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## A FEW NOTES ON THE THREE GUNAS

[As described in *The Dream of Ravan*]<sup>1</sup>

In the mystery allegory, *The Dream of Ravan* (published first in a series of articles in *The Dublin University Magazine* of 1853-54, and later in book form), the unknown author gives us what is said to be “an authoritative utterance on Hindu psychology.” As such, therefore, we have to regard it.

It will be remembered by those who have read this book with a message, based on a little known philosophical episode in the *Ramayana* that Mandodari broke down with grief after she had heard that would come a time in the future when she would no longer occupy her present relation to her husband Ravan and would be superseded by another. The Chorus of Rishis, in its endeavour to cheer her up, told her of the three qualities arising from Prakriti or nature: Tamas (darkness or indifference), Rajas (passion or desire), and Sattva (truth or goodness). She was told that she was of the Tamasic nature and was, therefore, the complement of the predominant Tamas quality in Ravan; but when in a future birth he rose to the stage of Rajas he would need as companion and partner someone who was of a higher quality than Tamas to spur him on. But as the Tamasic quality — which is the characteristic of brute matter, that pertaining to the animal man — even when no longer predominant, is not annihilated but continues to exist as the basis which affords fuel to higher emotions, so Mandodari would always be necessary to

Ravan to minister to his Tamasic nature. A strong bond would exist between them in the future, not the bond of husband and wife, but of beloved master and devoted servant.

It is important for us to note this, for it shows that Tamas is not to be despised at any stage of evolution; it is necessary to all stages. We have a hint here as to why we are told later in the book of the Rishi Maricha who “carried to excess” severe austerities, maltreated his body and looked like a skeleton, and of Ananta, also a Rishi, but one who avoided all excesses and treated his body with care.

A further point is made that progress in the Tamas sphere of life is helped forward by love. Therefore we learn that Mandodari, in serving Ravan in the future with here love and devotion, would receive at his hands much kindness and help. Theirs would be a new relationship of mutual trust, sympathy and gratitude. Indeed, in helping Zingarel, Ravan’s companion-to-be in his future appearance on earth, with a mother’s tenderness, Mandodari would receive in return the blessing of her love. Love, care, service — wife, husband and servant — make the triad.

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<sup>1</sup> This article initially appeared in *The Theosophical Movement*, Vol. 35, March 1965, p. 181-85

There is much practical advice for us here as to the attitude we should adopt towards those who serve us in a so-called low capacity. If we adopt this idea of mutual trust and respect, the result will be that those who minister to us as attendants now will grow towards the higher gunas in a natural way, and their devotion will be our recompense. Is it because we do not act in this way that there is so much unrest among the working classes, whose labour helps to give us comfort and to fill the coffers of their masters — for which service all they get is a meagre wage?

To understand the gunas we have to see that their base is the "primordial and eternal unity." This unity, we are told, divides itself into the three radical, prismatic qualities of Tamas, Rajas and Sattva, when reflected in time, through the prism of Maya, into the multitudinous universe. Every soul born into natural life partakes in greater or less degree of these qualities, each of which is necessary to the others. For man to evolve, he must know these gunas, how to use them and how to control them.

First, it is necessary to understand that, no matter what descriptions we are given of the qualities, the threefold egoity or self-consciousness is Sattvic, Rajasic or Tamasic, and in each of these states the power or energy peculiar to it appears radiantly developed. Tamas, for example, is not merely darkness, but the self-consciousness of darkness, and in it resides the power and energy of substance or brute, insensible matter. Rajas is not merely passion, but the self-consciousness of passion, in which exists the power or energy of action. Sattva is the self-consciousness of truth or goodness, and in it is the power and energy of knowledge or wisdom.

Of these three qualities we and all nature partake. The consequences produced by their workings and

interactions imprison us, and by observing them we get to know which is the predominant guna in us.

To help us, we are told that Tamas, which springs from ignorance and is the confounder of all mental faculties, imprisons us through intoxication, sloth and idleness. Rajas, which is of a passionate nature, and arises from the effects of worldly thirst, imprisons us through the consequences produced from action. Sattva, by reason of its purity, wisdom and freedom from defect, "entwines" us — which conveys a slightly different idea from "imprisons" — through sweet and pleasant consequences.

If we would recognize our jailers or entwiners we must familiarize ourselves with their moral characteristics. Tamas tends towards gloominess; idleness, foolishness and distraction of thought; when, therefore, we give way to any of these tendencies, we must know that we are in the Tamasic state. If we are industrious, if we like to begin works and love to gain from them, if we are intemperate and our desires are immoderate and unrestrained, we must know that it is Rajas which has imprisoned us. If we are wise in all we do, and are happy, but still are attached to the consequences springing from wise action, then we must know that Sattva entwines us.

If we continue to remain in the Tamasic sphere we shall become distracted and unstable. If we continue in Rajas we shall become covetous. If we dwell in Sattva we shall have wisdom.<sup>1</sup>

A further description of these qualities is given, which helps us to understand them from another angle. Tamas is said to be the absence of all knowledge, feeling, motion, penetrability or transparency, its demerit thus being negative. It is "that stolid state or form

<sup>1</sup> "Light and goodness" would probably have expressed the idea better, for if the body of the lamp is Tamas, its moving fuel, Rajas, and the flame is Sattva; then the light given off by the flame is Super-Sattva, the Hall of *Wisdom* "wherein all shadows are unknown and where the light of Truth shines with unfading glory." (V.O.S.)

of spirit, which causes it to appear and be what we call matter." It is, in fact, "the moral basis of matter." Its highest form of organic development cannot go beyond the mere animal life and the region of sense.

Still it must be kept in mind that this quality is necessary for evolution and therefore necessary for both Rajas and Sattva and also for the condition when these three qualities will blend into one. Without Tamas, which is the characteristic of stolid, brute matter, there could, be no basis either for Rajas, consciousness in action, or Sattva, consciousness in goodness. Neither of these could function or even come into being without a form through which to work. Without some kind of stability there could be no form. We are told that "within it is the movement, the fire, and the anguish of the Rajas, and the light and joy of the Sattva. And in proportion to the large basis of the Tamas quality is the intensity and power of that Rajas fire and Sattva light, which movement can evolve." For "heroic greatness and energy of character," a basis in the animal or Tamas energies of man is needed.

To help us see that Tamas contains within itself potentially the other two qualities, which have to evolve from it, we are given an illustration: Tamas is the coal, and coal is necessary if we want fire, steam or light. "Through the anguish of the fire alone can the black coal of the mine become transmuted into light. And so the sorrow and anguish, which result inevitably from the passions in the Rajas, or emotional life, constitute the purifying fire designed to purge away the dross of our Titanic nature, and transmute it into the pure Sattva, where purity, goodness, and truth are predominant."

The "dark plastic love" of Tamas, the "simple, unreflecting, spontaneous kindness of nature," devoid of passion and unawakened to the light of knowledge, is necessary for our material existence. Therefore it is that Mandodari's love for Ravan, which is of the Tamas quality her affectionate discharge of her duty in looking after his physical needs and comforts, is necessary to him at his present stage and also will be needed by him in the future when he advances to a higher s .

As the human soul progresses from Tamas to Rajas, brute appetite and blind impulse are superseded by passion, and the life of the senses becomes the life of emotion and desire and therefore of pain, which in time awakens the mind. Yet it is this very emotional life whirl, the fire that purges this quality in time because of the sorrow suffering connected with it. It is only through pain that we be reflect and try to gain knowledge so as to alleviate or avoid this and suffering. In doing so, we begin to reach outside our own Ra' nature and turn to a still higher sphere of ideal life. Reason, knowlw universal sympathy grow up within us and awaken the Sattvic qu Passion dies, "killed by its own pain and swallowed up in love absolute resignation." The restless activity of the emotions is formed into the unruffled constant activity of Sattva, which is uni joy. All other passions expire in giving birth to an eternal sentimjustice and love, which are ultimately one.

*The Dream of Ravan* also gives a description of these qualities, in terms of colour. Tamas, matter, is dark purple or violet; Rajas red; Sattva is orange. When Sattva re-enters into Rajas and and penetrates them with its influence, all three isolated prismatic colours coalesce into pure universal light, and a consciousness of reunion. This is a stage beyond Sattva, the stage of pure being, truth, pure goodness, all merged into one, and is attained only when all isolation is renounced. But if Sattva cuts itself off from Rajas and Tamas and seeks to stand alone, in proud isolation, then its colour becomes "a deadly, venomous yellow<sup>1</sup>, the colour of serpents, dragons, and irredeemable Brahma-Rakshasas." This is a reference to the person who has cut

<sup>1</sup> This "venomous" yellow is that yellow with a green subtone. Yellow with a touch of warmth or red becomes the goldenrod colour — that of Buddhi. The "venomous" yellow may symbolize the *Pratyeka* Buddha, who takes bliss rather than renouncing "isolation" to stay and help humanity as a Nirmanakaya — the Boddhisattva of compassion, the Buddhas of the *Secret Heart*. — COMP.

himself off from his fellows and from all nature; there is nothing left for him but stagnation.

When Sattva, which is the characteristic of spirit in antithesis to body and soul, matter and life, escapes from the chains of individuality<sup>1</sup> and limitation and loses itself in pure light, then we are beyond the three qualities. As our book puts it, this is attained

"when man becomes God" . . . when the plastic, and the emotional, and the ideal, become absolutely one, and there is, properly speaking, neither matter, nor soul, nor spirit, but something which is all and yet none of those — call it Brahman; call it the constant or eternal Life; call it, if you will, that true Hindu trinity in unity — SACH — CHID — ANANDA-GHANA — "SOLIDARITY OF BEING, THOUGHT, AND JOY," in which the eternal going-forth and re-introcession of the One, is expressed in the most perfect harmony with the deepest speculation of Platonism. . . .



### ***GUNAS, MOODS AND MENTAL AFFLICTIONS***

The *gunas* receive much attention from Sri Krishna in the *Gita*, as their interaction plays a prominent part in the life of every man. Arjuna is advised to be free from their influence and to rise above them, but this is a task that the disciple cannot perform easily or right away. If *kama* still has power to delude even the wise man, we may be sure that average students like ourselves are far from having brought fully under control the *rajasic* and

<sup>1</sup> "Individuality" here, seems to be a synonym of "personality" rather than the Higher Human Ego. The *Dream of Ravan* was written long before the 1875 cycle actually began, so terminology differs but the thought is the same. — COMP.

*tamasic* elements in us and from having attained *sattvic* equilibrium.

