

The Adept and the Sage by Hermes Trismegistus

The Conundrum of the Adept

The Adept: O Teacher, I have experienced much and studied diligently in my life and am therefore not ignorant. I have not been closed to experiences and have actively and with much zeal sought out the answers to life's mysteries. So, I am not timid. I have traveled in the East through the remnants of what mystery schools remain from ancient times, studied the ancient books, and listened to my instructors, yet I am frustrated.

The Sage: You are dear to my heart and have indeed applied yourself without reservation to the quest for truth. Your skills of introspection, of discernment, and of observation are unquestioned, bravery being the key to knowledge. Therefore, you will receive no condescension from me. Tell me what troubles you, and I will help if I am able.

The Adept: I have stood in the great stone circles of the north, as well as many others, hidden and little-known. I have stood in the candled circles, drum circles, and points within circles of ceremony. I've entered the tombs of the Sun Cave and Horus Netjerikhet and have been risen from my own tomb in ritual. I've seen the face of war and engaged in acts of peace. I've achieved high secular rank and received thirty-two titles of philosophical honor. I have directly experienced the mystical rush of light and sense of ecstatic Oneness on two occasions. My consciousness has looked down upon my own body from without on more than one occasion, and I have learned to expand and contract it within as taught by many of the great teachers of the East. I have rested before the Temple of Isis at Pompeii, the Shrine at Sagamihara, the Horemakhet at Imentet, and every holy house in between.

The Sage: And where have you arrived?

The Adept: Uncertainty. The more that is revealed to me, the more light of knowledge I gain, the more the mysteries are explored - it seems the less I know. Rather than a buildup of understanding, the compiling of a body of knowledge, my sense is as if everything is narrowing to a point. My intuition is to discard more and more as superfluous – the various astral and spiritual bodies, the realms and planes of other worlds, the secret words and lost arcs – all derivative, mere assertions of others. Once understood, ritual becomes mere habit. Once unveiled, sacred symbols become just pictures. Once uttered without consequence, sacred words become only babble.

The Sage: Why does this trouble you so?

The Adept: I wanted there to be a final truth. The mystery schools coyly promise the secret will be revealed with each new step, only to then call it a 'substitute secret' once in hand. The salvation and eternal life of the religions are cleverly concealed behind death's curtain, while their gentler teachings are buried in piles of bodies. Yet, I sense truth in them somewhere! I have experienced that which is called 'spiritual' or 'sublime' firsthand! My instinct is that it all points to *something*, an underlying current, that is buried in nonsense.

The Sage: What is this nonsense that you have found?

The Adept: I have found three truths that cannot be seen, and therefore I cannot say they are truths.

The Sage: And what are these invisible truths?

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The Adept: The first is the idea that righteous or good behavior is required for approaching the divine. While I have no doubt that virtue and uprightness are desirable for civilization to exist, I have found only scant direct connection between human **morality** and concepts of ultimate reality. Logic does not seem to connect the two. For example, the ancient texts often point to the idea that existence is good, therefore the sustainer and creator of existence must be good, so one must be good in order to join with or know the creative being. However, that which is 'good' for a human is a mere judgement, often changing over time. Further, creation contains all that is evil, as well. How is it not then the case that doing evil should bring one closer to God? In fact, it should be obvious to anyone who will look there is something very, very wrong with the universe, and we are trapped here. I could make many more arguments to this point, but it is sufficient to say there seems to be no satisfactory link connecting the mundane behavior of humans to the divine.

The Sage: And the second?

The Adept: The second is that for as much as the ancients talk of **the soul**, I cannot find it, let alone find its divinity. Certainly there is the mind, and there is consciousness – that which experiences the mind – yet we know the mind's humble limits. We know consciousness comes and goes. Where is the divinity in this? My teachers have propounded to me over and over again an 'inner' self that is the divine spark, apart from and transcending all these doings of the brain. However, simply asserting its existence so that this or that spiritual system may function is simply not satisfactory. The pious tell me it is my connection to the divine yet I, too, have been in peril for my life in the middle of the night, feeling I may die within a moment, yet never felt a divine presence- only a peace and calm in its absence. I, too, have had powerful experiences during which my consciousness seemed to transcend my body- without one inclination that they were anything other than states of my own mind. The soul, one's inner divinity, seems not to exist.

