

Self-Study Guide—Mysteries of the Great Operas by Max Heindel

Introduction

This study guide is intended for use with *Mysteries of the Great Operas* by Max Heindel. The guide contains two groups of questions for each section in *Mysteries of the Great Operas*. The first group of questions for a section are questions whose answer may be found somewhere in the section. The second group of questions are labeled as "thought questions." The answers to these questions are not given in the section, but rather can be answered by relating what was said in the section to one's own experience and by using one's creative imagination.

In using the study guide it is recommended that one first read an entire section from *Mysteries of the Great Operas* to get an overall picture of the topic being discussed. Then answer the questions below, referring back to the text as needed.

It is hoped that this study guide will help the reader clarify and make more precise the understanding of esoteric Truths, so that he or she may tread the path with a more certain step.

Section 1 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

1-1] Lucifer pointed out to God that man might have fared better if God had withheld a certain power from man.

a) What was that power?

b) Why (according to Lucifer) might man have been better off without that power?

1-2] When Lucifer describes Faust, what problem does he point out?

Thought Question:

1-3] Is discord needed in the universe? Why?

Section 2 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

2-1] Why do people need to experience temptation?

2-2] Why is Faust dissatisfied with his "book learning"?

2-3] How can one, in general, open one's consciousness to that of some Spirit?

Section 3 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

3-1] Where is it possible to meet the Spirit of the Earth face to face?

3-2] What is the path by which one may obtain entrance to this location?

3-2] On whom is the aspirant in the Western Mystery School taught to depend for spiritual direction and for obtaining of a soul body?

3-4] Choose the word or phrase in each parentheses which correctly completes the sentence.

In the ordinary process of Nature the human Spirit enters its dense body during antenatal life by way of the (head, feet), and withdraws at death by way of the (head, feet). The Invisible Helpers who have learned to transmute their sex force to soul power in the pituitary body, leave the dense body by way of the (head, feet) and enter by way of the (head, feet). Christ entered the Earth through (the north pole, the vital body of Jesus, the Moon) and when He leaves He will go through (the south pole, the vital body of Jesus, the moon).

Section 4 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

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4-1] Why was Faust not able to retain communion with the Earth Spirit?

4-2] If Lucifer served Faust here on Earth, then when would Faust be required to serve Lucifer in return?

4-3] Faust says that it will be time for him to die when he takes on what attitude?

4-4] Lucifer required Faust to sign their contract in blood. Why?

4-5] From where do adherents of the Western Wisdom Teachings get the life energy to obtain knowledge and use it creatively?

Section 5 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

5-1] Which of the following is not a reason why Faust made a pact with Lucifer?

- a) Faust felt that Lucifer was a being of great virtue who could help him to learn also to be virtuous.
- b) Faust had failed at getting knowledge directly from Nature, and thus was seeking elsewhere.
- c) Faust wanted to experience various emotions, including the depths of sorrows of the human soul as well as its most ecstatic joys.

5-2] What types of feelings have the Lucifer Spirits helped mankind to develop?

5-3] What caused the present-day apes to degenerate, instead of progressing?

5-4] What moral choice was Faust faced with when he met Marguerite? What was Faust's choice?

5-5] What moral choice was the priest faced with when Marguerite's mother brought him the jewels which came from Lucifer? What was the priest's choice?

5-6] Why do the Lucifer Spirits incite people to war and murder?

Section 6 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

6-1] a) What sin did Marguerite commit?
b) Consequently, what punishment was inflicted on Marguerite?
c) What caused Marguerite to turn to Christ?

6-2] a) Whom did Faust blame for the disaster which befell Marguerite?

b) What effect did this have on Faust's aims in life?

6-3] Why did Faust, after his death, not have to serve Lucifer?

6-4] Goethe states, "All that is perishable is but a likeness."

a) Where are the perishable things?

b) What are the perishable things likenesses of?

6-5] When Goethe states, "The unattainable, here is accomplished." Where is he referring to?

Section 7 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

7-1] Of the arts (sculpture, painting, and music), which has the greatest power to soothe sorrows, calm passions, stir to bravery and otherwise influence humanity?

7-2] In our material existence what do we tend to forget which music is able to remind us of?