Moods are the result of the predominance of one or another *guna* or combination of *gunas*, but many of us do not recognize when we are under the domination of a mood; no doubt if we did we might more quickly take steps to get out of it. But usually we revel in it. We hug our woes to our breast and fail to see to what extent we are in bondage to that blend of *gunas* which we call self-pity. Patanjali leaves us in no doubt as to what are the mental afflictions which destroy for us our composure and our power to concentrate.

The obstacles in the way of him who desires to attain concentration are Sickness, Languor, Doubt, Carelessness, Laziness, Addiction to objects of sense, Erroneous Perception, Failure to attain any stage of abstraction, and Instability in any state when attained.

These obstacles are accompanied by grief, distress, trembling, and sighing. ( Book I. 30-31 )

What is this — grief, distress, trembling and sighing — but self-pity? To take but the last item first — sighing, "Do your sighing and crying within you," advises Mr. Judge. He had his own periods of mental gloom before he was able to assert that he never had the "blues." But these deep sighs that are indulged in, day in and day out, being the indulging of the prevailing *guna*-mood are a great hindrance; not only are they destroyers of the power of clear seeing but they affect the vital and pranic currents and are the cause of much poor health, the constantly recurring petty sicknesses from which people so often suffer. Again, sighing tends, like every other action, to become a habit so that the strain on the nervous system becomes great.

The same remarks apply to trembling, which shows that the astral is yet in a condition disturbing to the pranic currents and this inflicts its quota of ill health and loss of equilibrium of mind on the sufferer. "Beware of trembling. 'Neath the breath of fear the key of Kshanti rusty grows: the rusty key refuseth to unlock," says *The Voice of the Silence*. Why allow the corroding rust of the kamic nature to go on disturbing the mind? It should also be noted that if any one of these afflictions is allowed to remain and is not removed, its companions, as described by Patanjali, will not be long in making their appearance and previous gains may be wiped out.

Modern methods of medicine are turning to what is called "shock treatments" to change as it were the tendency of mind of mental patients who have allowed their feelings and thoughts to go to the extreme of mental instability. These electrical treatments are thought to produce the necessary change. But they may sometimes worsen the condition, as in ordinary medical practice the procedure is largely conjectural and has not been worked out on a true psychological or even physiological basis, as the Homoeopaths claim to have done in their treatment of disease, following the motto *similia similibus curantur* (like [ailments] are cured by like [remedies]), which is a very cautious means of inducing this change. The Theosophical student need not be dependent on any physical means for the curing of his mental and emotional disorders. The rules for the change from one type of thinking to another are laid down in many texts and Patanjali, after mentioning the mental afflictions already quoted, simply adds: "For the prevention of these, one truth should be dwelt upon." (Patanjali, I. 32) Any accepted truth can thus be made the seed of a normal and healthy current of

ideation to sweep away the mental infection. Mr. Judge took as his constant text by which to rise above the passing show the following verse of the Isa Upanishad:

In him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind with the Supreme Being, what room can there be for delusion and what room for sorrow when he reflects upon the unity of spirit?

This verse, he said, always settled everything for him.

Patanjali mentions certain positive attitudes that will be found helpful for purifying the mind, namely, Benevolence, Tenderness and Complacency. Mr. Judge in his edition of Patanjali adds a note that the practice of these "brings about cheerfulness of the mind, which tends to strength and steadiness." Patanjali adds that to discourage the harmful states there should be "Disregard for objects of happiness, grief, virtue and vice" — "not," Mr. Judge explains, "that virtue and vice should be viewed with indifference by the student, but that he should not fix his mind with pleasure upon happiness or virtue, nor with aversion upon grief or vice, in others, but should regard all with an equal mind.

The person afflicted with self-pity is full of tenderness but it is for his own woes and sorrows which he indulges instead of resisting their pressure. As *The Voice of the Silence* advises, we have to "become as the ripe mango fruit: as hard as that fruit's stone" for our own "throes and sorrows" and "as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes." Again, tenderness may be shown towards others, not with the correct attitude but merely as a projection of one's own mood or feeling on to the other person, with the idea that "if I were in his shoes this is how I would feel," and then acting towards that other person on that basis. This would only cause mischief instead of enabling

one to see the other person in his own mental and physical environment and helping him from that position to take the next step possible for him. Such misguided tenderness is not really charitable at all but only sentimental.

The attitude of self-pity brings out or accentuates numerous other wrong mental attitudes — for example, faultfinding. The sufferer is usually very keen in noticing what others are or are not doing and in ascribing motives to others but, as the prevailing mood colours all such judgments, they are hurtful to the individual who indulges them, and he soon finds himself at odds with his friends and members of his family and spreads his sorrow wherever he goes.

Yet relief is available for all such mentally afflicted folk. “Which of the hells do you think you are in?” asks Mr. Judge and he adds that the corresponding heaven is very near. One may create for oneself a mental hell but one certainly need not remain there; at least a student of Theosophy need not if he applies his philosophy, which should be for all true students a contest of smiles and not of sighs. The well-known lines, “Laugh, and the world laughs with you; weep, and you weep alone,” have a sound psychological basis,

Our knowledge of the *gunas* and their action gives us power to control them. We learn from the *Gita* exactly how these *gunas* of *Sattva*, *rajas* and, *tamas*—light or truth, passion or desire and indifference or darkness—are mingled within us; their relative proportions make pessimists of some and optimists of others. But we need not remain under the disposition which falls to our lot on account of our past karma. We may exercise our inherent spiritual energy to rise above the prevailing *guna* or mood. The *Gita* explains how the prevalence of one or another of the *gunas* is determined by the

pattern of our ideation, which can be changed. Therefore we have only to change the pattern deliberately by self-effort, to induce an alteration in our mood and, to keep to our example, to substitute for self-pity, real pity and compassion for others’ woes.

The key to the make-up of any mood is in our possession and we can apply the antidote as and when we choose. Therefore we should make a careful study of the *gunas* and watch their rise and fall, mark the times and seasons when we fall under their influence and take steps accordingly against their cyclically recurring attack. We should keep on hand certain aids to the mind which have the power to restore our equilibrium quickly when it is disturbed. Each will have found by experience certain texts or passages in our devotional books or in the world’s great literatures that have a tranquillizing effect upon him. But study and reflection at fixed times provide daily periods that we should utilize for mental adjustment.

In this endeavour to rise above the *gunas* we find that Krishna, as early as in the Second Discourse, advises Arjuna to free himself from the *gunas* and the “pairs of opposites” and to be constant in the quality of *Sattva* or, in other words, to repose upon eternal truth, the higher counterpart of the *Sattva-guna*, which “by reason of its lucidity and peacefulness entwineth the soul to rebirth through attachment to knowledge and that which is pleasant.” (Bhagavad•*Gita*, XIV. 6 ) This *guna* must also be surmounted. Mr. Judge in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* shows that it is not that the qualities themselves have to be renounced but that Krishna’s instruction is “to remain freed from the influence or binding force that any sort of quality has upon the human Ego.” (p. 63)

Yoga or union is variously defined as “equal-mindedness,” “skill in the performance of actions,” exemption “from

attachment to all desires," and "disconnection from union with pain," to take some definitions in Chapters II and VI of the *Gita*. We have been so far dealing with the yoga of "disconnection from union with pain." Let us resolve now to gain the position of a *sthitaprajna*, that is, to gain equal-mindedness, and develop those skills of purified action that it makes possible for us.



## PORTRAITS OF THE THREE QUALITIES

DIGESTED FROM "THE  
BHAGAVAD GITA"

Spring is not seen, but its results on trees are evident. Similarly is the Soul, though unseen, separate from the attributes (Gunas). The sun causes many things such as the fading of the stars, the fire in Suryakanta, disappearance of darkness and the opening of the lotus, and yet the sun is untouched by any of these phenomena. So is the Soul inside the body, the fount of real power and unconcerned with actions. It is the light of the Soul, which discloses the Gunas. It is the prowess of the Soul, which increases them and yet the Soul is unconcerned. When wisdom brings the realisation of this, the man is said to be beyond Gunas (*Gunatita*).

—*Dnyaneshvari*.

The Tamasic man is ignorant and indifferent, with but small capacity. He is rash and heedless, having little common-sense, or power of judgment and discrimination. His whole concern is with mean, petty things, or else he is attached to one object as though it were the only thing in life. His knowledge and interests are confined to effects and symptoms, and he ignores causes. He is vain, foolish and fearful. He tends to become depressed and gloomy and will get satisfaction from self-mortification, because of pride and hypocrisy, or from the desire to hurt another person by such actions. He puts

false values on things, mistaking wrong for right.

He is half-asleep, lazy, idle and dull. He does not care what he eats or how it is prepared. He will undertake to do a thing without considering the consequences, or whether he has the capacity to carry it out. If he gives anything in the way of presents or favours, he does so to the wrong people, or scornfully, and without considering as to whether it is the right time and place. He carries out what duties he has to do in a slovenly way, and his religion does not even follow the letter of the law, but is a matter of omitting as much as he can " get by with. " He is drawn to spiritualistic practices, which encourage passivity and stupefaction of the soul.

The Rajasic man is the restless, over-active type, with a strong possessive spirit, always running after this, that or the other thing. He is overwhelmed by all the vast variety of things in the world, all of which he wants very intensely, but he does not see clearly among all these what to do and what to omit, nor can he distinguish between what is of value and what is harmful. He is always starting something fresh, though he will avoid doing what is likely to cause him pain and annoyance. The pleasures that come from sense activities appeal to him most, but he does not recognize that they generate pain. He likes his food too highly seasoned, and suffers from indigestion and other ills in consequence. He tends to make a burden of his work and leisure activities, and is always looking for what he is going to get out of them, or how he is going to appear to other people. If he does a generous act or performs a sacrifice, it is for show, and the same hypocrisy makes him perform ostentatious austerities for the sake of the respect and fame they bring, If he gives a present or does a favor, he expects a return or at least some feeling of spiritual benefit from it, otherwise he does it with reluctance. In his religion he looks to some

god or gods or power outside who will help him to get his desires, regardless of the effect on other people.

The Sattvic man is attracted by knowledge and harmony, and his innate wisdom shows in the very clarity of his physiognomy and his way of speaking and acting. His character is steadfast, bright, calm and happy. His natural bent is to carry out rightly whatever is necessary, as it should be done, without worrying over its results, and without self-interest or conceit. He has the power of seeing the unity underlying all the apparently separate things of life, and is able to decide what ought to be done and what not, and when and how to begin any task. He can see the dangers of any position and what will hinder and what will help in getting free from it. He can recognize that what may be painful at first may really lead to the true source of happiness, and he has the steady perseverance in his devotion that enables him to control hindering mental and physical reactions.