The Sage: And what of the third?

The Adept: The third is all this talk of **immortality** – it seems another assertion by the pious. Some books talk of bodily resurrection after death, while others talk of the incorruptibility of the soul. What is to be believed? Though I am not chained only to my senses, demanding unassailable proof and demonstration of the fact at this point, it is also true that I have not even seen a good argument from reason that leads naturally to immortality. All the philosophy I have heard is stretched, bending this way and that, to somehow reach what appears to be the inherited, foregone conclusion – the reasoning created after the conclusion instead of the other way around. What am I to make of this other than the fear of death makes the belief in immortality paramount over reason?

The Sage: Are not your three invisible truths, **morality**, **the soul**, and **immortality**, explained in detail within the many scriptures and holy works you have read? Were they not explained over and over again in the sermons of the righteous? Will the sermons not be repeated to you from among the congregation – from every man and every woman upon the road?

The Adept: What you say is true, O Teacher! The people will repeat, and the sermons do propound, and the books do reveal! However, the repetition of the people is mere parroting of the sermon. The sermon is mere aping of the scriptures. And the scriptures tell me only that I must believe without question. This is my great frustration, that I cannot set aside reason for the sake of belief. It doesn't seem possible to truly believe without knowing, for to merely make oneself believe is only to make-

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believe! If a friend tells me he has the secret of all things in a box under his bed, but cannot show it to me, saying I must only believe him, and saying the belief is a suitable substitute secret, then I cannot believe my friend. It is this insistence that I set aside the gift of my faculties that dismays me.

The Sage: Verily, then, you are a true adept! In the East you are called Yogi! In the West you are called Mage! Everywhere you are a mystic and a holy woman – a true knight of both directions. By your answers to my questions you have shown yourself to have passed from an apprentice to one who stands at the end of the student's path.

The Adept: Truly, O Teacher, I am humbled before your blessings and praise, but I do not understand the cause for these. I do not feel worthy of such, as I have only arrived at the realization that I have no faith, and therefore no belief in the invisible truths others speak of. I am cloaked in doubt.

The Sage: It is your cloak that reveals you to me, for as I may be great three times, you are twice such. It is your dismay that anoints you, for the Son of Man said, "The one who seeks should not cease seeking until he finds. And when he finds, he will be dismayed. And when he is dismayed, he will be astonished. And he will be king over the All." Was it not the dismay of the Charioteer that caused His Driver to reveal the Truth to him? Did a wise traveler not tell you once when you were in a foreign land that some people are more conscientious than others, and they are the ones who will suffer?

The Adept: Yes, O Teacher, you have reminded me of these teachings, and they have led me here. But what teachings will lead me on to my astonishment? Tell me plainly, for the world is awash in parables.

The Sage: Plainly I will tell you what you wish to know, the final veil slid down from the sacred monument. I will give you the teachings that you will need to attain degrees so high that they return to the beginning, for the secret knowledge is most simple, most primal. It was before your eyes always, but buried in ruins. I can point to it, but it will be through your own labor that the rubble is removed.

Of Belief and Knowledge

The Adept: Then, O Teacher, tell me the nature of the invisible truths. Tell me, how can the sacred books of all the world be correct about these things when they disagree so on others? Tell me then if the sources can be demonstrated to be so wrong about so many things, how then am I to believe what remains?

The Sage: My Wise Seeker, you have discovered the two religions. There exists, and have always existed, a religion of faith and a religion of knowing. The first is the religion of 'revealed truth' and the second is the religion of 'found truth'.

The Adept: Describe these to me, O Teacher! What are their characteristics so that I may know them each? Which is better?

