



## Eye to Eye, The Quest for The New Paradigm

[Book Review: *Eye to Eye, the quest for the new paradigm*; Ken Wilber, Shambhala Publications, 3<sup>rd</sup> and revised edition, 2001]

In this volume Ken Wilber investigates what the emerging paradigm will be and how it will shape the future.

If this type of new, higher, and comprehensive paradigm is indeed starting to emerge — and I think it is — then it is probably true that the single greatest issue it must face — an issue it has not yet adequately treated — is its relation to empirical science. For, the argument goes, if any sort of "new and higher" paradigm is not an empirical science, then it has no valid epistemology — no valid means of acquiring knowledge — and thus anything it says or proclaims, no matter how otherwise comforting, must therefore be invalid, nonsensical, and meaningless. There is no use trying to figure out the range or scope or methods of knowledge of the "new and higher" paradigm, which wishes to include philosophy and mysticism, until you can demonstrate that you have actual knowledge of any sort to begin with. Make no mistake about it.<sup>1</sup> (p. 1-2)

<sup>1</sup> In Occultism this would happen in the context of *cyclic law*. For example, when a new "seed" of consciousness is planted the Paradigm emerges in due time just as surely as the babe from the mother's womb in the fleshly or sense-bound domain. Madame Blavatsky was quite explicit that a new paradigm was beginning at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century due to the closing of several cycles (see p.5fn, *Esoteric Character of the Gospels*, Theosophy Company reprint from *Lucifer*, Nov. 1887). The emergence of the new "Paradigm" gradually becomes incontestable because its growth "closely adheres to Nature, and follows the laws of uniformity and analogy." (*SD I*, viii)

Wilber in setting his groundwork of discussion posits what he calls "Three eyes of the Soul."

The "three eyes" of a human being correspond, in fact, to the three major realms of being described by the perennial philosophy, which are the gross (flesh and material), the subtle (mental and animic), and the causal (transcendent and contemplative). ...

The truth of ideas cannot be seen by the senses. For example, mathematics is a nonempirical knowledge or a supra-empirical knowledge. It is discovered, illuminated, and implemented by the eye of reason, not by the eye of flesh. ... Thus many philosophers, such as [Alfred North] Whitehead, have held that the abstract (or mental) sphere is necessary and *a priori* for the manifestation of the natural/sensory realm, and this is approximately what the Eastern traditions mean when they say that the gross arises from the subtle (which arises from the causal).

In mathematics, in logic — and more: in imagination, in conceptual understanding, in psychologic insight, in creativity — we *see* things with the mind's eye which are not fully present to the eye of flesh. Thus we say that the mental field includes but greatly transcends the fleshy field.

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

<a href="#">Eye to Eye</a>	1
<a href="#">Hellenism &amp; Madhyamika Buddhism</a>	12
<a href="#">Point Out The Way — LV</a>	20
<a href="#">Dyaneshvari — LIV</a>	26
<a href="#">Iamblichus — V</a>	27

The eye of contemplation is to the eye of reason as the eye of reason is to the eye of flesh. Just as reason cannot be reduced to, nor derived solely from, fleshy knowledge, so contemplation cannot be reduced to nor derived from reason. Where the eye of reason is transempirical, the eye of contemplation is transrational, trans-logical, and transmental. (pp. 3, 5, 6)

Wilber pits Galileo against *Simplicius*, the Neoplatonist in saying that science began as an *antirationalism*, as a direct revolt against the rational systems of the scholastic age. By this he means that Galileo emphasized strict sensory data as the only adequate proof of reality. This was the argument between Bruno and Galileo, the first advocating visualization as a primary aid, and Galileo limiting himself to the “stubborn facts” of gross sensory data.<sup>1</sup>

Empirical science was a historical revolt against platonic rationality and a return to the contemplation of brute fact — the eye of flesh had usurped the domain of the two higher eyes — mind and contemplation.

There was ample reason for this revolt in the gross distortions of theology, scholasticism, and dogmatism which *claimed* to represent the “eye of contemplation”!

Wilber admits that all the major religions have suffered from this problem of distortion, still his criticism is so mild, one wonders how deeply he recognized the problem. Perhaps he planned to concentrate on the New Paradigm vis-à-vis Scientism and leave this for a later date.

However that may be, we should remember that Science, despite its

<sup>1</sup> In Theosophy with its emphasis upon the *duality* of Mind or Manas, the problem would be described as that viewpoint of the mind which accepts only fleshy proof as decisive — *i.e.*, Kama Manas. This mind is indeed anti-rationalistic, inductive, and therefore reductionist in its thinking.

reductionism, drove a wedge into the Mediaeval Church scholasticism that endeavoured the better to bewitch and enslave the human mind.

The greatest temple ever built is the “human body” and Trans Himalayan Occultism views great dogmatic religions as a reversal of real “religion” (*religare*: to bind back to the Source) rather than a support:

...all in this universe is contrast so the light of the Dhyan Chohans and their pure intelligence is contrasted by the “*Ma-Mo* Chohans” — and their destructive intelligence. These are the gods the Hindus and Christians and Mahomed and still others of bigoted religions and sects worship; and so long as *their* influence is upon their devotees we would no more think of associating with or counteracting them in their work than we do the Red-Caps on earth whose evil results we try to palliate but whose work we have no right to meddle with so long as they do not cross *our* path. (*The Mahatma Letters...*, p. 463)

In any case, it was a struggle of thought to be free, at least on the fleshly level of sense data. However, as Wilber points out, this led to a very momentous consequence in our century: That which struggled to free itself from irrational mind-destroying religious activity has now become the tyrant on the stage, striding forth in the person of “**Scientism.**”<sup>2</sup>

When a lower eye of knowledge usurps the other two eyes, then disaster is imminent. Wilber points this out quite clearly. When the two higher levels are held by “pretension” rather than inner achievement, then the problem is multiplied. Theology, or what Wilber calls, “the great problem for almost every major religion” stifles man’s evolution,

<sup>2</sup> Discussion of this word appears on page 5.

whether it be Christianity, Mohammedan, Hinduism, etc., etc.

Descarte is a good example of the misuse of the mental eye. For him “reason — and reason alone — could discover ultimately self-evident truths, an apprehension Descartes called intuition (rational intuition not spiritual intuition).

Thus he made the eye of flesh and the eye of contemplation subservient to the eye of reason.

When one eye tries to usurp the role of any of the other eyes, a category error occurs. ... anytime one eye tries to see for another eye, blurred vision results. (p. 10)

Wilber is using the word “role” in the sense of *Dharma* or *particular* ability (*i.e.*, the *role* or *Dharma* of fire is to burn). For example, the eye of contemplation is far, far, superior to the eye of rationality or the eye of flesh, but it must proceed through those two Dharma-channels if it is to manifest on earth among the non-enlightened.