He chooses well-flavoured, nourishing, protective foods, which also steady and tranquillize the mental faculties. If he gives a gift he makes sure the recipient is worthy, and that the time and place are right, and—he does not expect a return. In his religion he turns to spiritual powers higher than himself, and carries out his acts of devotion religiously because he feels them essential, and without expecting to be rewarded for it. His discipline is concerned with reverence paid to such higher beings, spiritual teachers and wise men, and with self-purification and adherence to the principles of chastity, rectitude and harmlessness. In speech he disciplines himself to truthfulness and a gentleness that causes no anxiety in other people. He reads noble, elevating writings diligently. Mentally he inculcates in himself serenity, mildness of temper, the power of silence, self-restraint and absolute

straightforwardness of conduct. He is the personification of unselfishness and faith.

The characteristics of the man who is above the three qualities are perfect equal-mindedness, discrimination and control. He accepts the fact of the inertia of Tamas, the restlessness of Rajas, the harmony of Sattva, and takes them as they come without identifying himself with them. Pain and pleasure, blame and praise, disgrace and honour, hate or friendship leave him with an equal mind. Wealth has no attraction ; his values are not worldly. He does only what is necessary, in the attitude of concentrated devotion to the Spirit of all things, that is, he acts for and as the SELF. His discrimination is absolutely pure and clear, his self-control resolute. Neither the charms of sense reactions nor any notions of like and dislike affect him. He avoids crowds, eats moderately,

keeps his body, speech and mind under dispassionate control, turning his meditation always to Spirit. Without any sense of egotism, pride or possession, he can maintain calmness at all times. He is the embodiment of the Supreme, selfless, serene, sorrowless, desireless, with compassion given to all beings alike.





## POINT OUT THE WAY

### XLII

#### Chapter IX

##### I. — Vegetarianism, Religious Taboos, Memory

**Question:** — It is stated that the various animals are going through a course of evolution. That being the case, what is the general opinion of a student of Theosophy in regard to the flesh-eating habit?

**Answer:** — It varies with different Theosophists. Many Theosophists eat flesh and wish they didn't have to, but they do it just the same.

If you want a specific statement on that subject, you may find it by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*. She says it is not what man eats so much as what he thinks and feels that determines his progress; that to eat meat is no sin.

You know, the aboriginal tribes of the South Seas have what they call taboos. The Jews have taboos. No Jew could eat pork, but they could gorge themselves on goose. A good many people would prefer ham to goose, but ham is taboo to the Jew. In the same way, many people make meat a taboo; they wouldn't eat meat to save a ship from sinking. Others make a taboo of something else. There are a certain number of people in every period of religious revival who would not eat

anything at all. They die in the odour of sanctity; and a dead saint is just as dead as a dead devil I! So it all depends upon how one feels about many subjects.

There are things which in themselves are bad; they possess no alleviative or remedial features whatever; the consensus of mankind knows them to be bad. Take such a thing as to betray the confidence of a friend, to rob one who trusts you. The world around, irrespective of race, creed, sex, condition or organization — these things are done, but the man who does them is a Judas. There is something that possesses no extenuating features.

But we, according to our nature and our ideas, set up an arbitrary criterion and say: *This* is good; *that* is bad. Then, instead of acting upon our perception — if it is good, do it; if it's bad, don't do it — instead of doing that ourselves (in other words, practising ourselves what we believe), we go out and try to ram it down other people's throats.

The people of India, for example, are naturally vegetarians. Through thousands of years of heredity, they have the vegetarian idea there, just as we in the West have the personal-God idea. No modern Hindu invented it; it is inherited. The same with us and our personal God. We didn't invent a personal God — it was imposed on us.

The orthodox Hindus saw mortal sin in killing an animal; they saw no sin whatever in neglecting and abusing animals. Of all places on earth where the cattle look as if they lived in the poorhouse the worst is India. Nobody would kill a cow, but many will maltreat one, and some times starve it to death. A man may abuse a cow in every way, and still be a vegetarian.

Jagdish Chandra Bose, one of the greatest of our real modern scientists, discovered that vegetables have nerves just as an animal has, and that they suffer just as an animal does. A storm of protest arose in India! The Hindus had to live; if it was the same kind of a sin to eat a vegetable as it was to eat an animal, what was the Hindu going to do?

The point is that these are not moral questions, except as any man himself makes them moral questions. All of us see things, unless we are stone-blind, that are relatively bad — that is, imperfect — and we see how they could be much better. We go out and do the best we can to put our ideas before others and educate them to the same view. But suppose they don't want to be educated. Then most people feel like resorting to violence. I have seen vegetarians who, if they could, would hang a man who ate meat.

We forget the fundamental nature of man. Let us illustrate. It is not the stomach's job to choose what will be put into it. That is our job. The stomach will take any-thing that is put into it — alcohol, opium, glass, anything. It is the man's business to put the right food into his stomach. The average man will put anything into his stomach that he can get and all that it will hold and anything that tastes good; that is his criterion. The same thing is true of our mental food. What kind of ideas do we put into our minds? Our minds go to work and digest what we put into them. It is like the food in our stomach. Once in our stomach, the alcohol does not behave the way we think it should. It behaves according to the nature of alcohol. Opium behaves like opium, etc. The poisons don't obey the stomach; they obey the law of poisons.

The same thing is true mentally. People get all sorts of mental diseases, mental appetites; their minds become perverted. And we are deceived because

of their tremendous sincerity. Anybody whose mind contains no discordant idea is terribly sincere — 100 per cent sincere, since there is no discordance in his own mind.

Take the well-known worshippers of the Goddess of Death in India, the Thugs. It was their religion to kill a man. No Thug could go to heaven until he had killed a man. It never occurred to him to question it. If he had, he would have quitted Thuggee; but the 100 per cent Thug would not let any contrary idea into his mind.

The same with a genuinely religious man: his mind is set. Why? Because it is 100 per cent religious. Look at the Jesuits. Certainly there were never any more sincere men than the holy fathers of the Inquisition; yet their ideas were infernal. Take the prevailing ideas in the world today — many of them are genuinely infernal, but nobody questions them.

You know there is something wrong with your mind when *you* can't control it; that inability is the source of most of our misery. You know there is something wrong with your body if you can't control it, and something wrong with your moral nature if you can't control *that*. Since we can't absolutely depend on any part of our nature as we are now using it, isn't that evidence enough that there is something wrong with us?

We must go to work and find out what is wrong. We shall find plenty; but very few people are interested. The more a man suffers, the more he demands a panacea; and there are no panaceas except knowledge and self-reformation. The more a man is a lover of his fellow men — that is, the more he has in him of the elements of a Mahatma, of universal brotherhood — the more he has that feeling of compassion, of sympathy for

his fellow man and still hasn't *knowledge* — the more this man looks for a panacea and is ready to propound one.

Read the church announcements in the papers and you will see a peck of religious panaceas offered. Listen to any political speech, read the newspapers, and anybody and everybody will tell you how to cure the troubles of the whole country — when they can't cure their own! No wonder people have said, "Physician, heal thyself!"

Sincerity, conviction, self-sacrifice, they are as common as dirt. Why? Because man is a divine being. There are drunken gods, wicked gods, cruel gods, and there are a lot of ignorant gods here on earth. Theosophy knows they are gods, but knows they will have to stay here in jail — that is, condemned here in mortal life — until they learn their business, until they become intelligent gods, self-examining gods. Self-knowledge is of the essence of the highest.

**Question:** — Does not H.P.B. somewhere advocate vegetarianism by quoting a passage in Genesis which says that man's food is of herbs and of the fruits of the tree?

**Answer:** — Why, yes, certainly. H.P.B. was a vegetarian who ate meat; so was Mr. Judge; so was Mr. Crosbie. Paul said, "If meat make my brother to offend," he would not eat meat.

But we fail to see that a man may be a great-hearted phil-anthropist, utterly harmless, yet go to war and fight vigorously. There never was a greater peace-loving man than George Washington; yet he fought one of the bitterest wars in history. From our point of view, Christ was a fool. He submitted to the "vivisection" of himself, but he had no need to; and he not only submitted to

vivisection, he submitted to betrayal; and he never complained.

So we have to get a truer view. People use the profoundest words of Brotherhood, God, Spirit, Love and so on, as if they knew what those words meant. We need to think over our conception of fundamental verities, and we shall find that our conceptions of the highest things are often of the earth, earthy.

**Question:** — When Mr. Hume asked one of the Masters if his wife could cease eating beef or drinking liquor, didn't the Master write that she could stop the meat but to keep on with the liquor — that if she stopped the liquor, it would kill her? Might that not be the same case with others as to meat?

**Answer:** — There are myriads of folk, as we were saying, who put moral tags on all the time, failing to see that, so far as any individual himself is concerned, the morality or the immorality of any act is in himself that, so far as the effects of his actions upon others are concerned, the effect which they experience is good or bad according to their natures; that there are very, very few things which are fundamentally good, and very, very few things which are fundamentally bad. We name as "good" and "bad" innumerable things which are neither good nor bad, except as we think them so. In other words, we try to determine moral bases by physical values. You might as well try to weigh the centre of gravity as to weigh the centre of morality.

**Question:** — Wouldn't it make a difference what the motive was? If it was to gain spirituality, that would be selfish, would it not?

**Answer:** — It would make a difference to the man. Mr. Crosbie used to tell a story about a Christian Scientist and her

little boy. It seems they were late to an appointment and were cutting across through an alley. In the alley there happened to be a white goat that had broken loose from his picket-rope, and, frightened or aggravated at the sight of the little boy — or the Christian Scientist, perhaps — the goat charged. The little boy rushed to his mother and began to whimper. She said, “Tommy, Tommy, remember that you are a Christian Scientists”!

“Yes, Ma,” he said, “but the goat isn’t!

Now, suppose a man’s stomach is habituated to meat: his stomach has no conscience, no moral nature, no motives. It knows meat; it does not know rice, or vegetable soup, or anything that a horse eats. The conscience is in the man. He may, for motives that to him seem worth while, abstain from meat after having been a meat-eater for 50 generations. But the lives in his body would raise Cain with his body, if the change was too sudden. We have in the West a meat-eating heredity; so this matter is a question for each individual to solve for himself.

**Question:** — Will you state in simple terms how to meet the general objection that we don’t remember our past lives?

**Answer:** — This question is to say, “If we have lived before, why don’t we remember?” or “Why don’t we remember here in a body?” Let us start with an answer that any man can understand. You know that this body, this brain, this nervous system and these organs of sense have all been built in the last 30, 40, 50 years; in other words, 100 years ago this body did not exist, nor did this brain, these senses and this nervous system. How could anyone remember in *this* body what happened in a body a thousand years ago? It would

take a miracle for him to remember — without effort on his part.