The Sage: I tell you that neither is better nor worse than the other, but that only one may be known by the seeker, for if you seek you will find. You will know the followers of the revealed truth because they are concerned with immortality after death, and believe the here and now to be profane. You will know the seekers of the found truth because their concern is unity with the divine here and now, and take no heed of future immortality.

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The Adept: And what of the sacred texts? Do they not tell of only one true way, despite being so flawed in other ways?

The Sage: No, my dearest pupil, each text tells of two ways. One way is for the seeker of hidden knowledge, the other is not. Do not be disheartened by the falsehoods lying beside the truths, for all of these books were written by mankind whose vision is imperfect. Consider the great plays of human drama from the past, do they not contain truths of mankind's love and tragedy despite their fanciful settings and contrived names? It is a greater tragedy that there are some who require the play to be faultless or else they cannot see its beauty.

The Adept: You say there are two ways to be seen in each sacred book. How will I know which I am seeing? How will I know which to follow?

The Sage: You can only see the books in the way you have been prepared to see them.

The Adept: O Teacher, your words bring me sobriety! I have known that throughout my studies I had not the faith required to receive the three hidden truths! What then can I know? Though I am a seeker for these things I have found, I understand them not without faith.

The Sage: Fear not, for this means your path is prepared already. This is the path of hidden knowledge, so therefore turn from this impasse and I will show it to you!

The Limits of Mind-Knowledge

The Adept: O Teacher, I am ready to turn away from my confusion and doubt, prepared to read the sacred texts with new eyes! I am ready to know the secret ways!

The Sage: Strong is your desire to learn, but first you must know knowing! As an enlightened seeker, you have already discerned between knowing and believing-to-know. You have learned that believing-to-know is not possible for you, yet you are still confused about what it means to know.

The Adept: How have I overlooked this! What you say is true, that I have turned away from the blocked path only to travel the unlit one! O Teacher, tell me about knowing!

The Sage: As there are two paths, there are two kinds of knowing. They are both necessary but only one can carry you from this point, being close to the secret. The first kind is the **knowledge of the mind**. This kind of knowledge you are most familiar with, being all things from your senses, all ideas, all reasoning, all dreams, all learnings, all thoughts, and all thoughts about thoughts, even what is hidden!

The Adept: True! This knowledge is something I know well, but it seems inescapable. How can there exist some other type of knowledge outside of this knowledge?

The Sage: Verily, though it has many windows and is a library, this kind of knowledge is also a prison to the seeker, but its walls can be overcome. Freedom can be had through the second kind of knowledge, which is the **knowledge of direct experience**.

The Adept: How, O Teacher, can all of the wisdom of the saints, the teachings of the sages, the logic of the philosophers, and all else that I have learned be a prison? Am I to leave all of this behind when it has gotten me here? Will it not get me hence?

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The Sage: You say the truth. Do not shun your sense-acquired knowledge. Do not reject your thoughts. Do not cast off your prison! Become its master, instead, turning it into a fortress! First, though, you must learn the extent of its walls – the limits of the mind's knowledge.

The Adept: How will I do this?

The Sage: As with all things, it is important to ask the proper question, for different questions lead to different answers. Here, you must ask yourself "What can I know?" You will find that there is very little you can know. Almost everything in the mind-knowledge is assumed, contrived by the mind as a substitute for knowing.

The Adept: What, then, can I know?

The Sage: The first thing that you can know with the mind is that there is something rather than nothing. This is **Cosmos**! This is the entirety of the infinite and natural order of things. Nothing can exist outside of it, not even a thought! It is the All. If a thing can be conceived of, even God, it cannot stand apart from the All. You can know there is Cosmos simply by your existence, for you are part of it. All of your other mind-knowledge is founded upon this first knowing. Your knowledge of Cosmos is absolute and sure.

The Adept: Yes! This is clear to me! When I open my eyes Cosmos is the first sight, without surmising, without measuring, without reasoning! This I can know directly and with certainty, but tell me, O Teacher, if this is the first thing I can know what is the second thing?