The EYE of the Highest sees through the eye of the lowest and the higher one proceeds the more correct the vision translation on descending levels. Distortion occurs only when the lower tries to see through the eye of the higher, OR our MOTIVE for the inner work is tainted. The Master Yogis tell us that “sacrifice” (Ijya) of the lower to the higher protects from “category errors” along the way — it does not necessarily avoid them, but is an ever-present *correcting* influence upon the journey.

When Wilber imputes a category error as a heavy problem in all the major religions, we agree, but when he proceeds to apply that statement to the sages of those religions, we must part company:

... the great sages of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, and so on all opened, to one degree or another, the eye of

contemplation — the third eye.<sup>1</sup> But that does not mean, at all, that they then automatically became experts in the realms of the first and second eyes. Enlightenment, for instance, does not carry the information that water is composed of two hydrogen and one oxygen atom. If it did, then that fact would appear in at least one religious text, whereas in fact it is in none. (p. 10)

By analogy and correspondence the said sages were experts in the first and second levels because they *included* those levels. The fact that it does not appear in any *exoteric* religious text is no proof of ignorance. Thus there are two errors in Wilber’s assertion: the second being used to buttress the first. All this could have been avoided if the mind deadening horror of theology had been examined more carefully. Great Sages are almost without exception persecuted by the lineage in which they were born. *Structure* kills growth, and great sages, as pioneers of the cycle, personify growth.

*Eye to Eye* is an eloquent text in describing the fleshly eye — the domain of Lower Manas:

Scientific proof is empirical and inductive; it is not rational and deductive (although, obviously, science uses logic and deduction, only it makes them subservient to empirical induction). Induction — systematically proposed by Francis Bacon — is the formation of general laws on the basis of numerous specific instances (the opposite of deduction. For instance, after Galileo tried his experiment on metallic objects, he might try it on wooden ones, then clay ones, then paper ones, and so on and see if he got the same results. That is induction: the suggested proposition is

<sup>1</sup> We must keep constantly in mind that no eye, first, second, or seventh, opens beneficently unless it sprouts in the soil of a “Gayatri” motive, or a “Padmapani” motive, or — as Wilbur eloquently describes in another book — the “Bodhisattva” motive.

tested in all sorts of new circumstances; if it is not disproved in those circumstances, it is to that extent confirmed. The proposition itself is generally called a **hypothesis**. A hypothesis not yet disproved (without extenuating circumstances) is generally called a **theory**. And a theory that looks like it may in fact never be disproved (supplemented, perhaps, but not fundamentally invalidated in its own realm) is generally called a **law**. Galileo discovered two laws of earthly motion; Kepler discovered three laws of planetary motion; and the genius<sup>1</sup> Newton put these laws together to join the forces of heaven with those of earth: he showed that: — an apple falls to earth (Galileo) for the same reason that the planets circle the sun (Kepler) — namely, gravity. (p. 13)

The point is that the classic scientific method was empirical and inductive, not rational and deductive. ... In summary, we have this: The ingenious and enduring contribution of Galileo and Kepler was the demonstration that, as regards the physical or sensorimotor world, the eye of reason can and must be linked to and grounded in the eye of flesh by inductive experimentation, whose very heart is repeatable measurement (number).<sup>2</sup> Let the eye of flesh speak for the eye of flesh — and empirical science was invented for just that purpose.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> But the "genius" of Newton came from his ability to mentally synthesize. Once his mind's eye saw the possibilities, then the testing with the eye of flesh could begin to see if it was in fact correct. The "higher" plane synthesizes the "lower."

<sup>2</sup> The scientific *method* of repeatable experimentation need not be limited to the sensorimotor world of flesh, but may serve a wider domain:

"The 'Wise Men' of the Fifth Race, of the stock saved and rescued from the last cataclysm and shifting of continents, had passed their lives *in learning, not teaching*. How did they do so? It is answered: by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts; *i.e.*, men who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic, and spiritual organizations to the utmost possible degree." (S.D.I, 273)

<sup>3</sup> As long as it is limited to this domain then much can be explained and discovered; but the limitation will hardly do service even to the fleshly eye. We

The deadly nature of the conceptual world when not ruled and guided — and filled with relevance! — by the Contemplative is eloquently described by Wilber. The endless negations of Nagarjuna<sup>4</sup> are a way of saying that

need to get our hierarchical house in order, for none of the "eyes" are distinctly separated and he who tries to *serve* other than the ALL will fail. Egotism eventually reaps the whirlwind. Nagarjuna shows this quite clearly — the mind world must look up and assimilate the spirit if it is to escape the dry bones of concepts and intellect:

"Accept the explanations and teachings of Occultism, and, the blind inertia of physical Science being replaced by the *intelligent active* Powers behind the veil of matter, motion and inertia become subservient to those Powers. It is on the doctrine of the illusive nature of matter, and the infinite divisibility of the atom, that the whole science of Occultism is built. It opens limitless horizons to *substance* informed by the divine breath of its soul in every possible state of tenuity, states still undreamt of by the most spiritually disposed chemists and physicists. ... To blend the two sciences, the archaic and the modern, requires first of all the abandonment of the actual materialistic lines. It necessitates a kind of religious mysticism and even the study of old magic, which our Academicians will never take up. The necessity is easily explained. Just as in old alchemical works the real meaning of the substances and elements meant are concealed under the most ridiculous metaphors, so are the physical, psychic, and spiritual natures of the Elements (say of fire) concealed in the Vedas, and especially in the Purânas, under allegories comprehensible only to the Initiates. Had they no meaning, then indeed all those long legends and allegories about the sacredness of the three types of fire, and the *forty-nine original fires*—personified by the Sons of Daksha's daughters and the Rishis, their husbands, "who with the first son of Brahmâ and his three descendants constitute the forty-nine fires"—would be idiotic verbiage and no more. But it is not so. Every *fire* has a distinct function and meaning in the worlds of the physical and the spiritual. It has, moreover, in its *essential* nature a corresponding relation to one of the human psychic faculties, besides its well determined chemical and physical potencies when coming in contact with the *terrestrially* differentiated matter." (SDI, 520-21)

<sup>4</sup> **Nâgârjuna** (*Sk.*). An Arhat, a hermit (a native of Western India) converted to Buddhism by Kapimâla and the fourteenth Patriarch, and now regarded as a Bodhisattva-Nirmanakaya. He was famous for his dialectical subtlety in metaphysical arguments; and was the first teacher of the Amitâbha doctrine and a representative of the Mahâyâna School.

knowing a doctrine without *living it* is worse than ignorance. The only two items I have ever noticed that escaped his negations were “the magnanimous Sage” and “enacted merit,” but to return to Wilber’s discussion of the topic:

If you attempt to translate non-dual Reality into dualistic reason, then you will create two opposites where there are in fact none, and therefore each of these opposites can be rationally argued with absolutely equal plausibility — and that, to return to Kant, shows why reason only generates paradox when it tries to grasp God or the Absolute. To indulge in metaphysical speculation (solely with the eye of pure reason) is thus to indulge in nonsense.<sup>1</sup> To say “Reality is absolute subject” is not false, it is nonsensical, it is meaningless, it is neither true nor false but empty, because its opposite can be put with equal force: “Reality is absolute object.” In the East, the same nonsense would exist (“Reality is Atman” versus “Reality is Anatman”) until totally dismantled by Nagarjuna in precisely the same way followed by Kant.  
...