If we look into the subject of memory, we shall find that our ideas of memory are like our ideas of ourselves and of nature — they are altogether personal. There is nothing personal in nature except man. Have we thought of that? Memory in itself is absolutely impersonal. Matter and body are in themselves absolutely impersonal. Thought is absolutely impersonal. All our powers are impersonal. It follows then that, so long as we limit our idea of Self to this body we never can remember the experiences that may have occurred in former bodies. So long as we limit our ideas of Self to this bodily existence, we never can have any memory of Self as distinct from this or any other body, in it or out of it. So long as we regard ourselves as a creature, we never act from any conception of ourselves as a creator. Isn’t that perfectly simple?

The true memory is in man the creator, man the metaphysical Self, man the impersonal Self. Once that idea is suggested to a man and he gets to thinking about it, we can bring up the question of dreams and deep sleep. Thinking of the inner Self, a man will see that that is the only explanation of the riddle of Life, the riddle of Nature and the riddle of our own experiences — that the mind must be capable of existence independent of the body; in other words, that it is possible for us to exist subjectively.

When a man goes to thinking on that line, the question of memory begins to clear up very readily, very rapidly. Consider: we are all perfectly aware that we have an objective existence right here and now. Are we not equally aware that we have a subjective existence here and now? Is a physical existence, a sense existence, a sensuous existence, the only existence that we have? We know that we have a mental, moral and spiritual, or a

self-conscious existence, but we have never yet, in this body, found out for ourselves whether or not we could have an independent existence. That is the only way to explain dreams; that is the only way to explain sleep.

The real question becomes: "Is the man's present understanding of life — that this is the only birth there is — a tenable basis of thinking?" If he examines his own basis, he will find that the whole universe is against him on the theory that we are only born once, that we had no existence before this body, and that we shall have no existence after this death. Then, when he has found out that his own theory of life will no more hold water than a sieve, he may be ready to listen with an open mind to some other theory, and he will find that this other theory will fit all the facts as far as he knows them, and will fit a great number of facts that he can find no explanation for. Whether or not it will fit all the facts known or imagined would remain to be seen.

This much is perfectly certain: No matter how much knowledge may exist outside of our brain con-sciousness of it, no matter how many millions of times we may have lived in other worlds — in other bodies or in no body at all — we could have no consciousness whatever of it, here, unless the knowledge or the memory were printed in the brain here. It would be in vain to go out in the forest from which this paper came to look around to find The Ocean of Theosophy it would be in vain to look in the pulp mill for The Ocean of Theosophy it would be in vain to look in the paper house for The Ocean of Theosophy. Not until something which is the product of mind has been transferred, by the independent use of one form of matter, to another form of matter, do we have the printed book that we call The Ocean of Theosophy. The brain of man is just exactly that. Our knowledge of rest of the universe is our "Ocean of Theosophy,"

and until we print it on this brain, we can never know it for ourselves.

Everyone is aware, if he chooses to look within himself, of countless impressions that never came from his physical body, or his physical senses: he cannot account for them in this life. If this is a universe of order, of law, and the impression is there — it must have come from somewhere. Nobody could get from physical existence any notion whatever of immortality, but all men everywhere have the notion, whether they believe in it or not. No man in the world could ever get from physical existence the conception of law, the conception of cause and effect. We all have the fundamental notion, however erroneously. Nobody could ever get from physical existence the idea of justice or injustice; yet we all have the idea. Where did it come from? Suppose we had no other knowledge than what our eyes give us, and had the same reasoning powers that we now have, and suppose we had a visitor here from the planet Mercury, where our time is not. He sees a clock on the wall, and asks, "What is that?" Somebody would answer, "That is a clock." "Where did it come from?"

We might tell him it grew out of a wall. He wouldn't doubt what he heard — no child ever doubts when it is told that the Moon is made of green cheese! So far as the visitor from Mercury knows, he has received a truthful explanation. We know better. Why? The result of our experiences.

Understanding does not come until we begin to question in a reverent sense two things: first, to question our experiences over again; and secondly, to question the explanations offered to us and instilled into us, or those which we have adopted. Very few of our bases of action, our bases of thinking, our explanations of things, will stand examination. But the more any man will examine Theosophy —

which is an explanation of all the phenomena of existence — the more he will understand his experiences, until finally the explanation, the experience and the ability to command both, will become one in him — and he will have regained his ancient state of knowledge.

No matter what state of consciousness we may be in, if we take that state to be real, then we shall take everything else which happens, as an attribute or quality of that state, to be real, and we shall seek for an explanation within that state. But if, in fact, the explanation lies outside, we shall never find it that way. The explanation of death, of birth and of reincarnation lies outside of all human experience. We have the experience, but the explanation lies outside of human life. Where? On the plane of Higher Manas.

Until we investigate, we shall not see the relation between our thinking in former lives and our birth in this one. We shall not see the relation between the views and notions that we have adopted or have had drilled into us, and our Karma. When we begin to look, we shall begin to see.

It has been said that the Ocean calls particular attention to the fact that neither Atma nor Buddhi is incarnated at all; to them, our matter does not exist. Manas exists to them, and is to them the only “existence.” Manas is only partly incarnated, because Manas is so identified with the effects — conscious effects of unconscious causes — that we cannot, of our own will, let go for an instant its identification with these effects. The moment we begin to let go — for example, by considering merely as a plausible theory the Fundamental Propositions of Theosophy — that moment we begin to see for ourselves.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



## DNYANESHVARI

### XLI

[The *Dnyaneshvari* is mentioned many times by Madame Blavatsky, always in glowing terms. The following rendition is extracted from Manu Subedar's translation. The great Sage, Dnaneshwara Maharaj sang this work to his people when he was quite young. He did it in their native language, Marathi, about 700 years ago. It is his commentary on the *Bhagavad Gita*.]

### CHAPTER THIRTEEN

**Arjuna says to Shri Krishna:** This body is called the field (Kshetra). Whoever knows this thoroughly, is called the husbandman (Kshetragna). The true husbandman is, however, Myself, who protects all these fields. True wisdom (Dnyana) is that, by which full knowledge can be secured of the field of the husbandman.

I will now tell you why the body is called the field, where it is produced, and what transformations it goes through; whether it grows wild and to whom it belongs. The scriptures have attempted this description, and logicians have constantly had disputes about this. Sciences exhaust themselves in working out its qualities. Full knowledge of this has not yet been secured by anybody. There are theories and controversies. The terms in which this can be spoken have not yet been fixed. No one knows what the body is, but everyone is anxious to know

about it. Such is the strong sense of possession with regard to the body, that there are disputes over it in every family. When the Vedas raise their voice to put down agnosticism, the non-believers start on a different issue. These non-believers raise arguments about the body, only to find them futile. The seekers of Yoga realize that death would put an end to this body, and try to circumvent it by their efforts. Those who are afraid of death, resort to solitude and subject themselves to a large number of disciplinary rules. It was due to false notions about his body, which compelled Lord Shankara to come down from heaven to take his abode in the crematorium. He made the ten points of the compass as his garments, and burnt into cinders Cupid, the tempter. Prolonged attempts to ascertain the exact nature of the body (Kshetra), have not secured the object. There is a school of thought which says that the body belongs to self (Jiva), and breath (Prana) is only its agent; that the four different breaths work conjointly under the common supervision of the mind. The limbs and the senses constitute the bullocks, and they work night and day in the field. If the self (Jiva) misses the right reason to do the proper duties, sows the seeds of sin and the manures of evil, he reaps the crop of sin and suffers the sorrows of rebirth. He reaps bliss from good seeds sown at the proper season. There is another school of thought which says the field does not belong to the self. Self (Jiva) is merely a traveler on the path, and life (Prana) is one of the rightful owners who keep watch. The body (Kshetra) is really the province of Prakriti (Maya), which is without beginning. The body carries on cultivation as of a homestead. The three principal qualities required for cultivation are born of Prakriti. The Rajas (activity) sows, the Satwa (truth) maintains, and Tamas (darkness) does the reaping, Mahattatwa

(over-soul) constitutes the threshing wheel, the threshing being done by the bullock in the form of time (Kala). Like grains falling in the center, the Unmanifest remains in the midst. To this school the agnostic replies that all this is false and modern, but he does not know that before Brahman (Paratatwa), Prakriti is of no account.

The original intention (Sankalpa) lay on the mattress of nihility (Sunya) on the bed of absorption in Brahman (Sulinata). It awoke, and having the power, it attained the end according to its wishes. The plantation of the formless primeval principal, which is as extensive as the three worlds, came into being by its exertion. Then this original intention collected the different principles and different proportions of the Mahabhuta (the primary element), and secured the creation of the different orders of the worlds of beings. The five main elements were constituted. Land, which was barren became fertile. In the fields, various functions such as sowing, etc., were introduced. On the two sides of the human body were set up boundaries in the form of good and bad actions. All along the path, where this purpose moved unseen, a high road was made for birth and death. In the sky of life the branches of this purpose (Sankalpa) spread widely, and all activities find their root in it. Still another school has disputed this line of explanation by arguing that, if the abode of Sankalpa were in the domain of Paratatwa, why should not creation resulting therefrom be acknowledged? They ask, who filled the sky with clouds, and who holds the multitude of stars in the firmament, who holds the canopy in the form of the sky, and from whom does the wind madly circulating, derive its impetus; who has sewn the hair on the body, filled the ocean, or created the showers of rain? They say

that this body (Kshetra) exists naturally; it is the domain of no one, and it yields to those that cultivate it, and gives nothing to those who do not. Yet another set of men are dissatisfied with this explanation, and ask angrily why should the body be subject to death. In their opinion, death is supreme and individuals can do nothing. Beings are helpless in the vortex of birth and death. The flow of death has extended taking the whole world in its grip. Death (Kala) is the dominant factor.

In this way, O Arjuna, there have been different theories with regard to the body (Kshetra). Many sages have talked about it since ancient times and advanced various logical reasons. In the Vedas there are many couplets explaining this, yet the controversy goes on. The Brihatsamsutra is full of wisdom, but it does not tell much about the Kshetra. The knowledge has eluded them all. I shall impart it to you.

In the first instance there are five elements. There is consciousness of self (Ahankara), intelligence (Bhuddhi), and illusion (Maya). There are also ten centers, five of thought and emotion, five of action. There are thirty-six qualities in all. In addition to the ten senses there is the mind, which constitutes the eleventh. There are further pleasure and pain, hatred, association and desire. There is vitality (Chetana) and endurance (Dhriti). The five elements are earth, water, light wind and sky. Consciousness of life is concealed in illusion, as dreams are concealed in waking life. The moon is invisible on the new moon day. Youth is only latent in a small child, and scent is concealed in the bud of the flower. Fire exists unseen in a piece of wood. Similarly the five elements shape the human body, and what makes it move about is consciousness of self (Ahankara). So illusive is this consciousness, that it

clutches at the throat of the wise and trails them through many perils.