The Sage: Having Cosmos as your foundation, it is easily demonstrated that you can only experience some part of this Cosmos and your mind cannot comprehend the All. Think what is beyond the wall of your own house and a picture will come to you. Despite its detail, and that you may have just seen these things outside a few moments before, the picture is still merely a memory. You do not truly know what is there, but your mind builds an illusion of what is there. This is the same for what may lie in the next town, the next star, or in the heart of the next person. You, O True Knight, cannot directly know these things despite directly knowing Cosmos. What you may know in a brief lifetime, in the few places you may travel, from among the books you've chosen to read out of the vast library, is only a pale particle of dust compared to Cosmos. So of Cosmos there are two parts, the tiny fragment you may know and the vastness you may not. This is called **Aesthesis**.

The Adept: This is plain to me now! What the mind can truly know is limited beyond conception! I do not even know the inside of my own body, the hidden machinery of my own brain, that organ closest to me. How quickly my knowledge shrinks as I take a single step away from the certainty of Cosmos! The great library of mind-knowledge that was once a prison now shrinks to fit in the palm of my hand, and I become its master, able to overcome it at will!

The Sage: Blessed you are, O Daughter of Light, for you have in this moment discovered the third thing you may truly know with the mind. This thing is something I cannot teach you myself, but can only be discovered by you, the seeker. You have known your past self, not understanding Aesthesis, and now you know your present self, understanding the true limits of mind. This is like the people all around you. Some of them believe the thoughts they carry are the complete truth, the entirety of Cosmos. They believe they have arrived at the destination. Do not scorn them, for theirs is a true knowledge, but they do not know that the All cannot be held in the mind, for it is ineffably large. The finite cannot contain

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the infinite. There are others, though, who have realized the limits of their knowledge, the puniness of their prisons, and have thus transcended their confines. This is **Enlightenment**.

The Adept: Truly, O Teacher, I now understand what you have shown. Certainty is like a pyramid, widest at its foundation but becoming narrow the more one assembles the blocks of mind-knowledge. But certainly you have talked of a hidden knowledge that must somehow be apart from the mind-knowledge. How can this be? I do not understand how there can be a kind of knowledge that is not held within the mind.

The Way of Hidden Knowledge

The Sage: O Lover-of-Knowledge, what you say is true! Casting aside mere belief, you have discovered direct experience. Direct experience has illuminated the limits of mind-knowledge, making you its enlightened master. Now, listen as I tell you of the second kind of knowledge that is revealed through direct experience. This is the hidden knowledge!

The Adept: I will listen with all of my faculties, for I am sorely confused about this knowledge that is not knowledge.

The Sage: Do not be confused, for you have glimpsed the pathway to the hidden knowledge already! Consider the three truths that can be discerned by the mind. You have learned these already – Cosmos, Aesthesis, Enlightenment. How did you come about this knowledge?

The Adept: Through direct experience, O Teacher, after leaving the road of belief that was closed to me.

The Sage: Then, True Knight, does there not exist a fourth truth that preceded the three?

The Adept: Direct experience!

The Sage: Yes! That which experiences the truths must be in place first, before anything might be known at all, even being itself! Something had to exist first, primally, to experience the thought of Cosmos, to experience the thought of Aesthesis, to experience the Enlightenment! This experienter of all things is **consciousness**, first among truths, more certain than Cosmos, not itself a thought, not itself known by the mind – it being the knower of the mind.

The Adept: I did not see the consciousness that was there all along because it is the very eye that sees all! It is truly the foundation of all that can be known, even before Cosmos, but it is so subtle as to not be perceived. It is perception, itself - the knower of all that can be known. But tell me, O Teacher, is this first among truths the secret knowledge?

The Sage: No, but it is the gateway to the secret knowledge.

The Adept: Then tell me, how do I open this gateway so that I may pass through?