An excellent way to grasp Kant's position is by studying the aforementioned Buddhist genius, Nagarjuna, because Nagarjuna applies the same critical philosophy to reason, but he does so not just to show the limitations of reason but to push further and help open the eye of contemplation (prajna), which knows the Ultimate directly, nonconceptually, and immediately. (p. 17-18)

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Viewed as the greatest philosopher of the Buddhists, he was referred to as “one of the four suns which illumine the world”. He was born 223 B.C., and going to China after his conversion converted in his turn the whole country to Buddhism. (*Theosophical Glossary*, p. 223)

<sup>1</sup> Metaphysical speculation ceases to be nonsense when *analogy and correspondence* are kept as the primary tool. It is *analogy* and *correspondence* that make occultism possible. A Great Sage can pull analogies from a higher plane in such a way as to be useful to the disciple, provided the latter does not mistake the road map for that which it symbolizes!

### The New Scientism

There are many ways to state the fallacy of scientism. It went from saying, “That which cannot be seen by the eye of flesh cannot be empirically verified” to “That which cannot be seen by the eye of flesh does not exist.” It went from saying, “There is an excellent method for gaining knowledge in the realm of the five senses” to “Thus the knowledge gained by mind and contemplation is invalid.” As Smith put it: “With science there can be no quarrel.”<sup>2</sup> Scientism is another matter. Whereas science is positive, contenting itself with reporting what it discovers, scientism is negative. It goes beyond the actual findings of science to deny that other approaches to knowledge are valid and other truths true.” Or, more to the point: “The triumphs of modern science went to man's head ...[and] He came to think that what science discovers somehow casts doubt on things it does not discover; that the success it realizes in its own domain

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<sup>2</sup> So far as Science remains what in the words of Prof. Huxley it is, viz., “organized common sense”; so far as its inferences are drawn from accurate premises—its generalizations resting on a purely inductive basis—every Theosophist and Occultist welcomes respectfully and with due admiration its contributions to the domain of cosmological law. There can be no possible conflict between the teachings of occult and so-called exact Science, where the conclusions of the latter are grounded on a substratum of unassailable fact. It is only when its more ardent exponents, over-stepping the limits of observed phenomena in order to penetrate into the arcana of Being, attempt to wrench the formation of Kosmos and its *living* Forces from Spirit, and attribute all to blind matter, that the Occultists claim the right to dispute and call in question their theories. Science cannot, owing to the very nature of things, unveil the mystery of the universe around us. Science can, it is true, collect, classify, and generalize upon phenomena; but the occultist, arguing from admitted metaphysical data, declares that the daring explorer, who would probe the inmost secrets of Nature, must transcend the narrow limitations of sense, and transfer his consciousness into the region of noumena and the sphere of primal causes. To effect this, he must develop faculties which are absolutely dormant — save in a few rare and exceptional cases — in the constitution of the off-shoots of our present Fifth Root-race in Europe and America. He can in no other conceivable manner collect the facts on which to base his speculations. Is this not apparent on the principles of Inductive Logic and Metaphysics alike? (S.D.I, 477-78)

throws into question the reality of domains its devices cannot touch." (p. 19)

For example: Recall that one of Kant's contributions was the clear demonstration that anytime you try to reason about the Absolute, you can always reason in two contradictory but equally plausible directions. This is not, as later positivists thought, a sufficient proof that Godhead doesn't exist, but a demonstration that IT transcends reason.

Whenever higher dimensions are represented on lower ones, they necessarily lose something in the translation. As a simple example, whenever a three-dimensional sphere is reduced on a two-dimensional surface, it becomes a circle. The sphere, as it were, is cut in half so as to fit on the paper. And notice that the sphere can be cut in two totally different directions — say, from east to west and from west to east — *and it still appears as the same circle*. We would say, then, that whenever a circle tries to think about a sphere, it can manufacture two totally contradictory statements with equal plausibility, because — to the circle — *both* are indeed correct. It is the same with reason and spirit.<sup>1</sup> (p.22)

<sup>1</sup> This is precisely the type answer Madame Blavatsky gave when challenged to exemplify the *unknown*:

**Question:** "*Brahma, as the 'germ of unknown Darkness,' is the material from which all evolves and develops.*" *It is one of the axioms of logic that it is impossible for the mind to believe anything of that of which it comprehends nothing. Now if this "material" which is Brahma be formless, then no idea concerning it can enter the mind for the mind can conceive nothing where there is no form. It is the garment or manifestation in the form of "God" which we can perceive, and it is by this and this alone that we can know anything of him. What, therefore, is the first form of this material which human consciousness can recognise?*

**Answer:** Your axioms of logic can be applied to the *lower* Manas only and it is from the perceptions of *Kama-Manas* alone that you argue. But Occultism teaches only that which it derives from the cognition of the Higher Ego or the *Buddhi-Manas*. But, I will try to answer you on your own familiar lines. The first and only form of the *prima materia* our brain-consciousness can cognise, is a circle. Train

### The Nature of Scientism

"However you disguise it," says Whitehead, "this is the practical outcome of the characteristic scientific philosophy which closed the seventeenth century." ... "We must note its astounding efficiency as a system of concepts for the organization of scientific research. In this respect, it is fully worthy of the genius of the century which produced it. It has held its own as the guiding principle of scientific studies ever since. It is still reigning. Every university in the world organizes itself in accordance with it. No alternative system of organizing the pursuit of scientific truth has been suggested. It is not only reigning, but it is without a rival. And yet — it is quite unbelievable."

There is Whitehead's famous judgment of the scientific world view. ...