The characteristic of intelligence (Buddhi) is that it enables the over-running of all enjoyments when passion is inflamed by the senses, and then, when such enjoyment results in happiness and misery, it gives an indication as to which of these two is worse. By means of intelligence, a man gets to know the qualities of different objects of enjoyment. He gets discrimination between happiness and misery, sin and merit, pure and impure action, the worthy and the unworthy, the material and the immaterial. Intelligence is thus the root of the power of wisdom (Dnyana). It is by means of intelligence that Satwa (truth) can grow. Intelligence dwells on the confluence of self (Jiva) and Self (Atma).

I will now tell you about Maya (illusion). What the Sankhyas regard as the original principle (Prakriti), is nothing but Maya. It is unseen. I have described to you the twofold Prakriti, the second of which is called Jivabhuta. Stars disappear from the sky at the close of the night. Activities cease at the close of the day. Desires abate with the passing of the body. Trees are contained in the seed, and cloth in the thread. So, the five elements and all living beings, abandoning their visible existence and resorting to the immaterial, rest in the unseen (Avyakta) called Maya.

I will now describe to you the senses. There are those pertaining, to sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell. These are the five senses of knowledge. By means of these one is enabled to determine what is essential and what is not, what is attractive and what is not attractive. Similarly speech, hands and feet, the lower limbs and the reproductive organs are the five senses of action. The power of action which resides at the gates

of these senses of action is the companion of the life force.

The characteristic of the mind (Manas) is that it dwells always on the throne of activity (Rajas) at the conjunction of the senses and the intelligence. The mind can be likened to the swift movement of the wind, or the (unreal) blue color of the sky, or the mirage. The five elements constitute the body, and out of them, the wind acting in ten-fold manner constitutes the breath (Prana). These ten-fold Pranas reside according to their nature in their respective places, but they are never steady, and, therefore, they give rise to activity (Rajas). Their strength is increased in the region beyond intelligence (Bhuddhi) on the one side, and egoism (Ahankara) on the other. This restlessness is called the mind (Manas), but it is imaginary. It is this, which gives to Self (Brahman) the condition of self (Jiva). The mind that, thus, is at the root of all activities, gives strength to desires. It rivals egoism, stimulates aspirations, empowers hope, and is assisted by fear. From this comes the experience of dual qualities. The mind harbors ignorance (Adnyana), leading to the enjoyment of the senses. It is the mind that destroys by means of doubt, the original purpose (Sankalpa), by which the world is created. It is the mind that builds castles in the air. It is the storehouse of error. With all the restlessness like wind, it chokes the outlets of intelligence (Bhuddhi).

I shall now tell you the characteristics of the different senses. The sense of touch, speech, sight, taste, and smell constitute the five-fold group of mental senses. These lead automatically to knowledge, in the same way as green grass tempts cattle.

Let me now describe to you desire (Ichcha). The remembrance of enjoyments that have passed, and the hearing of accounts of what has gone before are the root of desires. When objects of enjoyment are available to the senses, further hope increases the desires. Desires run along the path of inclination, and when they are aroused, they make the mind wander indiscriminately, directing the senses where they should not go. By association with desires, Buddhi (intelligence) weakens. The foundation of desires is the love of pleasures. When the senses do not acquire their objects, the attitude which is created in the mind from unfulfilled desire is called 'hatred.' Next comes 'happiness,' which is that by which alone, the self (Jiva) forgets everything else. That which in mind, speech and body, is steady, and which destroys the worries of the body and all its incidents; by the acquisition of which breathing (Prana) becomes slow, and true thought (Satva) increases; that which puts to sleep all passions in the solitude of the heart; that in which the self (Jiva) has been secured the joy of meeting with Self (Atman), is called happiness. The contrary of this is 'unhappiness.' Happiness is not the accompaniment of desire. Otherwise, desire being constant, there should be no need of search for happiness.' Happiness goes with the abandonment of imagination (Kalpana), and unhappiness goes with attachment (Sangha).

'Soul' (Chetana) is that supreme power of Brahman, untouched by anything and witnessing everything, which resides in the body. From the top to toe, this is always awake and this is unchanged in the least during the extremes of the three-fold condition. It is this soul which maintains in their freshness, the mind (Manas), intelligence (Buddhi), and all other constituents, in the same manner as

perpetual spring keeps in all its beauty the forest. The soul dwells equally in inert as well as active limbs of the body. It is the sway of the soul over the body, which gives life to everything, which would be otherwise dead matter, in the same manner as the king who may not recognize all his individual warriors, but at whose command everybody tries to kill the enemy, or as tides come in the ocean at the sight of the full moon, or as a piece of iron would galvanize itself into activity when touched with a magnet, or the light of the sun enabling the world to function, or as a tortoise nourishes the young ones without feeding at the breast, but merely looking at them. This is life. This is soul.

I will now tell you the different characteristics of 'firmness' (Dhriti). The five elements usually act at variance with one another. Water will displace and destroy the earth. Water will put out fire. Wind will affect fire, and the sky or ether will eat up the wind. The ether dwells by itself. These five elements in this manner, ordinarily antagonistic, secure unity and common action inside the body. They shun their antagonism and help each other to carry out the common functions. What enables these different elements to hold together is undoubtedly firmness.

The thirty-six items which I have mentioned in company with the self (Jiva) constitute 'collective life' (Sanghata). Together they make up what is known as the body (Kshetra). That is called a chariot, with wheels and poles and everything else. That is called a body, that has a head, arms, and all the other limbs. That is called an army, which has the infantry, cavalry, elephants and all the other units. That is called a sentence which has a collection of correlated letters in it. Collectively the clouds are called the sky. All the visible living beings are called the world (Jagrat). Oil,

wick and fire coming together in certain positions, get the name of a lamp. In this manner, these thirty-six items together constitute the body (Kshetra). In this field, according to the tendency of self, whether sinful or virtuous, the crops grow. It is for this reason that the body has secured comparison with a field. This is as good a name as any other. Really, everything that exists and disappears on this side of the Oversoul (Brahman), everything moveable and immovable, is of the genus (Kshetra). The different species such as Devas, human beings, serpents, etc., reflect the connection with the three qualities (Gunas) and the different kinds of action (Karma). I shall mention these later on.

I will now tell you the characteristic of wisdom (Dnyana). The knowledge of Self is that for which the Yogi cross beyond the cavity of Brahman, ignoring the temptations of heaven. Prosperity does not tempt them, and attainment does not stand in their way. The severity of asceticism does not hold them back. They cross the fortress of austerity. They go beyond the merit of millions of sacrifices. They uproot the creepers of Karma. Some of them take unto the path of devotion (Bhakti). Some move about with bare body. Some take to the path of the intermediate condition. In hope of acquiring this wisdom, the great sages, with a single purpose, have lived practically on each leaf of the tree of the Vedas. To their preceptor, they yield everything in the absolute confidence, that service of the preceptor will save them the journey of many births. When wisdom enters, error is destroyed, as the self and the Self begin to live together. The doors of the senses are closed up. The feet of Karma are broken and mental melancholy is removed. Duality dwindles down to famine rations. Equanimity is plentiful through the prowess of the knowledge of

Self. Pride runs away. Illusion is destroyed. No other feeling remains except consciousness of Self. The coils of worldly existence are broken up. All mistaken performance is purified, and one embraces the all-pervading Brahman. At the acquisition of this wisdom life (Prana), which activates the ordinary functions of the world, itself becomes lame. The light of this wisdom (Dnyana) clears all stains of intelligence, and the self freely rocks in the cradle of joy. Such wisdom is the abode of purity, which secures crystalline brightness to the mind (Manas), that has been clouded by objects of sense. The feeling that "I am self," which is produced in the Soul the slow consumption which has set in, are removed all together in the presence of this wisdom.

The full description of this wisdom (Dnyana) is not possible. But I will tell you a few things, though there is nothing tangible that you can see with your eyes. All the same, when wisdom sprouts in the body, it also affects all actions that are performed by means of the senses. The flower in the tree indicates the advent of spring. So certain kinds of action are symptomatic of the growth of knowledge (wisdom). Just as the root in the ground comes up when it has been watered, and then the tree grows, from which there are many branches, and then there are flowers and fruits, fertility of the ground is indicated by the nature of the sprouts. The prosperity of men is seen from the way in which they act. Courtesy and hospitality is the visible proof of love. Just as the mind gets peace at the meeting of a sage, just as a hidden piece of camphor is detected by the smell, the light of the lamp is not impeded by the glass cover put on it. So, the growth of Dnyana (wisdom) inside gives more than one outside indication. The attainment of any enjoyment (of the senses) is unpalatable to him in whom wisdom (Dnyana) has spouted. Reputation

of any kind is a burden. When any one describes his merits, or establishes that he is worthy of respect, he is frightened like a deer who meets a tiger or like a swimmer caught in a whirlpool in the middle of the river. His mind is distressed by the esteem of people and he does not allow greatness of any kind to come near him. He is unwilling to use his eyes to see the difference being given to himself or to use his ears to hear his fame. He does not even want to be identified by people. For this reason he is not fond of hospitality, will not accept any respect, and even ordinary greetings embarrass him. In spite of deep wisdom in himself, equal to that possessed by the god of learning, he is afraid, lest people give him distinction, and behaves, therefore, like a fool. He never shows his cleverness. He conceals his prowess and deliberately behaves in an ignorant manner. If people talk about him he is unhappy. For this reason he is not fond of the accomplishments of science. He is anxious for peace. In his heart, he would like that the world should ill-treat him and that all relations should desert him. Though thoroughly occupied with his own higher performance inside, he appears outwardly most inactive. He behaves in this manner, because he would like people to wonder if he is even alive or not. He looks in a manner that would raise doubts as to whether he is walking at all or whether it is the wind that moves him. He wants even his name to be forgotten. This is his constant prayer and for this purpose he seeks isolation. He is overjoyed in reaching a place where there is nobody. His friendship is with the wind, his discourse is with the sky, and the trees are like the dear companions of his life. He who shuns fame and distinctions in this manner, might be assumed to have attained wisdom (Dnyana).

[TO BE CONTINUED]



# Correspondence

## An Open Letter to the Scientific Community

www.cosmologystatement.org

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The big bang today relies on a growing number of hypothetical entities, things that we have never observed--inflation, dark matter and dark energy are the most prominent examples. Without them, there would be a fatal contradiction between the observations made by astronomers and the predictions of the big bang theory. In no other field of physics would this continual recourse to new hypothetical objects be accepted as a way of bridging the gap between theory and observation. It would, at the least, raise serious questions about the validity of the underlying theory.