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7-3] Next to each item on the left put the letter of the item on the right which is most closely related (in the symbolism of Parsifal):

Gamuret weds
Herzleide. _____

A. As a result of suffering,
one forsakes worldly
attitudes and becomes a
fool from the worldly
point of view.

Gamuret dies and
Parsifal is born. _____

B. The aspiring soul flees
from worldly things and

Parsifal leaves Herzleide,
and she dies. _____

Parsifal is told it is
wrong
to kill a swan, and he
breaks
his bow. _____

The wound in Amfortas'
side
begins to bleed afresh at
the sight of the
Grail. _____

Kundry is forced to
serve
whoever wakes her,
whether
it be Klingsor or the
Grail
Knights. _____

leaves worldly sorrows
behind.

C. The dense body must
respond to the commands
given it, whether they
come from the lower or
higher self.

D. The harmless life is an
absolute essential
prerequisite to the
helpful life.

E. The man of the world is
tied to sorrow and
suffering.

F. When we have sinned,
we
feel remorse when we
compare our actions
with the ideal.

7-4] When Kundry tempts Parsifal to engage in "love", how does Parsifal describe Kundry's "love"?

7-5] What did Parsifal discover (in his encounter with Kundry) was the means by which the world is stirred, tossed, convulsed and

often lost in shame?

7-6] In the third act when Parsifal is questioned as to how he came to Mount Salvat, what is his answer?

7-7] a) Parsifal obtains the spear subsequent to having withstood what temptation.

b) In what way would Parsifal not use the spear?

c) In what way did he use it?

Section 8 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

8-1] Choose the word or phrase from each parentheses which correctly completes each sentence.

The (desire, vital) body can be powerfully stirred by one particular event, but the effect does not last very long. The (desire, vital) body requires repeated impacts upon it to receive any significant impression, but then the effects last for some time.

8-2] Next to each item on the left put the letter of the item on the right which is most closely related:

The Rhine maidens lived under the waters of the Rhine._____

A. Ancient humanity was guided and cared for by divine hierarchies.

The Rhine maidens spent their time in frolic and play._____

B. Ancient humanity was united in spirit. All felt themselves to be part of one great family.

There was one lump of Gold in the Rhine which all danced around._____

Alberich stole the gold and swam to the surface._____

By forswearing love, Alberich was able to form the gold into a ring._____

C. Humans began to make a distinction between mine and not mine, and to work to further their own interests.

D. Humanity emigrated to the highlands and began to see themselves as individuals.

E. Primitive humanity dwelt at the bottom of the ocean in the dense, foggy atmosphere of Atlantis.

Thought Question:

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8-3] Do we view ourselves differently than we view other people? Do we apply the same standards of morality to ourselves as we do to others? Do we consider the needs or wants of others as important as our own needs or wants?

Section 9 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

9-1] Next to each item on the left put the letter of the item on the right which is most closely related:

The gods built a walled fortress, Valhal._____

The Sun and Moon were part of the payment given to the builders of Valhal._____

Freya, who fed the gods on her golden apples to preserve their youth, was given as part of the payment to the builders of Valhal._____

To bind the bargains with the builders, magic characters were cut in the spear of Wotan._____

A. Creeds and dogmas are not universally true, and thus may become outdated when situations change.

B. Creeds and dogmas prevent one from seeing the universal light and knowledge.

C. Religion loses some of its spiritual power when it tries to make itself understandable to the masses.

D. Religion, to make itself comprehensible to the masses, develops creeds and dogmas.

9-2] According to the teaching of the Norsemen, those only who died in battle were entitled to be taken to Valhal. What lesson does this contain for the aspirant?

Section 10 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

10-1] What did the Walsungs seek? Why?

10-2] Why did Siegmund leave Valhal?

10-3] Why did Sieglinda (initially) stay in Valhal?

10-4] When Siegmund and Sieglinda flee from Hunding, they know they will have to do battle with Hunding. What will fortify them in this battle? In Life, what will fortify us in our battles against conventionality?

10-5] Which of the following is not one of the factors which influence our lives (according to the symbolism of the Yggdrasil tree)?

- a) The elements (fire, air, water)
- b) Fate, as determined by primordial law
- c) The caprice of the gods
- d) The nature forces

10-6] What spiritual truth is portrayed by the myth when Brunhilde refuses to obey Wotan's order to help Hunding as he fights Siegmund?

Thought Question:

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10-7] Think of a convention or creed or dogma in the world today which is not in complete agreement with truth? Is this convention or creed or dogma (in spite of its untruth) of some value to those who hold it? What will be needed before its tenants will be able to seek and find the truth?