The empiric-scientific world view is unbelievable because it is partial, and in pretending to be total, it lands itself in incredulity. For, among other things, the empiric-scientific method is virtually incapable of dealing with *quality*. "Science is primarily quantitative," says Whitehead, and one is not thinking scientifically if one

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your thought first of all to a thorough acquaintance with a limited circle, and expand it gradually. You will soon come to a point when without its ceasing to be a circle in thought, it yet becomes infinite and limitless even to the inner perceptions. It is this circle which we call Brahmā, the germ, atom or *anu*: a latent atom embracing infinitude and boundless Eternity during Pralaya, an active one during the life-cycles; but one which has neither circumference nor plane, only limitless expansion. Therefore the Circle is the first geometrical figure and symbol in the subjective world, and it becomes a Triangle in the objective. The Triangle is the next figure after the Circle. The first figure, the Circle with the Point, is really no figure; it is simply a primeval germ, the first thing you can imagine at the beginning of differentiation; the Triangle must be conceived of once that matter has passed the zero point, or *Laya*. Brahmā is called an atom, because we have to imagine it as a mathematical point, which, however, can be extended into absoluteness. *Nota bene*, it is the divine germ and not the atom of the chemists. But beware of the illusion of form. Once you drag down your Deity into human form you limit and condition it, and behold, you have created an anthropomorphic god.

“is thinking qualitatively and not quantitatively.” For science is “a search for quantities.” That is, *numbers*.

Now the problem with numbers is that, whereas one quality can be better than another, one number cannot. Love is *intrinsically* better than hate, but three is not intrinsically better than five. And thus, once you have translated the world into empiric measurement and numbers, you have a world without quality, guaranteed. Which is to say, without *value or meaning*. All that is left, says Whitehead, is “bare valuelessness,” which “has directed attention to *things* as opposed to *values*.” ... (p. 23-24)

Now the traditional view of reality had maintained that existence is hierarchically graded, that the contemplative realm is more real and more valuable than the mental realm, which in turn is more real and more valuable than the fleshy realm. All three realms were to be appreciated and used, but let there be no mistake as to their relative worth: the causal is higher than the subtle [which in turn] is higher than the gross....

But as all knowledge came to be reduced to fleshy, empiric knowledge, and since the arbiter of fleshy knowledge is number.... The old hierarchy of value and being was thereby ditched in favor of a hierarchy of number. Certain realms could no longer be said to be *higher or more real or better* than others — they could only be said to be bigger or smaller than others. We might say that levels of *significance* were replaced by *levels of magnification*. (p. 25-26)

Now we come to a very powerful statement regarding “knowledge”:

To escape from scientism or exclusive empiricism is simply to realize that empiric knowledge is not the only form of knowledge; there exists beyond it mental-rational knowledge and contemplative-spiritual knowledge. But if that is so, then how can these “higher” forms of knowledge

be verified? If there is no empirical proof, what is left?

This seems to be a problem because we do not see that all valid knowledge is essentially similar in structure, and thus can be similarly verified (or rejected). That is, all valid knowledge — in whatever realm — consists of three basic components, which we will call injunction; illumination, and confirmation.

Wilber proceeds to give an outline of the essentials of his argument, and suggests “that all *valid knowledge* — in whatever realm — consists most fundamentally of these basic components:

1. *An instrumental or injunctive strand*. This is a set of instructions, simple or complex, internal or external. All have the form: “If you want to know this, do this.”

2. *An illuminative or apprehensive strand*. This is an illuminative *seeing* by the particular eye of knowledge evoked by the injunctive strand. Besides being self-illuminative, it leads to the possibility of:

3. *A communal strand*. This is the actual sharing of the illuminative seeing with others who are using the same eye. If the shared-vision is agreed upon by others, this constitutes a communal or consensual proof of *true seeing*.

Those are the basic strands of any type of true knowledge using any eye. Knowledge does become more complicated when one eye tries to match its knowledge with a higher or lower eye, but these basic strands underlie even that complication ....

Starting with the eye of flesh, let me give some examples. The injunctive strand, we said, is of the form, “If you want to see this, do this.” In the eye of flesh, which is the simplest knowledge, injunctions can be as prosaic as, “If you don’t believe it’s raining outside, go look.” The person looks, and there is his or her illumination, his or her knowledge (strand #2). If others repeat the same instruction (“Go look out the window”), and all see the same thing,

there is the communal strand (#3), and we can say, "It is true that it is raining," and so on.

Even in the eye of flesh, however, the injunctions can be quite complex. In empirical science, for instance, we usually find highly difficult and technical instructions, such as: "If you want to see a cell nucleus, then learn how to take histological sections, learn how to use a microscope, learn how to stain tissues, learn how to differentiate cell components one from the other, and then look." In other words, the injunctive strand demands that, for whatever type of knowledge, the appropriate eye must be trained until it can be adequate to its illumination. This is true in art, in science, in philosophy, in contemplation. It is true, in fact, for all valid forms of knowledge.

Now if a person refuses to train a particular eye (flesh, mental, contemplative), then it is equivalent to refusing to look, and we are justified in disregarding this person's opinions and excluding him or her from our vote as to communal proof. Someone who refuses to learn geometry cannot be allowed to vote on the truth of the Pythagorean theorem; someone who refuses to learn contemplation cannot be allowed to vote on the truth of Buddha Nature or Spirit. In other words, if an individual will not take up strand #1 of knowledge, he or she will be excluded from strands #2 and #3. We say that person's knowledge is inadequate.<sup>1</sup> (p. 28-30)

<sup>1</sup> Theosophy would call this ignorance or *avidya*. Until we take up the "injunctive strand" for what we wish to know there is only the arid soil of *assertion* and *denial*. Learning say, geometry, is pretty straightforward in what has to be done; but with *occultism* it is your *life itself* that is demanded. The problem is so far outside our normal idea of "knowledge" that few undertake it. Masters in the Sacred Science present us with a "graded path" or what's sometimes called "crude probation" before *chelaship*.

It is sometimes said that mystic knowledge is not real knowledge because it is not public knowledge, only "private," and hence it is incapable of consensual validation. That is not quite correct, however. For the secret to consensual validation in all three realms is the same, namely: a trained eye is a public eye, or it could not be trained in the first place; and a public eye is a communal or consensual eye. Mathematical knowledge is public knowledge to trained mathematicians (but not to nonmathematicians); contemplative knowledge is public knowledge to all sages. Even though contemplative knowledge is ineffable, it is not private: it is a shared vision. (p. 31)

### The Nature of Development

Everywhere we look in nature, said the philosopher Jan Smuts, we see nothing but wholes. And not just simple wholes but hierarchical ones: each whole is a part of a larger whole which is itself part of a larger whole. Fields within fields within fields, stretching through the cosmos, interlacing each and every thing with each and every other.