But the big bang theory can't survive without these fudge factors. Without the hypothetical inflation field, the big bang does not predict the smooth, isotropic cosmic background radiation that is observed, because there would be no way for parts of the universe that are now more than a few degrees away in the sky to come to the same temperature and thus emit the same amount of microwave radiation.

Without some kind of dark matter, unlike any that we have observed on Earth despite 20 years of experiments, big-bang theory makes contradictory predictions for the density of matter in the universe. Inflation requires a density 20 times larger than that implied by big bang nucleosynthesis, the theory's explanation of the origin of the light elements. And without dark energy, the theory predicts that the universe is only about 8 billion years old, which is billions of years

younger than the age of many stars in our galaxy.

What is more, the big bang theory can boast of no quantitative predictions that have subsequently been validated by observation. The successes claimed by the theory's supporters consist of its ability to retrospectively fit observations with a steadily increasing array of adjustable parameters, just as the old Earth-centred cosmology of Ptolemy needed layer upon layer of epicycles.

Yet the big bang is not the only framework available for understanding the history of the universe. Plasma cosmology and the steady-state model both hypothesise an evolving universe without beginning or end. These and other alternative approaches can also explain the basic phenomena of the cosmos, including the abundances of light elements, the generation of large-scale structure, the cosmic background radiation, and how the redshift of far-away galaxies increases with distance. They have even predicted new phenomena that were subsequently observed, something the big bang has failed to do.

Supporters of the big bang theory may retort that these theories do not explain every cosmological observation. But that is scarcely surprising, as their development has been severely hampered by a complete lack of funding. Indeed, such questions and alternatives cannot even now be freely discussed and examined. An open exchange of ideas is lacking in most mainstream conferences. Whereas Richard Feynman could say that "science is the culture of doubt", in cosmology today doubt and dissent are not tolerated, and young scientists learn to remain silent if they have something negative to say about the standard big bang model. Those who doubt the big

bang fear that saying so will cost them their funding.

Even observations are now interpreted through this biased filter, judged right or wrong depending on whether or not they support the big bang. So discordant data on red shifts, lithium and helium abundances, and galaxy distribution, among other topics, are ignored or ridiculed. This reflects a growing dogmatic mindset that is alien to the spirit of free scientific enquiry.

Today, virtually all financial and experimental resources in cosmology are devoted to big bang studies. Funding comes from only a few sources, and all the peer-review committees that control them are dominated by supporters of the big bang. As a result, the dominance of the big bang within the field has become self-sustaining, irrespective of the scientific validity of the theory.

Giving support only to projects within the big bang framework undermines a fundamental element of the scientific method -- the constant testing of theory against observation. Such a restriction makes unbiased discussion and research impossible. To redress this, we urge those agencies that fund work in cosmology to set aside a significant fraction of their funding for investigations into alternative theories and observational contradictions of the big bang. To avoid bias, the peer review committee that allocates such funds could be composed of astronomers and physicists from outside the field of cosmology.

Allocating funding to investigations into the big bang's validity, and its alternatives, would allow the scientific process to determine our most accurate model of the history of the universe.

[*The Aquarian Theosophist* neither endorses nor denies the above, but if you are a scientist or engineer and want to sign this

statement or get more information, go to:  
**cosmologystatement.org** ]

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## *IAMBlichUS<sup>1</sup>: A TREATISE ON THE MYSTERIES.*

A NEW TRANSLATION, BY PROFESSOR  
ALEXANDER WILDER, F.T.S.<sup>2</sup>

### PART II

[Continued from Vol. IV, #5 Supplement — Last  
paragraph of first insertion is repeated.]

Consider, if you are willing, the last one of the divine races, the soul pure from the defilement of bodies. Being superior to the realm of nature, and living the unbegotten life, what does it want of the generated life with sensual pleasure and of the restoration thereby into the realm of nature? Being outside of everything corporeal, and of the nature which is divisible in respect to the body, and being likewise entirely separate from the accord in the soul which goes down into the body, why is it to participate of the pain that leads to decay and dissolution of the structure of the body? On the contrary, it has no occasion for the susceptibilities which are forerunners of sensation, for it is neither held at all in a body nor in any way environed by it so as to have occasion for bodily organs in order to perceive different

<sup>1</sup> We have modernized some of the spellings: *Iamblichos*, to Iamblichus, *Porphyrios* to Porphyry, *Ammonios* to Ammonius, *Plotinos* to Plotinus, etc. The text was highly prized and often quoted by H.P.B., so the effort to have the best translation possible available to Madame Blavatsky's students is a useful endeavor. Most of this series comes from the 1915 edition published by The American School of Metaphysics, Greenwich, Conn.

<sup>2</sup> Professor of Psychological Science in the United States Medical College, New York, and Member of the General Council of the Theosophical Society. This very rare Work of Iamblichus has never been hitherto fully or even correctly translated from the original Greek. Our esteemed friend is an eminent Platonist, and no one is better qualified for the work than he is. We are happy to find that he has at last realized his dream of many years standing, to give to the public a correct rendering of this most abstruse and difficult treatise upon *theurgy* by the Neo-Platonic mystic, — Thomas Taylor's translation being very unsatisfactory. — ED. THEOS.[HPB]

bodies outside of these organs. In short, however, being indivisible, remaining in the one same form, being essentially incorporeal, and having nothing in common with the generating and susceptible body, it can be affected by nothing in regard to classification or transformation, nor in short has it any concern whatever with change or condition.

But on the other hand, whenever the soul comes into the body it is not itself, nor are the rational faculties which it imparts to the body susceptible to impression.<sup>3</sup> For these are simple and single ideals, not admitting any disturbing element: or entrancement, so far as relates to them. It is, therefore, the something that yet remains that is the cause of such experience to the composite nature. Nevertheless, the cause is not in any way the same as the effect.<sup>4</sup> Hence, the Soul being the first genesis and origin of the composite living beings that come into existence and pass to dissolution, is itself, so far as relates to itself, unbegotten and imperishable; so also those that participate of the soul are susceptible to impression and do not possess life and essence in their completeness, but are entangled in the indefiniteness and alien conditions of the realm of matter.<sup>5</sup> Yet the soul, as relates to itself, is

<sup>3</sup> Plotinus, using the comparison that the workman does not contract the imperfections of his tools, remarks that it is not necessary that the soul shall be itself affected by the conditions of the body. It simply uses the body as its instrument. It is incorporeal, and hence the passions and susceptibilities of the body do not penetrate into its substance, but only into its powers and energies. — A.W.

<sup>4</sup> Proclus illustrates this by the analogy of a man viewing his own image in a stream of water. He is unchanged in his own person and individuality, but the image exhibits great perturbation. So the soul contemplates its own image as reflected in the body, and though it is itself impassible and unaffected, it may be perplexed by the incidental disturbances. — A.W.

<sup>5</sup> Greek, wood, rubbish; the negative or inert quality called matter, from which natural objects proceed. Aristotle first adopted the term. Plato, unable to conceive of matter as substance *per se*, made use of terms signifying the "nurse" and the

unchangeable, as being in its own essence superior to impression, and as neither being moved by any preference inclining in both directions (passiveness and impassibility), nor as receiving an acquired versatility in the participating of habitude and power.

Since, therefore, we have shown, in respect to the last race of the superior orders, namely, the soul, that it is impossible for it to participate in any passive or impressionable condition, how is it proper to attribute this participation to demons and half-gods who are sempiternal and follow the gods, and themselves according to their respective grades preserve, and likewise in their several places make the regular arrangement of the divine beings always complete, and do not leave any unoccupied space between the different orders? For this we know for certain: that the passive condition is not only undisciplined but also discordant and unstable, never being in any case its own master, but attached to that by which it is held fast and to which it is subservient in reference to the sphere of generated existence. This condition of passiveness, therefore, pertains to some other race rather than to one always existing and allied to the gods, not only maintaining the same arrangement but likewise going around the same circuit with them. Hence, therefore, the demons, and all who rank with them after the superior races, are impassible.



#### CHAPTER IV

### rites, symbols and offerings

"Why then, are many ceremonies performed histrionically in the Sacred Rites, as though the gods were moved by passion?"

I think that this is said without an intelligent understanding in regard to the Sacerdotal technique of the Mysteries.

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"receptacle" or passive force. The term "matter" is from *materia*, the mother-principle. The phrase "realm of matter" is adopted here, as the term implies a department in the universe, and not simply matter itself. — A.W.

For of the ceremonies performed from time to time in the Sacred Rites, some have an ineffable cause and a divine principle; others are consecrated to the Superior beings from eternity as symbols are consecrated;<sup>1</sup> others preserve some other image, just as Nature, the Supreme Genetrix also from invisible concepts, molds visible semblances. Others are brought forward from some motive of veneration,<sup>2</sup> or they are endeavors at figurative representation, or some concept - of a family relationship. Some prepare us for something that is useful, or in some way purify and free our human passions, or turn away some of the evils that may be impending over us. Yet it may not be admitted that any part of the **Holy** Observance is performed to the gods or demons as to impressionable beings. For the essence which is subjectively everlasting and incorporeal is not of a nature to permit any change from the bodies (offered at the Rites.<sup>3</sup>)

Not even though it be admitted that it has use especially of such a kind, would it ever need it from human beings in a religious service of this kind. It is supplied from itself, and from the nature (or feminine principle) of the world, and from the abundance which is in the genesis (or generative energy) ; and if it is permissible to say this likewise, it receives a sufficiency before it can be in any want, through the unfailing complete supply of the world and its own ample abundance, and because all the superior races are fully supplied with the good things pertaining

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<sup>1</sup> Symbols constituted a prominent feature in the ancient religious worship. They were undoubtedly to a large extent fetishes, there being a measure of the essence and operation of the deity supposed to exist in them. The Egyptian, and indeed the whole Oriental worship consisted of them, and even at the present time, there is no ritual that is without them. But then, human language is made up of symbols and representative sounds. — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> This is distinctly denied in Part V, Chapter VI. — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> See Part V, Chapters II and IV. — A.W.

to them respectively. Let there be, therefore, this general encouragement for us in regard to the worship of the uncontaminated races, that they are likewise affiliated by kindred relationship to the beings that are otherwise superior to us, and on this account the pure are attracted to the pure, and the impassive to the impassive.

