldom if ever been conscious. That is, they exist on the unconscious, symbolic level or on the directly religious one, presuming in the first instance a lack of self-awareness and in the second instance a faith in arcane religious forms and/or minor deities. In brief, the attitude of the mind thus cultivated tends towards uncritical acceptance and 'superstition' - and a lack of real understanding regarding the relationship between the individual and the gods.

The realization of the Occult requires a specific way of living - one that takes the individual away from the modern world with its abstractions, its beliefs, its dogma, its noise, frenetic pace and crowds. This way returns individuals to themselves, to confront and understand what is within, and then having achieved a self-

understanding and thus liberation, to an understanding of 'Nature'/the gods and thus the cosmos.

The attitude of mind required is an openness - an enquiring approach which combines a pragmatic view with intuition or insight. Such an attitude may for convenience be called 'Thinking' or 'contemplation' - it is a reasoned empathy developed by various methods or occult techniques, and may be said to represent the essence of pragmatism, an essence capable of apprehended and developed only by the way of living mentioned above.

Such an understanding as arises from such an attitude is highly individual - that is, it cannot be constrained within a dogma or form part of a religious belief. There is thus the development of an entirely new type of conscious apprehension - a new way of 'Thinking' or being, and thus a new way of living. Fundamentally, this new understanding is what "Physis" means - and to achieve this is the aim of the Physis community or foundation.

PHYSIS
TOWARDS A COMMUNITY
By David Myatt

Part I

I have travelled in most of the countries of the world, lived for years in several of them and in the course of it all I believe I have learned a few things from my contacts with other peoples.

I have learned to respect the harmony that one finds in small communities - from the Malay Jungle, through to the highlands of Japan to the isolated villages of Nepal. There is a pattern about such small communities that makes their way of life unique and totally different from that of a city or town - be the city New York or Bombay and be the town Brighton or Georgetown.

The small communities are usually agricultural, and the people, being tied to the soil, aware of the seasons or the vagaries of their climate, are usually traditional insofar as local customs and methods govern their life.

In rural villages in Japan, for example, it is still the custom for neighbours to help in house-building: still regarded as favourable for a man to have sons who will inherit not only his land but his skills as well. The tradition binds these communities, and there is usually pride in and loyalty to the family. In contrast, the dweller of the city or town is generally self-centred, lacking in tradition and without loyalty to anything except an abstract and artificial idea.

Of course, such statements are generalisations, with many exceptions - but they are based on sufficient experience for forming to some extent at least part of a 'world-view' of philosophy of life. By and large, the member of a rural, agricultural community, bound by tradition and sharing a common heritage, is a far more natural and healthy person than the city dweller. Such a person may not be as 'well-educated', may lack refinement in speech and may be illiterate - but he will, on balance, be more genuine and honest because of it. But, above everything else, the perspective of the local community is different -

the way of life slower, more inward, more peaceful. The disputes, such as they are, are personal and local ones.

The disputes of the city however, are those created by artificial ideas like the parity of the pound with the dollar or the demarcation of power between one large inhomogenous group and another (such as 'workers' and 'bosses' or Britain and France).

When such disputes enter rural communities they are destructive and usually costly in terms of human life - like wars between rival religions or rival factions.

However, it would be a mistake to see rural communities romantically, as an idyll, just as it would be mistaken to idealize the peasant farmer and try to copy his ancient way of life. What such communities show, I believe, is that it is possible to live a full harmonious life with understanding. Despite all the technology and advantages Western civilization has given us we are not so much different, in human terms, from our barbarian ancestors. Six thousand years or so of civilization seems to have had little effect on human behaviour - we as human beings understand far more about our world and universe, we have mastered with our tools and technology our environment, but we are still driven to a large extent by forces (like hatred, malice, envy and all the long etcetera of human urges which are not consciously understood).

Billions of people have died in countless conflicts large and small over scores of generations - and still it seems our ability to live in peace with ourselves, our neighbours and relations, our ability to live fulfilling, harmonious lives is very small. Religion of course, attempts to show why this is so, and different religions offer different solutions to 'the human condition'. Yet with the exception of Taoism (if the Taoism of Lao Tzu may be called a religion) religion soon becomes ideology.

Over the years what I have discovered is important about life is one's attitude to living. I have come to realise, gradually, that ideology of whatever kind from communism to Christianity to Hinduism encourages what it has become fashionable to call the 'alienation' of the individual.

Ideology encourages strife - for without division, it cannot thrive, just as Christianity cannot thrive without the idea of sin and the conflict between the righteous and the sinner. When ideology assumes power in the form of a State, evolution of understanding ceases and cultural regression begins.

The attitude of the Japanese farmer, planting his rice crop by hand is probably closer, in terms of human understanding, to reality, than any religious or political zealot. The farmer lives in the world of the elements, drawing his life from the earth while the dweller in the realms of politics or religion lives in the realms of conflict created by his own ideas and belief. The farmer may be concerned about the weather, or about the state of his rood - but all his concerns are natural and of significance only to him, his family and immediate neighbourhood. But above all, he is capable of being in harmony with himself and his environment simply because his purpose and vision are so restricted.