The Sage: Know that your days and nights are consumed with mind-knowledge, flowing in from your senses, created by your mind, thoughts, dreams, all things known by the knower. The day is flooded with the toils and concerns of existence, the wants and desires, the striving and the results. By night, too, the consciousness is inundated by the dream images. Waking again, you are chased from your bed by your own thoughts and the cycle continues for another day and night. All these things, the all-

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consuming river of mind-knowledge, entirely floods consciousness – the knower within. But the enlightened, knowing that the mind-knowledge is indeed miniscule, may easily surmount its distractions! The mind of the day and night may be shrunk, ignored, abolished, so that no more does the mind-knowledge flow to the knower within. The constant roar of the inflowing waters ceases and consciousness is all that remains in the still.

The Adept: If all knowledge is stilled, and ceases to flow to the knower within, what then remains to be known but utter darkness and nothingness?

The Sage: What remains is the secret knowledge! Without the mind-knowledge, consciousness does not disappear. It is left alone with itself, to know only itself. Without the words of mind-knowledge to describe its boundaries, it is infinite. Without the thought of mortality to limit it, it is immortal. Without the mind to describe it, it is ineffable! Such limits only exist in the mind-knowledge. Even my words here are insufficient and are not themselves the secret knowledge. You must pass through the gates of your own consciousness alone. Only in this way will you know the secret knowledge.

The Adept: O One-Who-Praises-Knowledge! The way of knowing without knowledge is clear to me now! This is the turning inward spoken of by the great masters of the East. This is the shunning of the profane spoken of by the holy ones in the West. To tame the desires, to turn one's gaze inwards, to be free of Earthly sin, is all with one purpose! This I will do, then I will know. But tell me, O Teacher, how do I know this experience of the consciousness knowing itself is not mere illusion, a trick of the mind?

The Sage: Ever the true philosopher and seeker of pure science, O One-Who-Hears, you ask the proper question that will lead to the proper answer! I will tell you how you may know the experience to be true knowledge and answer your questions about immortality and the soul!

Immortality and the Soul

The Adept: Describe to me plainly, then, as you promised, the secrets of the three invisible truths.

The Sage: When you are able to retract your senses into your being, turning your sight inward, freeing yourself from the desires that chain you to the objects of the world, consciousness experiencing only consciousness, the observer having nothing but itself to observe, this experience is the **soul**. Direct experience of the soul is the secret knowledge. It is not darkness, or a void, or nothingness, but will appear to you as a shining sun within, whose light connects with all light everywhere, being boundless. You have experienced this twice before but did not know what it was.

The Adept: I have! But how do I know this was real and not a dream?

The Sage: You can know the soul to be real because it is experienced directly without the need for mind-knowing, just as you experience Cosmos, both therefore being an undeniable reality.

The Adept: Is then the soul the same as consciousness?

The Sage: Yes, but they merely seem to be two different things. When it is deluged with the mind-knowledge, acting as the knower of external things, it is thought of as consciousness. When the secret knowledge has been had, it knowing itself, boundless and immortal, it is the soul.

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The Adept: Is then the soul separate from the body, differentiated from the mind-known world?

The Sage: No, for they are utterly the same. Remember, O Knight of the Sun, that nothing can be outside of Cosmos. The experience of the secret knowledge is within Cosmos. The body is within Cosmos. All mind-knowledge is within Cosmos. All things are joined and are one within Cosmos. But know this, that the consciousness-soul, by being boundless and immortal, must therefore stretch over all things and all times. The soul, then, contains Cosmos and is contained by Cosmos – they are One!

The Adept: Now I am truly moved from dismay to astonishment! From darkness to the light within! This light is everywhere and for all time! By degrees of understanding I have come to know the secret knowledge! Through learning and knowing I have come to know the immortality of the soul! But still I am troubled by the exhortations to morality from the pious. If the secret knowledge can be had by looking within, and it is the possession of all humankind, then what need for these laws? What need for the grief of guilt and the punishment of sin? Does the secret knowledge give us divine law to follow, or make necessary purity from vice to attain? Is there punishment weighed against eternal life for our failure to follow either? You have described plainly as promised, O Great Teacher, the nature of the soul and its immortality. Now, tell me likewise what we are meant to do and from what we are meant to abstain.