Following every point in its turn, we remark that the planting of "phallic images" is a special representing of the procreative power by conventional symbols, and that we regard this practice as an invocation to the generative energy of the universe. On this account many of these images are consecrated in the spring, when all the world is receiving from the gods the prolific force of the whole creation.<sup>1</sup>

I think, however, that the immodest language to which you refer affords an illustration of the absence of moral virtues<sup>2</sup> in the realm of matter, and the

<sup>1</sup> The custom here described was universal in ancient times, and it is still found in parts of India. Its remains also exist in architecture and ornamentation. In the worship of the Ashera and Venus of Eryx, and of the Great Mother in Syria and Western Asia, the observances were carried to greater extremes. King Asa of Judea is said to have deposed his mother, Maacha, from royal dignity for her participation—"because she made a phallus to an Ashera," I *Kings XV* : XIII. It has been generally believed that the Festivals and Initiatory, or Perfective Rites, of the different countries, included the same feature, as indeed, is here admitted. It should be borne in mind, however, before any hasty judgment, that the different faiths had their two sides, like the right or the left, and that worshippers regarded them and took part in them according to their inherent disposition. Thus, in India, there are the Ascetic siva-worshippers, and the Saktas, to this day. In this way the Mysteries presented themes for the highest veneration, as well as phases that are esteemed as gross and lascivious. Every curious person, therefore, sees in them what he has eyes to see, and is often blind to the rest. — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> *Greek*, *Καλῶν* from *Καλόν*, good, beauty, moral virtue, excellence. Mr. M. W. Hazeltine, in the *New York Sun*, remarks upon this apparent confounding of moral with physical beauty, which this word exhibits, that "the ancients had not that conception which forms the basis and aim of *Æsthetics* in our time. To a Greek, if a thing was

unseemly rudeness existing beforehand with the unformed elements that are to be organized. These being utterly destitute of orderly arrangement, are passionately eager for it, so to speak, to such a degree as they are conscious of the unbecoming condition of things around themselves. Hence, again, perceiving from the speaking of vile utterances, what is vile, they follow to the (divine) sources of the ideals and moral beauties.

They accordingly not only turn aside from evil action, but through the words, it is manifest in its forms and changes the impulse to a contrary direction.<sup>3</sup>

There is, however, still another reason of analogous character for these customs. The powers of the human passions that are in us, when they are barred on every side, become more vehement: but when they are brought into activity with moderation and reasonable measure, they are sufficiently de-lighted and satisfied, and becoming pure in consequence, are won over and set at rest. In the same way, likewise, in comedy and tragedy, when we behold the emotions of others, we repress our own, make them more moderate and are purified from them. In the Sacred Rites, also, we are, by certain spectacles and relations of ugly things,

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beautiful it was good, and if it was good it was beautiful; that, at least, was the prevailing attitude of the Hellenic mind." — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> These opinions were anciently entertained, the universe itself being regarded not as a fabric but as a birth, a creation or genesis, and evolution. But the philosophers generally disapproved of the doleful rites and immodest speech. Plutarch enumerates the various practices, such as the eating of raw flesh, the days of fasting and mourning for the slain divinity, (Matthew XI, 16; Amos VIII, 10) and the uttering of filthy and unseemly language. He explains that they were "not in honor of the gods, but rather to avert, mollify and appease the wrath of evil demons." The Emperor Julian, however, forbade the using of words that should not be spoken or heard. — A.W.

delivered from the harm that is likely to befall through the events represented by them.<sup>1</sup>

Things of this character are brought into use, therefore, for the healing of the soul within us, the moderating of the evils which have become natural to it through the genesis<sup>2</sup> or nativity, and likewise for the sake of its unloosing and deliverance from its bonds. On this account, probably, Herakleitos names them "Remedies"<sup>3</sup> as being cures for terrible maladies, and restoring the souls sound from the experiences incident in the generated life.

#### WHAT THE INVOCATIONS ACCOMPLISH

But the objection is also made: "The invocations are made as to gods that are impressionable beings; so that it is implied that not the demons only are impressionable, but the gods likewise."

This, however, is not as thou hast supposed. For the illumination which is present through the invocations is self-appearing and self-subsisting; it is also far removed from being attracted downward, and goes forth into manifestation through the divine energy and perfection, and it

<sup>1</sup> "This doctrine is so rational," says Mr. Thomas Taylor, "that it can never be objected to by any but quacks in philosophy and religion. For as he is nothing more than a quack in medicine who endeavors to remove a latent bodily disease before he has called it forth externally, and by this means diminished its fury, so he is nothing more than a pretender in philosophy, who attempts to remove the passions by violent repression, instead of moderate compliance and gentle persuasion." — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> By the genesis or generation, Plutarch explains Plato to mean "only that substance or underlying principle which is subject to change and motion, placed between the forming cause and the thing formed, transmitting hither those shapes and figures which have been contrived and modelled" in the eternal world. Hence it means more than mere procreating, it is no less than transition from eternity where the soul is native, into the region of time and space, where it is only a sojourner. — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> The Library of Alexandria bore the inscription of "*Remedies for the Soul*." A similar term is said to have been placed over the collection of Papyri in the "House of Seti" at Thebes, in Egypt. — A.W.

excels voluntary choice and activity by so far as the Divine Purpose of the Absolute Goodness is superior to the deliberately chosen of life. By such a purpose, therefore, the gods being gracious and propitious, give forth light abundantly to the Theurgists, both calling their souls upward into themselves, providing for them union to themselves in the Chorus,<sup>4</sup> and accustoming them, while they are still in the body, to hold themselves aloof from corporeal things, and likewise to be led up to their own eternal and noetic First Cause.<sup>5</sup>

From these Performances<sup>6</sup> it is plain, that what we are now discoursing about is the Safe Return of the Soul, for while contemplating the Blessed Spectacles,<sup>7</sup> the soul reciprocates another life, is linked with another energy, and rightly viewing the matter, it seems to be not even a

<sup>4</sup> Plato describes this chorus in the *Phædrus*. "Divine beauty was then splendid to the view," says he, "when we, in company with Zeus, and others with other gods, beheld together with the Blessed Chorus, the divine Spectacle and were initiated into the Perfective Rites, which are rightly called most happy. Being ourselves entire and unaffected by the evils which await us in the Aftertime, we took part in the Orgiac Drama, and having become both Mystics and Beholders (mystae and epoptae) we beheld in the pure light, apparitions that were complete, unique, calm and felicitous — being ourselves pure from earthly contamination and not encompassed in this investiture which we now call 'Body' and by which we are carried about, fastened like an oyster to his shell." — A.W.

<sup>5</sup> Socrates in his last discourse remarks that "While we live we shall approach nearest to the superior knowledge if we hold no partnership with the body, except what absolute necessity requires, and do not permit ourselves to be tainted by its nature, but keep ourselves uncontaminated by it till God himself shall release us." This is what a later poet has portrayed as living above while in the world. — A.W.

<sup>6</sup> The dramas or performances of the Mystic or Theurgic Rites and their inner significance are here denoted — the experiences of the Soul and its return to the Eternal World, as it enters into the conditions of worldly existence. The Egyptian "Book of the Dead" treats of the same matters. — A.W.

<sup>7</sup> The histrionic scenes and ceremonies which were exhibited to the Beholders of the Rites. — A.W.

human, for the most blessed energy of the gods. If, indeed, the upward way through the invocations effects for the priests a purifying of the passions, a release from the condition of generated life, and likewise a union to the Divine First Cause, why, indeed, does any one impute to it any of the passions?<sup>1</sup> For such invocation does not draw down beings that are impassive and pure, to that which is susceptible and impure. On the contrary, it makes us who had become impressionable through the generated life, pure and steadfast.<sup>2</sup>

On the other hand, even the "favorable inclinations" do not bring the priests into union with the gods through a passive condition, but they open the way for an indissoluble communion through the attraction which binds the universe together. It is by no means, as the term seems to imply, an inclining of the *mind* of the gods to human beings, but on the contrary, as the truth itself will teach the adapting of the human intelligence to the participating of the gods, leading it upward to them, and bringing it into accord through persuasive harmonies. Hence, both the revered names of the gods, and the other divine symbols, being of an elevating tendency, are able to connect the invocation with the gods.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The *Chaldaean Oracles* reiterate this sentiment.

"The soul of articulate-speaking men will in some way bring God into itself.

"Holding fellowship with nothing mortal, it is all intoxicated with God." — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> This is explained by the hierophant in Moore's romance, *The Epicurean*. The aim of the initiation and "blessed spectacle" is thus set forth; "to retrieve the ruin of the blessed soul, to clear away from around her the clouds of earth, and, restoring her lost wings, facilitate her return to Heaven — such is the great task of our religion, and such the triumph of those Divine Mysteries, in whose inmost depths the life and essence of our holy religion is treasured." — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> The names of the gods in the ancient Skythic and Euphratean languages were believed to possess some inherent virtue as well as charm. Hence the *Oracle* gives the injunction :

"Never change the barbarous names;  
For among them are terms God-given,

Proclus also declares that "the gods are readily persuaded by invocations and enable the neophytes to behold perfect, tranquil, and genuine spectacles."

#### PROPIITIATORY RITES

What is more, "the propitiations of anger" will be plain enough if we learn thoroughly what the anger of the gods really is. It certainly is not, as some imagine, an inveterate and persistent rage. On the contrary, so far as the matter relates to the gods, it is a turning away from their beneficent guardianship. We ourselves turn away from this just as we bring darkness upon ourselves by shutting away the light at noon-day and so rob ourselves of the priceless gift of the gods. Hence the "propitiation" can turn us to the participation of the superior nature,<sup>4</sup> lead us to the guardian fellowship of the gods, which we had cast from us, and bind to each other harmoniously both those participating and the essences participated. Hence so far is it from accomplishing its particular work through a passive condition, that it leads us to desist from any passionate and disorderly turning away from the gods.

Nevertheless, because evil is present in the regions of the earth,<sup>5</sup> the "expiatory sacrifices" act as a remedy and prepare us so that no change or any passive condition may occur with reference to us. Hence, whether it is through the gods or demons that a result of this kind takes place, it appeals to them as helpers, averters of evil, and as saviors, and through them turns away every harm that may be liable to

That have ineffable virtue in Sacred Rites." — A.W.

<sup>4</sup> Epistle of *Peter II*, 1, 4, "That by these ye might be partakers of communicants of the divine nature." — A.W.

<sup>5</sup> Plato: *Theætetos*. "It is necessary that there should be always something opposed to God; and it cannot be seated among the gods, but of necessity hovers around this mortal nature and this region of earth. — A.W.

follow from what has occurred. Let it be understood that those superior powers that turn away the blows incident to the realm of nativity and nature, are not preventing them in any way through passive conditions.