Further, said Smuts, the universe is not a thoughtlessly static and inert whole—the cosmos is not lazy but energetically dynamic and even creative. It tends to produce higher- and higher-level wholes, ever more inclusive and organized. This overall cosmic process, as it unfolds in time, is nothing other than evolution. And the drive to ever higher unities, Smuts called *holism*. (p. 75)

### Moving from the ego-mind

In moving *from* the ego-mind to the subtle or causal realms, *Eye to Eye* ventures on the age-old battleground of *bliss deferred* versus *bliss immediate*. Enlightenment, as understood by the vast majority those seeking it, is simply a more sophisticated form of *selfishness*. Wilber seems unaware of the problem in *Eye to Eye* though he does show an appreciation of the Bodhisattva-Vow in other writings.



For example, in his discussion of the three major classes of meditative practices, he says:

The first is the Nirmanakaya class, which deals with bodily or typhonic energies and their transmutation or transformation into the low-subtle region, culminating at the sahasrara. This includes hatha yoga, kundalini yoga, kriya yoga, and particularly all forms of tantric yoga. The goal of the Nirmanakaya class, as I mentioned, is the sahasrara, the crown chakra, and it is exemplified by Patanjali. (p. 107)

From the Occult viewpoint this is like defining by means of an inventory of *epi-phenomenon*. Compare the above with this from *The Theosophical Glossary* (p. 231):

**Nirmânakâya** (*Sk.*). Something entirely different in esoteric philosophy from the popular meaning attached to it, and from the fancies of the Orientalists. Some call the *Nirmânakâya* body “Nirvâna with remains” (Schlagintweit, etc.) on the supposition, probably, that it is a kind of Nirvânic condition during which consciousness and *form* are retained. Others say that it is one of the *Trikâya* (three bodies), with the “power of assuming any form of appearance in order to propagate Buddhism” (Eitel's idea); again, that “it is the incarnate avatâra of a deity” (*ibid.*), and so on. Occultism, on the other hand, says: that *Nirmânakâya*, although meaning literally a transformed “body”, is a **state**. The form is that of the adept or yogi who enters, or chooses, that *Post mortem* condition in preference to the Dharmakâya or *absolute* Nirvânic state. He does this because the latter *kâya* separates him for ever from the world of form, conferring upon him a state of *selfish* bliss, in which no other living being can participate, the adept being thus precluded from the possibility of helping humanity, or even *devas*. As a *Nirmânakâya*, however, the man leaves behind him only his physical body, and retains every other “principle” save the Kamic — for he has crushed this

out for ever from his nature, during life, and it can never resurrect in his *post mortem* state. Thus, instead of going into selfish bliss, he chooses a life of self-sacrifice, an existence which ends only with the life-cycle, in order to be enabled to help mankind in an invisible yet most effective manner. (See *The Voice of the Silence*, third treatise, “The Seven Portals”.) Thus a *Nirmânakâya* is not, as popularly believed, the body “in which a Buddha or a Bodhisattva appears on earth”, but verily one, who whether a *Chutuktu* or a *Khubilkhan*, an adept or a yogi during life, has since become a member of that invisible Host which ever protects and watches over Humanity within Karmic limits. Mistaken often for a “Spirit”, a Deva, God himself, &c., a *Nirmânakâya* is ever a protecting, compassionate, verily a *guardian* angel, to him who becomes worthy of his help. Whatever objection may be brought forward against this doctrine; however much it is denied, because, forsooth, it has never been hitherto made public in Europe and therefore since it is unknown to Orientalists, it must needs be “a myth of modern invention” — no one will be bold enough to say that this idea of helping suffering mankind at the price of one's own almost interminable self-sacrifice, is not one of the grandest and noblest that was ever evolved from human brain. (p. 231)

Or this passage from page 255, Vol. II, of *The Secret Doctrine*:

Men are made *complete* only during their third, toward the fourth cycle (race). They are made “gods” for good and evil, and **responsible** only when the two arcs meet (after 3½ rounds towards the *fifth* Race). They are made so by the *Nirmânakaya* (spiritual or astral remains) of the **Rudra-Kumâras**, “*cursed* to be reborn on earth again; meaning—*doomed in their natural turn to reincarnation* in the higher **ascending arc** of the terrestrial cycle.” (*Commentary IX.*) [Emphasis added]

Or this from Madame Blavatsky's article, "The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry"<sup>1</sup>:

Most of us believe in the survival of the Spiritual Ego, in Planetary Spirits and *Nirmanakayas*, those great Adepts of the past ages, who, renouncing their right to Nirvana, remain in our spheres of being, not as "spirits" but as complete spiritual human Beings. Save their corporeal, visible envelope, which they leave behind, they remain as they were, in order to help poor humanity, as far as can be done without sinning against Karmic law. This is the "Great Renunciation," indeed; an incessant, conscious self-sacrifice throughout aeons and ages till that day when the eyes of blind mankind will open and, instead of the few, *all* will see the universal truth. These Beings may well be regarded as God and Gods—if they would but allow the fire in our hearts, at the thought of that purest of all sacrifices, to be fanned into the flame of adoration, or the smallest altar in their honour. But they will not. Verily, "the secret heart is fair Devotion's (only) temple," and any other, in this case, would be no better than profane ostentation.

Now with regard to other invisible Beings, some of whom are still higher, and others far lower on the scale of divine evolution. To the latter we will have nothing to say; the former will have nothing to say to us; for we are as good as non-existent to them. The homogeneous can take no cognizance of the heterogeneous; and unless we learn to shuffle off our mortal coil and commune with them "spirit to spirit," we can hardly hope to recognize their true nature. Moreover, every true Theosophist holds that the divine HIGHER SELF of every mortal man is of the same essence as the essence of these Gods. Being, moreover, endowed with free will, hence having, more than they, responsibility, we regard the incarnated EGO as far superior to, if not more divine than, any spiritual INTELLIGENCE *still*

*awaiting incarnation*. Philosophically, the reason for this is obvious, and every metaphysician of the Eastern school will understand it. The incarnated EGO has odds against it which do not exist in the case of a pure divine Essence unconnected with matter; the latter has no personal merit, whereas the former is on his way to final perfection through the trials of existence, of pain and suffering.