Of Divinity and Morality

The Sage: Again, O True Knight, you ask the question that will lead to the profitable answer! It is not enough that a seeker merely accept the knowledge provided, but know that for one traveling the path of knowledge the questions are the keys to unlock the doors of all symbols. Now listen as I explain the nature of the divine and you will come to understand the nature of morality.

The Adept: I beseech you, tell me what is divine, and what is not.

The Sage: Truly you remember that all things are Cosmos. Nothing can lie without, for it is boundless and timeless. Therefore know this, O Daughter of Knowledge, that whatever you may conceive of as divine is also within Cosmos. All things are One within Cosmos, so then are all things divine within Cosmos.

The Adept: Is the soul divine?

The Sage: Yes. The act of consciousness knowing consciousness is within Cosmos and is therefore a divine act. Consciousness is itself within Cosmos, and is therefore divine, as is the body, the mind-knowledge, and all that may be sensed and conceived.

The Adept: What, then, makes the secret knowledge, consciousness knowing itself, so sought after by the adepts if all is divine within Cosmos, the soul not being especially divine?

The Sage: Consciousness is the knower within, the only divinity you may experience directly and before all knowledge. To know itself as boundless and deathless is to know all that is divine. All other conceptions of the divine are bounded and imperfect. It is the one, boundless, timeless, ineffable God within and without. When consciousness is turned inward to know only itself, it knows itself as God.

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The Adept: What you say is truly astonishing! Is it then that we are all corrupt flesh of a profane world, yet containing within the shining light of divinity?

The Sage: No, for all things in Cosmos are divine. The flesh and the world, being not outside of Cosmos, are divine. It is only an illusion that the soul within is separate from all else. It is merely the particular architecture of the mind that is the cause of this illusion – the vast structure of mind-knowledge sitting as an imposing edifice upon the divine ground below that is its true foundation.

The Adept: I see this clearly now! The lessons I have received in the past, being then visible only in shadows, are now becoming bright! I now understand that all is divine, within and without, and that which is divine is boundless and timeless. What, then, am I to understand about morality and immorality? If it is the case that all is divine, what then shall be the source of the laws and knowledge of good? What are we to do and how are we to live?

The Sage: Plainly I will answer you now. The religion of knowing is not one of forbidding or of promulgation, for the seeker seeks and will find without revelation. No words flow from the secret knowledge because it is itself ineffable.

The Adept: Why then do many of the great works require purification of the self through moral acts, and abstention from immoral acts, before one may approach the divine?

The Sage: In the religions of faith one must approach the divinity beyond the self, and therefore must make oneself more like God in order to unite with Him. The abstention from evil before knowing the divinity within is only so that the mind may work without the distraction of lust and desire. Take heed next time your anger overcomes you, and you will see that your thoughts can rest on nothing else but your rage. The overcoming of sin is only surmounting the most stubborn part of mind-knowledge.

The Adept: Does not this God make the moral laws? If not, where do good and evil acts come from if not the free will of mankind to obey or disobey?

The Sage: O Lover-of-Knowledge, imagine not that the thing you can conceive of in mind-knowledge is without bounds! The free will of mankind is bounded as are the wills of all creatures! Do not these creatures, too, follow the laws of their nature as does mankind follow its nature? Does not the lion sire cubs only to sometimes murder them? Does the ape not sometimes exile a kinsman? These creatures live by moral laws inborn to them. They violate the moral laws by choices that easily appear to us bounded. Does the lion choose to cook its dinner? Does the ape choose to build a city? Can a man or woman choose anything it cannot conceive of? Men and women of all peoples and religions, too, follow their inborn nature and commit the same trespasses and charities without end through the ages.

The Adept: Then what good can come of the secret knowledge, the religion of knowing, if not the betterment of the self?

The Sage: The betterment of the self is had when the divinity of the self is known.