Indeed, if anyone has imagined that the intercepting of the protecting influence may bring on some chance injury, the endeavor at persuading of the Superior races "through the expiatory sacrifices" recalling them to their generosity, and taking away the sense of privation, may be in every respect pure and unchangeable.<sup>1</sup>

#### "THE NECESSITIES OF THE GODS"

Further still, we will consider what are called "the necessities of the gods." The whole fact is this: The "necessities" are peculiarities of the gods, and exist as pertaining to gods, not indeed as from without, nor as from compulsion; but, on the contrary, as the goodness is of use from necessity, so also are they likewise in every particular and they are not in any respect otherwise inclined. Such necessity is itself combined with a purpose ideally good and is the beloved consort of Love.<sup>2</sup>

It is not only the same and unalterable in the order pertaining to the gods, but because it is at the same time,

<sup>1</sup> It was held that the vital emanation from the blood of the sacrificed animals was invigorating to spiritual beings (*Odyssey*, Book XI). But Plutarch is severe about it. He affirms that the murderous and lascivious customs at the festivals only served "to avert and appease the malice of certain evil spirits, or to satisfy the violent and raging lusts of some that either could not, or would not, enjoy with their bodies or by their bodies." Such, he declared, bring plagues and famine into towns, raise wars and dissensions, till such time as they obtain and enjoy that which they love. — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> Proclus affirms that the Divine Necessity was always coincident with the Divine Will and Purpose. Plato explains it as a habitude of the Efficient Cause or Author of Existence and Matter. Thus, also, there is a necessity in the thoughts and actions of human beings, yet the soul is self-moving, and so is its own "Cause." — A.W.

and in like manner, circumscribed in one boundary, it abides in this and never goes out of it. For all these reasons the very contrary takes place to what was inferred. If in Theurgy there are really genuine powers of such a character as we have set forth, the conclusion is inevitable that the Divine Being is proof against enchantment, impassive and not to be compelled.

#### SUPPLICATIONS AND THEIR UTILITY

Nevertheless, after this, thou passest over to another classification of gods as contrasted with demons. For thou remarkest that "gods are pure mental essences," proposing the opinion as the basis of an argument, or telling it as acceptable to certain individuals. Then thou addest: "that the demons are psychic beings, participating of mind."

It is not hidden from me that these notions are entertained by many of the Grecian philosophers.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, I do not think it proper to hide from thee the manifest truth, for all opinions of such a character are somewhat confusing. They carry the attention from demons to souls, for these are also partakers of mind; and they wander from the gods to mind that is non-material in respect to operation which the gods excel in every particular. Why, then, should we at-tribute these peculiarities to them, which are by no means exclusively theirs? This much will be sufficient in regard to this classification. Otherwise, so far as it may be thought worthy of a mention of such a kind, it is overmuch. But in regard to the matters of which thou art in doubt, they should have due attention inasmuch as they have to do with the sacerdotal function.

<sup>3</sup> Thales, Pythagoras, Plato and the Stoics generally held that the demons were beings of a psychic, rather than of an actual divine nature. Plutarch ascribed to them only a limited term of existence. — A.W.

Having further affirmed that "pure mental essences are not to be charmed or mingled with things of sense," thou doubtst whether it is necessary to pray to them. On my part,

I do not think it necessary to pray to any others. For that V something in us that is divine, mental essence and one or mental alone, if you choose to call it so—is then vividly aroused in the prayers, and when it is awakened it longs vehemently for its counterpart, and becomes united to the absolute perfection.

If, however, it appears incredible to thee that an incorporeal being hears a voice in any way, and there is need of a special sense and of ears in order that the things uttered by us in the prayers may be heard, thou art voluntarily forgetful of the superior powers of the Primary Cause, both in the perceiving of all things, and the encompassing of them at once in themselves. The gods certainly do not receive the prayers in themselves through faculties of sense, or through organs, but they encompass in themselves the full purport and energies of the pious utterances, and especially of those which happen through the Sacred Rites to have been established and brought into one with the gods. For then the Divine essence itself is simply present to itself, and does not share the conceptions in the prayers as distinct from itself.

But thou affirmest that "the supplications which are offered are entirely foreign to the purity of mental substances." Not at all: for it is on this very account, because we are ex-celled by the gods in power, purity and everything, that it is most opportune to supplicate them even with exaggeration of speech. If we are judged by being compared to the gods, the consciousness of our own nothingness causes us to betake our-selves to supplication, and we are led from supplication to the object of supplication,

and from the familiar intercourse we acquire a similarity to it,<sup>1</sup> and from imperfection we quietly receive the Divine Perfection.<sup>2</sup> f

If, however, it is conceived that the sacerdotal supplications are inspired into human beings as from the gods themselves, that they are symbols or tokens of the very gods, and are recognized by the gods alone, and have likewise after a certain manner the same power with the gods, how may it be justly supposed that supplication of this kind is still a matter of the physical senses, but not divine and of the higher intelligence? Or, what may in any likelihood insinuate itself into it when the most excellent human morals cannot be easily made pure?<sup>3</sup>

"But," it is remarked by thee, "the things that are offered are offered as to sensitive and psychic natures." If, indeed, they consisted of corporeal and composite powers alone, or of such as pertained merely to the service' of the physical organism, thou wouldst be correct. But since the offerings partake also of

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<sup>1</sup> It may be observed in this treatise that the divine personalities are very commonly indicated by terms in the neuter gender. The same is true in other instances. Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson was once in conversation with the Rev. Cyrus Bartol, the Transcendentalist clergyman of Boston. The latter mentioned the Supreme Being, using the masculine pronoun. "Why not say 'It,' " Mr. Emerson asked? — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> Whatever we keep most closely in thought, whether with favor or aversion, we gradually become like in character. Paul wrote like a philosopher to the Corinthian disciples. After referring to Moses with a veil, he adds: "We all with face unveiled, looking on the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed from glory to glory into the same image from his spirit." — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> In the Theurgic discipline of neophytes, there were several stages to be surmounted before arriving at the degree denominated "Perfection" or purity. We may trace them in the chapter, as follows: 1. The coming to the divinity who is supplicated. 2. The assimilation into the likeness of the divinity, and 3. Perfection. In the first of these degrees the candidate was styled Most Excellent; in the second, Divine; and in the third, Theopator; as now being fully identified with Deity itself. — A.W.

incorporeal ideals; special discourses and simpler metres, the peculiar affinity of the offerings is to be considered from this point alone. And if any kindred relationship, near or far away, or any resemblance is present, it is sufficient for the union about which we are now discoursing. For there is not anything which is in the least degree akin to the gods, with which the gods are not immediately present and conjoined. It is not, then, as to "sensitive or psychic," but actually to divine ideals and to the gods themselves, that the intimate union is effected so far as may be. Hence we have spoken sufficiently in opposition to this classification.

#### CLASSIFICATION CRITICISED

The next thing in thy letter is the question, "Are gods separated from demons by the distinction of bodied and unbodied?"<sup>1</sup>.

This distinction is much more common than the former one; but it is so far from indicating their peculiarities of essence, that it does not even constitute a reasonable guess in respect to them, or anything incident to them. For it is not possible from these things to apprehend intelligently whether they are living beings or beings without life, and whether they are deprived of life or do not need it at all. Besides, also, it is not easy to form a judgment as to how these terms are to be applied, whether in common or in relation to many different things. If they are to be applied in common, if both a piece of writing and a period of time, a god and demons likewise, and also fire and water, are under the same class as being incorporeal, the distinction is

absurd. If, however, they are employed with reference to the chief differences, why, when thou speakest of incorporeal things, dost thou indicate gods rather than tokens; or when thou sayest "body" why should it not be taken to mean the Earth rather than demons For this point is not itself defined, whether they have bodies as a part of themselves, or are carried by bodies as a vehicle, or make use of them on occasion, or encompass them, or are merely identical with the body.

Perhaps, however, it is not necessary to scrutinize this distinction critically; for thou dost not put it forward as thy own concept, but on the contrary, displayest it as the conjecture of others.

#### THE GODS OF THE SKY NOT CORPOREAL

We will, therefore, take up in place of this subject, the matter in relation to the present opinion, about which thou seemest to be in doubt. For thou hast proposed this question: "If only the gods are incorporeal, how shall the Sun, the Moon, and the luminaries visible in the sky, be accounted as gods?"

We reply: That they are not encompassed by the bodies, but that on the contrary, they encompass the bodies with their own divine lives and energies; also that they are not converted to the body, but possess the body which has been converted to the divine cause; and that the body does not interfere with their spiritual and incorporeal completeness, nor occasion any obstacle to it by intervening. Hence it does not even require more attention, but follows (the divinities) after a manner spontaneously, and by its own motion, not needing a self-operating superintendence, but urging on

<sup>1</sup> Origen affirmed that the angels have bodies, and that God alone is a spiritual essence, without body. Hence the clause in the Confession, "without body, parts or passions." — A.W.

by itself<sup>1</sup> uniformly by the leading of the gods upward toward the One.<sup>2</sup>

If, however, it is necessary, we will say this: The body (of the divine guardian of the star) in the sky is very closely akin to the incorporeal essence of the gods. For the essence being one, the other is unique; that being undifferentiable this is undivided; that being unchangeable this is in like manner unchanged.<sup>3</sup> But if even it is taken for granted the energies of the gods are after one ideal, the divine one in the sky has also a single orbit. Nevertheless it also imitates their sameness in respect of a perpetual activity constantly in the same manner, by the same impulses, according to one law and one order of arrangement; and also the life of the gods which is the life natural to the bodies in the. Hence, their body is not constituted of incongruous and different elements in the way that our body is composed; nor does their soul join with the body to bring out from two, one living being. On the contrary, the living forms of the gods in the sky are, in every respect, similar and united, and are likewise complete, uniform and uncompounded through their entire substance. For the superior divinities are always excelling in these respects, and the lesser ones being dependent upon the rule of those that are

prior and never obtaining this rule for themselves, the whole are brought into one joint arrangement and one common activity, and are all of them, in a manner, incorporeal and wholly divine. Hence, wherefore the divine ideal predominates in them, and implants through them all everywhere, the same One universal essence.

So, therefore, the gods that are visible in the sky, are likewise all of them in a certain sense, incorporeal.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

<sup>1</sup> Plato has explained this very similarity in the *Timaeus*. "When each of the stars necessary for the constitution of Time had obtained a motion adapted to its condition, and their bodies bound or encompassed by living chains, had become beings possessing life, and had learned their prescribed duty, they pursued their course." — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> That the Supreme Being is One and Absolute is the leading principle of every ancient faith, however bizarre and polytheistic it may be esteemed. Amon, the tutelar god of Thebes in Egypt, who may have been in the mind of Abammon when writing, was denominated: "The One, the Maker of all that have being." The Mysteries of Serapis were favored by Iamblichus, and the Rites of Mithras by Porphyry. — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> Plato makes use of an expression signifying "not subject to decay or disease;" Aristotle, "not being increased or changed." — A.W.