And finally this from *The Voice of the Silence*:<sup>2</sup>

This same popular reverence calls "Buddhas of Compassion" those *Bodhisattvas* who, having reached the rank of an Arhat (*i.e.*, having completed the *fourth* or *seventh* Path), refuse to pass into the Nirvanic state or "don the *Dharmakaya* robe and cross to the other shore," as it would then become beyond their power to assist men even so little as Karma permits. They prefer to remain invisibly (in Spirit, so to speak) in the world, and contribute toward man's salvation by influencing them to follow the Good Law, *i.e.*, lead them on the Path of Righteousness. It is part of the exoteric Northern Buddhism to honour all such great characters as Saints, and to offer even prayers to them, as the Greeks and Catholics do to their Saints and Patrons; on the other hand, the esoteric teachings countenance no such thing. There is a great difference between the two teachings. The exoteric layman hardly knows the real meaning of the word *Nirmanakaya*—hence the confusion and inadequate explanations of the Orientalists. For example Schlagintweit believes that *Nirmanakaya*-body, means the physical form assumed by the Buddhas when they incarnate on earth—"the least sublime of their earthly encumbrances" (vide "Buddhism in Tibet")—and he proceeds to give an entirely false view on the subject. The real teaching is, however, this:—

The three Buddhist bodies  
or forms are styled:—

<sup>1</sup> Theosophy Company Pamphlet, *The Roots of Ritualism in Church and Masonry*, p. 5

<sup>2</sup> Page 96 in Original edition, page 77 in Theosophy Company edition.

1. *Nirmanakaya*.
2. *Sambhogakaya*.
3. *Dharmakaya*.

The first is that ethereal form which one would assume when leaving his physical he would appear in his astral body — having in addition all the knowledge of an Adept. The *Bodhisattva* develops it in himself as he proceeds on the Path. Having reached the goal and refused its fruition, he remains on Earth, as an Adept; and when he dies, instead of going into Nirvana, he remains in that glorious body he has woven for himself, *invisible* to uninitiated mankind, to watch over and protect it.

*Sambhogakaya* is the same, but with the additional lustre of "three perfections," one of which is entire obliteration of all earthly concerns.

The *Dharmakaya* body is that of a complete Buddha, *i.e.*, no body at all, but an ideal breath: Consciousness merged in the Universal Consciousness, or Soul devoid of every attribute. Once a *Dharmakaya*, an Adept or Buddha leaves behind every possible relation with, or thought for this earth. Thus, to be enabled to help humanity, an Adept who has won the right to Nirvana, "renounces the *Dharmakaya* body" in mystic parlance; keeps, of the *Sambhogakaya*, only the great and complete knowledge, and remains in his *Nirmanakaya* body. The esoteric school teaches that Gautama Buddha with several of his Arhats is such a *Nirmanakaya*, higher than whom, on account of the great renunciation and sacrifice to mankind there is none known.

In Theosophy the critical defining ground for the "three robes" or sheaths is *motive*. That may be the reason that Nagarjuna pours such derision on defining by "outer marks" whether they be "subjective" or fleshly, such as the chakras. Of the second class or "robe" Wilber says:

The second is the *Sambhogakaya* class, which deals with the high-subtle regions, and aims for the seven (to ten)

subphases of subtle growth and audible illuminations secreted within and beyond the *sahasrara*. This includes Nada yoga and Shabd yoga, and is exemplified by Kirpal Singh. (p. 107-8)

The third is the *Dharmakaya* class, which deals with the causal regions. It operates through neither tantric energy manipulation (the first five or six *chakras*) nor subtle light and sound absorption (the seventh *chakra* and the higher subphase *chakras* beyond), but rather through inquiry into the causal field of consciousness itself, inquiry into the root of I-ness or the separate self-sense, even in and through the Transcendent Witness of the causal region, until all forms of subject-object dualism are uprooted. This class is exemplified by Sri Ramana Maharshi, Maha-Ati Vajrayana, Zen Buddhism, and Vedanta Hinuism. (p. 108)

What was a superb and readable book in its discussion of the rise of science and "scientism" and the three "components of knowledge" is now floundering in the mire of *exotericism*. The less said the better. But we have given quotes so the student can compare and decide for himself. To understand the "Dharmakaya body" philosophically, one needs some comprehension of the *Trikaya*:

**Trikâya** (*Sk.*). *Lit.*, three bodies, or forms. This is a most abstruse teaching which, however, once understood, explains the mystery of every triad or trinity, and is a true key to every three-fold metaphysical symbol. In its most simple and comprehensive form it is found in the human Entity in its triple division into spirit, soul, and body, and in the universe, regarded pantheistically, as a unity composed of a Deific, purely spiritual Principle, Supernal Beings — its direct rays — and Humanity. The origin of this is found in the teachings of the prehistoric Wisdom Religion, or Esoteric Philosophy. The grand Pantheistic ideal, of the unknown and unknowable Essence being transformed first into subjective, and then into objective matter, is at the root of all

these triads and triplets. Thus we find in philosophical Northern Buddhism (1) Âdi-Buddha (or Primordial Universal Wisdom); (2) the Dhyâni-Buddhas (or Bodhisattvas); (3) the Mânushi (Human) Buddhas. In European conceptions we find the same: God, Angels and Humanity symbolized theologically by the God-Man. The Brahmanical *Trimûrti* and also the three-fold body of Shiva, in Shaivism, have both been conceived on the same basis, if not altogether running on the lines of Esoteric teachings. Hence, no wonder if one finds this conception of the triple body — or the vestures of Nirmânakâya, Sambhogakâya and Dharmakâya, the grandest of the doctrines of Esoteric Philosophy — accepted in a more or less disfigured form by every religious sect, and explained quite incorrectly by the Orientalists. Thus, in its general application, the three-fold body symbolizes Buddha's statue, his teachings and his stûpas; in the priestly conceptions it applies to the Buddhist profession of faith called the *Triratna*, which is the formula of taking "refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha". Popular fancy makes Buddha ubiquitous, placing him thereby on a par with an anthropomorphic god, and lowering him to the level of a tribal deity; and, as a result, it falls into flat contradictions, as in Tibet and China. Thus the exoteric doctrine seems to teach that while in his Nirmânakâya body (which passed through 100,000 *kotis* of transformations on earth), he, Buddha, is at the same time a Lochana (a heavenly Dhyâni-Bodhisattva), in his Sambhogakâya "rube of absolute completeness", and in Dhyâna, or a state which must cut him off from the world and all its connections; and finally and lastly he is, besides being a Nirmânakâya and a Sambhogakâya, also a Dharmakâya "of absolute purity", a Vairochana or Dhyâni-Buddha in full Nirvâna! (See Eitel's *Sanskrit-Chinese Dictionary*.) This is the jumble of contradictions, impossible to reconcile, which is given out by missionaries and certain Orientalists as the *Philosophical* dogmas of Northern Buddhism. If not an intentional confusion ..., then it is the product of ignorance. As the Trailokya, the Trikâya, and the Triratna are the three aspects of the same

conceptions, and have to be, so to say, blended in one, the subject is further explained under each of these terms. (*Theosophical Glossary*, p. 338-39)