The Adept: Then what shall I do with the knowledge? What then is my purpose?

The Sage: Know this, that you are the offspring of the very first events at the very beginning of the Cosmos. Know that it is a privilege to be alive and aware in a Cosmos where most material things are neither. You are made of the very material of the Cosmos, and you are looking about trying to

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understand yourself. There can be no more of a divine and grand calling than that. There can be no more divine purpose than to **be** Cosmos knowing itself!

The Adept: This I know now, O One-Who-Praises-Knowledge! I am One, here and now, with the divine, the knower within knowing all things without! How then shall I use this secret knowledge to help my brothers and sisters? Tell me, what is my responsibility now?

The Sage: Again, your questions are the keys to the symbols! It is wise that you know this knowledge is a responsibility. It is wiser still that you know this responsibility to be towards your brothers and sisters. I say this, that your responsibility is to wear my robes and speak from my altar that others may know the secret, for it is a secret only because it is not possible to utter, being ineffable. Do not dwell in the selfish bliss of what you have found.

The Adept: Surely this I will do, and devotedly. Should I teach the mortification of the flesh and the shunning of mind-knowledge?

The Sage. You shall not, for know that I am the True Architect who built the mind-knowledge for all creatures, including mankind, so that they may survive in the world. To mankind I have given the symbols so that its knowledge may multiply and survive through the ages. Show to each according to their degree, so that they may know the temple of mind-knowledge built for them need not be a prison, for the ground upon which it sits is divine. Teach them in this way: The Apprentice suffers great pain from the confusion of living within the temple's vast chambers but finding no answers within. Confused and thinking the temple is all that may be known, the Apprentice asks no questions. All the Teacher may do is point out that the truth cannot be known within those walls. The Craftsman, learning something of architecture, becomes aware that something lies outside the temple, and asks "What is this thing that blinds me and causes my confusion?" Through symbols, the Teacher replies "It is the temple, but also a prison. It is not the All, but you think it is. It is not you, but you think it is. It is entirely yours to understand if you desire." The Adept asks "Upon what ground does the temple stand?" The Teacher must reply "It stands upon the divine ground, but I cannot describe the ground to you. You must remove the temple and look beneath its foundations yourself." When the Adept digs away the foundations of the temple, and its walls suddenly collapse, and the divine ground becomes exposed, then the Adept is enlightened and the secret knowledge is at hand. It lies beneath the temple.

The Adept: Truly, I see my path before me! Tell me, O Teacher, is this path open to all?

The Sage: Wise is your question! Hear my answer now, that the secret knowledge awaits all who seek. For whatever person, any and all, having any faith or none, being of any nation or being a vagabond, of any custom or station whatsoever and without exception, the path is open.

The Adept: Are there penalties in this life or the next for one who does not attain the secret knowledge?

The Sage: No, for it is the divine inheritance of all. The secret knowledge exists both if it is discovered or if it is left buried, no matter, therefore there can be no scorn for those who cannot see it. Let us not be so bold as to think that which we hold to our bosoms as wisdom at the time of death can change even a single star from its course!

The Adept: Is prayer then useless? Tell me, if all is divine, then what use is there in beseeching divinity?

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The Sage: As you are divine so are the words and the symbols from your mouth. So are the ears that hear. This I taught you in the House of Darkness. Know this now, that all works, whether through labor or through thoughts, are enshrined in the Cosmos forever after!

The Adept: Now, O Great Teacher, now I surely understand all that I must know!

The Sage: Surely now you wear my robes and speak from my altar! If ever from there your heart grows weary, or the shadows gather over your symbols, call on me thus:

O One-Who-Praises-Knowledge, who sees all things,
and seeing understands,
and understanding has the power to unveil
and to teach.
For what you know, you carved into stone,
Yet though you wrote the symbols onto stone you hid most.
The sacred symbols of the cosmic elements
you hid behind veils of wisdom and magic,
keeping silent,
that they might be sought out for all the long ages of the Cosmos.