Because we as individuals are capable of thought we are capable of understanding or learning from six thousand years of history.

Perhaps more importantly we are also capable of extending human civilization further. If, in attempting to live our understanding and so live harmoniously, we in the west re-create a past way of life or attempt to create a new way out of harmony with ourselves and our environment, it will not endure.

Accordingly, to preserve what is valuable about civilization (like knowledge) and to extend evolution and understanding still further, a new way of life, or life-style is needed, one that is harmonious, evolutionary and which passively encourages others to become positive, authentic individuals. Such a way of life would be a-political in every sense and its view of the world would owe much to ancient Greece and the internal alchemy of the seven-fold way. It would be, in the words of Heidegger, "preparation of readiness for the gods, it is the Yes to Being".

Such a way of life would be rural, a small community, whose daily life was itself harmonious and authentic.

PART 2

The essence of the community is expressed in the name - Physis, that is, a natural unfolding; the character or nature of a person as well as 'Nature' herself.

The aim is to develop - extend - the individual in a natural harmonious way. This implies balance - between the striving for knowledge and excellence and the inner development of empathy or insight. The former involves practical forms such as 'learning' of the development of craft-like skills; the latter involves the cultivation of basically esoteric or Occult abilities. Both can be attained by living in a certain way - as outlined in the first part of this article this way is essentially rural, a community part of the land through a striving for self-sufficiency.

Central to such a community will be a shared cultural understanding and heritage - a common feeling about the 'world'. this will not be religious as it will not be an attempt to re-create past religious, social or political forms of whatever kind. Rather, given a common intuitive understanding, new forms and ways will be created by the very process of living and striving - the attempt to achieve self-sufficiency and extend and preserve the essence of the common heritage. To help realise this, one of the practical aims is to establish a centre for esoteric knowledge and the study of the cultural heritage of the west - an approach where, for example, the principles of that esoteric knowledge can be put into practice, enabling individuals to achieve not only a genuine Initiation but also Adeptship and beyond. Of course this may seem a splendid idea, but rather impractical. Yet its realization will only require a few individuals to join together and act - by purchasing some land (and perhaps some dwellings/buildings) in an area conducive to the aims and which allows for possible future expansion. Then if they possess the necessary desire, the community can be created by the difficult task of trying to obtain some self-sufficiency in food and by beginning the process of establishing a cultural centre. What then, is genuinely Western which might be used to establish the basic intuitive and intellectual foundations of such a community?

First a desire to know, to understand and to reason - a respect for facts, for observation and careful analysis: a belief that everything can be explained given time, and that any dogma is detrimental to understanding. Second a feeling that there must be balance between us as individuals and Nature/the gods: a way of living, or being, which aids this balance, within us and external to us. Third, the belief that we as individuals are capable of evolving still further - in terms of consciousness, intellect and knowledge - and that this involves the

development of 'Occult' capabilities. Fourth, the understanding that the world external to us can be changed by various energies and forms some of which may be 'magical' and some not. Expressed simply, this means that such a community by its very existence produces change within the 'society' it has excluded itself from - this change perhaps being very gradual but nevertheless highly significant in 'Aeonic' terms.

It seems strange that in the West many communities exist and are continually being established based on religious or social (and sometimes even political) ideas entirely contrary to the spirit of the West and its cultural heritage - and seem to flourish - while no-one seems either interested in or prepared to work toward the establishment of a genuinely Western community; to create a way of living which is authentic and creative and which takes us towards the next stage of our evolution.

Perhaps part of this stems from a misunderstanding of our heritage and a misunderstanding of what the 'Occult' is all about. Basically, the development of our latent abilities involves an increase in perception - an empathy. But this empathy is not 'uncritical' just as it is not orientated in what could be called a social or political or religious direction. That is, it does not mean "compassion". rather it implies wisdom - the understanding of things and people as they are, according to their own nature or natures. It does not seek to change, or direct but is a 'letting-be' - and as such is often 'sad' because there is understanding of how slow real evolutionary change is and how most directed attempts at change produce the opposite and upset the dialectic balance. Part of this perception is rational - I.e. a reasoned understanding (which may gradually change as new information or knowledge is available) and hence genuine empathy is a harmony, a balance - between the intuitive (and thus numinous) and conscious understanding.

That this, and the Occult in general, have been so misunderstood isn't surprising considering the misunderstanding of Western tradition and heritage in general, for this type of harmony forms part of the essence of that heritage.

This balance is also expressed in the striving for knowledge and discovery and excellence, when such striving is linked to an appreciation of what it is convenient to call 'the gods' and our relation to them as individuals. (some may just prefer the term "Nature").

The striving, and the desire to maintain balance, are both necessary as, for example, the ancient Greeks understood: the loss of this balance was 'hubris' (or 'insolence' to the gods) and planted the seeds of the tyrant.

To re-discover, and help maintain, this balance is one of the main aims of a Physis community.