Section 11 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

11-1] How does fear prevent people from finding truth and living it?

11-2] What did Wotan fear would happen if he did not put Brunhilde (truth) to sleep?

11-3] Next to each item on the left put the letter of the item on the right which is most closely related:

Siegfried, because he is fearless, is able to forge the sword, Nothung._____

A. Intuition leads the truth seeker forward.

Siegfried recognizes that he does not look like Mime and that Mime is therefore not his father._____

B. Neither conventions nor illusions can waylay the fearless truthseeker.

Fafner, the dragon, possesses the Ring of the Niebelung._____

C. Only the fearless can use the courage of despair to seek truth.

Mime hopes Siegfried can slay the dragon so Mime can get the Ring._____

When Siegfried slays the dragon he also slays Mime._____

Siegfried is led by a bird to where Brunhilde lies sleeping.

Siegfried breaks Wotan's spear and passes through Loge's flames to reach and awaken Brunhilde._____

D. The desire nature has the Ego enmeshed in its snares.

E. The higher self recognizes that it is separate from the dense body, and was not produced by it.

F. The lower nature may scheme to use the power of the spirit to obtain material wealth and worldly power.

G. When the soul has conquered the desire nature it also is freed from the dense body.

Section 12 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

12-1] What must the truth-seeker do with truth once he has found it?

12-2] Next to each item on the left put the letter of the item on the right which is most closely related:

Brunhilde makes Siegfried's whole body invulnerable except at one point on his back between his shoulders._____

A. One who is married to truth is able to make swift decisions.

Siegfried gives Brunhilde the Ring of the Niebelung._____

B. We can stand the antagonism we will encounter as we live the truth provided we meet it directly and do not turn our backs.

Brunhilde gives her horse, Grane, to Siegfried._____

C. When the Spirit sees Truth, it also sees that all things are one.

Section 13 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

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13-1] What two advantages are there in feeling the warnings and urgings of conscience (which is the extracted essence of experiences from past lives), rather than remembering the individual incidences of the past lives?

13-2] In one life we encounter certain experiences. After death we retrospect the experiences and build into our consciences an imprint of the lessons learned. Why must we then, in the next life, encounter similar temptations?

Thought Question:

13-3] Why is the person who is able to search the Memory of Nature warned not to use this power to gratify his curiosity? What would be a legitimate use of this power?

Section 14 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

14-1] In each blank fill in a word or phrase which correctly completes the sentence.

Rhine maidens living in the Rhine correspond to the early _____ Epoch. Alberich forswearing love and forming the Ring, and devoting his energies to amassing material wealth and fighting others corresponds to the late _____ Epoch. The birth and work of the Walsungs (truth seekers) corresponds to the early _____ Epoch. The truth being opened to Siegfried and his taking the drink of forgetfulness and his being tempted to see if he will remain faithful corresponds to the later _____ Epoch.

14-2] Which of Loge's children was killed in the final battle between the gods and the giants. What element will be lacking in the "New Earth"?

14-3] When the earth undergoes the changes represented symbolically in the battle on the plain Vigrid, man will no longer be able to function in a dense body as he does now. What vehicle will he then function in?

Thought Question:

14-4] Give an example of a truth which the world knows (in its heart) but to which, in the present day, it is generally not faithful to.

Section 15 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

15-1] If an Ego takes a male body in one life, then in the next life it generally will take on a body of what sex?

15-2] Should women be treated as equals with men? Why?

15-3] What type of "love" did Tannhauser experience in the company of Venus?

Thought Question:

15-4] What are some of the effects of passionate, sensual love?

Section 16 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

16-1] Does true love seek to give, or does it seek to receive?

Thought Question:

16-2] Give an example of what one might do when he or she is filled with "true love".

Section 17 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

17-1] What is the unpardonable sin?

17-2] How must the unpardonable sin be expiated?

Section 18 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

18-1] What did the Lucifer Spirits lead humanity to do with the creative force?

18-2] What must humanity learn to do with the creative force?

18-3] Suppression of the sexual desire, by itself, is not celibacy. What additionally is needed for celibacy?

Section 19 (*Mysteries of the Great Operas*)

19-1] In what ways is a swan comparable to an Initiate?

19-2] When a Teacher comes in response to the earnest prayers of an aspirant, what does the Teacher do prior to expecting the aspirant to believe in him?

19-3] What does the Teacher require of the Aspirant (in respect to his attitude toward the Teacher)?

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