**Dharmakâya** (*Sk.*). *Lit.*, "the glorified spiritual body" called the "Vesture of Bliss". The third, or highest of the *Trikâya* (Three Bodies), the attribute developed by every "Buddha", *i.e.*, every initiate who has crossed or reached the end of what is called the "fourth Path" (in esotericism the sixth "portal" prior to his entry on the *seventh*). The highest of the *Trikâya*, it is the *fourth* of the *Buddhakchêtra*, or Buddhist planes of consciousness, represented figuratively in Buddhist asceticism as a robe or vesture of luminous Spirituality. In popular Northern Buddhism these vestures or *robes* are: (1) Nirmanakâya, (2) Sambhogakâya, (3) and Dharmakâya, the last being the highest and most sublimated of all, as it places the ascetic on the threshold of Nirvâna. (See, however, the *Voice of the Silence*, page 77fn) (*Theosophical Glossary*, p.100)

To paraphrase a statement of Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*: Among humankind only one in a thousand is seeking enlightenment, and among those so seeking only one in a thousand renounces the Dharmakaya vesture to stay and help all others.

The real Raja Yogi lives not for himself but for the world. "He who defendeth not the persecuted and the helpless, who giveth not of his food to the starving nor draweth water from his well for the thirsty hath been born too soon in human shape."



## Hellenism and Madyamika Buddhism

A Dialogue on the Dialectic

Pierre Grimes, Ph.D. Σ2003<sup>1</sup>

Raymond:

Greetings Joseph. Well, you and I both made time for a talk over coffee and this is a good place. There isn't much business at this time so we can sit back and get into those issues that we agreed to discuss in your e-mail. I don't have to tell you that they are important to me, so when I heard you make a distinction last Friday night between religion and having a spiritual life I knew you were going to launch into an interesting discussion and I wanted to hear all about it.

Joseph:

That's right, either one doesn't necessarily entail the other. You can be religious without having a spiritual life and have a spiritual life without being religious. On the one hand religion binds people together under one belief and that, in some way, satisfies their religious needs, but on the other hand one's spiritual life is rooted in personal experience that transcends belief and everyday worldly experiences.

As for the discussion you were referring to I remember that you didn't say much at the time.

Raymond:

Well, the views you presented were so new and since it opened up a whole new area for me to explore I didn't want to say anything before that group until I got into it further.

Now, I'm aware that scholarship can impact one's understanding of religious movements but it never dawned on me that it might cause someone like myself to be turned around as much as it has. I can't get over it. The idea that scholarship can

uncover the origin of major religious movements and in doing so awaken philosophy to explore its own spiritual roots sounded so weird I had to look into it. As I wrote you in my e-mail, I've been involved in Zen Buddhism, but I'm still drawn to all that Platonic stuff that you introduced me to through those Golden West College philosophy courses. So, I came running when I heard that you were exploring the links between Madhyamika Buddhism and Plato because that sounded so strange and unlikely that I wanted to hear from you what you found.

Joseph:

When I e-mailed you back I cited those books and articles we discussed that day and from what I hear I assume you must have gotten into them. I would really like to know what you found significant and insightful in them.

Raymond:

I opened with Thomas McEvilley's stuff. His view of Plotinus was very insightful and he really showed how similar it is to Vijnanavada Buddhism. I sure liked the way he saw those two ways of viewing Plotinus' thought as both an ontological and idealist viewpoint. I always like seeing such parallels between systems, but when I got into his Pyrrhonism and the Madhyamika Buddhism that did it for me. I'd like to go over a few things he said about Nagarjuna because my own Zen Buddhism comes out of his school and was shaped by it. But I have to tell you that I never would have thought that Pyrrhonism was introduced into India at the time of Alexander the Great. From what I read his entourage included Pyrrhon, his master Anaxarchus, and the Cynic philosopher, Onesicritus. Are you satisfied that there is some archeological evidence to support the claim that they started a school in Taxila, in Kashmir? I'd like to know more about that.

<sup>1</sup> This article is a Study Project of Opening Mind Academy and is copyright material.

Joseph:

Yes there is. There has been some remarkable work done in Taxila by John Marshall. You can get his "A Guide to Taxila" and see that his archeological work has uncovered sufficient evidence that a Greek style city was founded there, that's where they built monasteries, fortresses, and even started a kind of university in Taxila. You know Rod Whaleback, don't you? Well, he has the three-volume work of Marshall's that includes maps of the site, photos of Hellenic style sculpture, Hellenic coins, artifacts galore. Give him a call, he'll be glad to share it with you. I imagine you are going to explore what Mortimer Wheeler said about Kandahar, Ai' Khanoum, Charsada, and Taxila. He said that Kandahar, "was a balanced Greek city with its writers, its philosophers, its teachers". I hadn't realized that there was an Indo-Graecia civilization flourishing at that time, it is something to marvel about.

Raymond:

I'll give him a call; I'd love to see it. Now, let's turn to Nagarjuna and Pyrrhon. I enjoyed seeing that the dialectic was introduced into Indian and Buddhist thought through Pyrrhon. McEvelley argues that since the dialectic has a long history of development among the Greeks but none prior to Nagarjuna. He argues that the Hellenics must have introduced it since Nagarjuna's dialectic picked up at the stage of development of that of Sextus Empiricus and that it was brought to Taxila. He advances the idea that the Pyrrhonian arguments can be found before Alexander, in the writings of Eleatics, Academic or Platonic, and among the Cynic philosophers.

What amazed me was seeing the extraordinary similarity between Nagarjuna and Pyrrhon positions. To realize that these two thinkers were expressing the same doctrine, the same

attitude, the same doctrines, and even using the same metaphors and analogies to express their thought was eye opening. The recurrent use of the imagery of the rope that seems like a snake, the use of the smoke and fire image to explore causation in both traditions was significant. But, for all that it was even more surprising to realize that the very purposes of the dialectic were the same in both traditions, Nirvana for Nagarjuna and Ataraxia for the Pyrrhonians.

Say, Joseph, are you convinced, as I am, that there was this Greek influence on Buddhist or Indian logic before Alexander's conquests?

Joseph:

Actually, you will find McEvelley's study of "Early Greek Philosophy and the Madhyamika" is part of growing body of literature that argues for that issue. Given your interest you can also check on Richard H. Robinson's work, and don't ignore the insightful work of Alfonso Verdu's on the dialectical aspects in Buddhist thought. You have a good mind for this kind of reflection, Raymond, so it is likely you are going to have to check out Sir William Tarn's claim that a Hellenistic dynasty was preserved throughout this region and in those genuine polis cities were philosophers, teachers, stonemasons doing their thing. They even constructed amphitheaters for tragic and comic plays.

Raymond:

Sometime I think it all borders on fantasy. I was taken into McEvelley's thought and more than once wondered whether this was some scholar whose imagination was greater than his research. However, Joseph, he opened up an issue I once wondered about but never pursued. I used to wonder if Plato's *Republic* might have influenced the great legendary King Asoka. He started a rational rule that historians and thinkers look upon with

envy. I let that idea go as too far fetched only to find that McEvelley said that the edicts of Asoka were found in Kandahar carved in stone in Greek. Now you know there must have been a sizable Greek population for that kind of thing, right?

Joseph:

True and it seems that that cruel viper known as philosophy bit you. Why don't you tell me what you found that convinced you that the systems of Pyrrhon and Nagarjuna were not only similar but have the same strategy for achieving their philosophical goals?

Raymond:

That's fair. I'll gladly do it as long as you remember to talk about the relationship that all this has to Plato. You promised and have yet to discuss it.

Well, I was influenced by one argument that McEvelley put forward. It was so simple that I became convinced he was right about the essential identity of Pyrrhonism and Nagarjuna's Madyamika Buddhism and because of that he had a right to claim the Indo-Graceo thesis you just mentioned.

First, let me back up a bit and say that this Pyrrhonism grew out of a Stoic philosophy and it reached its high point with Sextus Empiricus in the second century of our Common Era. During the same time Nagarjuna spent most of his life in Naagaarjunakonda and that city was in the orbit of Hellenistic influence. Actually, you know that they have found there many Graeco-Roman medallions and Buddhist Stupas that clearly show Greek artistic influences.

So much for that but as I was saying what convinced me that Nagarjuna was deeply influenced by the thinking of Sextus Empiricus was McEvelley's idea that when ever you find Nagarjuna difficult to follow all you have to do is

find the parallel idea being discussed in Sextus. I spent many an hour trying to figure out Nagarjuna and along comes this idea, so now I study Sextus and use that to cut through the difficulties I find in Nagarjuna. I struggled with his ideas of time and space, origination and destruction, motion and rest, substance and attribute, and never guessed that the same criticism runs through them all.<sup>1</sup> It is that simple. The arguments against cause and effect are a kind of paradigm for all these pairs of ideas, so you can substitute any pair for cause and effect and you can see his criticism of them. When I saw that was true I jumped for joy. I never suspected there was this kind of connection. To find that Robinson also saw this clearly was something I was really pleased to see. He said that you could substitute different terms or ideas within the same pattern in either Sextus or Nagarjuna. Here are important works that I needed to find and learn about and I didn't even know they existed.

Joseph:

<sup>1</sup> The limitation of mental constructs comes up again and again in Theosophy: "Prakriti, Svabhavat or Akâśa is — SPACE as the Tibetans have it; Space filled with whatsoever substance or no substance at all; *i.e.*, with substance so imponderable as to be only metaphysically conceivable. Brahmâ, then, would be the germ thrown into the soil of that field, and Śakti, that mysterious energy or force which develops it, and which is called by the Buddhist Arahats of Tibet — FO-HAT. "That which we call form (*rupa*) is not different from that which we call space (*Śūnyatâ*) . . . . Space is not different from Form. Form is the same as Space; Space is the same as Form. And so with the other skandhas, whether *vedana*, or *saññâ*, or *samskara* or *vijñana*, they are each the same as their opposite." . . . (Book of *Sin-king* or the *Heart Sutra*. Chinese translation of the *Maha-Prajña-Paramita-Hridaya-Sutra*. Chapter on the *Avalokiteshwara*, or the *manifested Buddha*.) So that, the Aryan and Tibetan or Arhat doctrines agree perfectly in substance, differing but in names given and the way of putting it, a distinction resulting from the fact that the Vedantin Brahmans believe in Parabrahman, a *deific* power, impersonal though it may be, while the Buddhists entirely reject it." (*CW*, *iii*, p. 405-6fn)

Hold it for a moment. Even if there is this kind of correspondence, are you willing to agree that the Nirvana of the Madyamika is the same as that of Ataraxia for the Pyrrhonists? Are you willing to say that the Stoics, Cynics and the Pyrrhonists really had a spiritual life on the par with Nagarjuna? Have you become convinced that these Greek philosophers achieved the ideal of the Madyamika? Now, you know that will need a bit of rewriting history won't it, Raymond?

Raymond:

Yes, and what adds to my pain is a lot of confusion. Sure, I know that means I'm in a state of suffering. The cause of it is clear enough and so, too, is the remedy, and it sure doesn't need an eightfold path. It becomes a crazy question to even ask, but the logic of it is compelling. I'll state it loudly so it can penetrate deep into my mind, "Why am I still a Buddhist if I can do and get the same thing from Sextus Empiricus?" If they are doing the same thing then the Pyrrhonian tradition was as much of a spiritual tradition as the Buddhist. This turns everything around. Surely, that means that the persecution and exile of non-Christian philosophers, during and after the reign of Emperor Constantine, brought about the end of all spiritual systems that competed with Christianity. However, the picture that our philosophers and historians have given us about these systems stresses only the logical character of their works and ignores this profound spiritual dimension. Frankly, it is a rip off.

Joseph:

You do have the questions. Some have called the obliteration of the Hellenic culture genocide. I do think you are seeing the differences between religious belief and the cultivation of states of mind. But, Raymond, are we to forget about the difference between Nirvana and Ataraxia?

You've done your homework, you've studied it, it sure is important to you, so now wouldn't you like to share what you have seen?

Raymond:

Well, to begin with, both systems of the dialectic are designed to remove consciousness from identifying with any conceptual structure and that includes both natural and philosophical languages, and to block the possibility of identifying with ontology. They both believe the unreflective imposition of language and its categories on experience forces experience into the categories of language for which it is totally unfitted. It creates all the delusions and with it all the sufferings that mankind experiences. Thus, when you realize this then the very conditions for being upset and suffering are overcome. And I know it is not an easy and simple task to live without these impositions of thought upon experience. It takes courage and an inner determination to live without concepts, but the concept free mind is the mind of the Buddha, enlightenment.

The idea that we can have a non-conceptual experience of the moment, without intense goal direction in life, and without emotional attachment is actually common to both Nagarjuna and Sextus. When the mind is suspended so that it neither affirms nor denies anything and recognizes nothing is more this than that one reaches Epoche. What is that but a mind suspended from judging things as good or bad, right or wrong, and neither real nor unreal? Thus, the mind reaches silence (aphasia), freedom from all phenomenal influence<sup>1</sup> (apatheia), and is no longer perturbed (ataraxia) so that each

<sup>1</sup> And when the mind is rendered free of "phenomenal" influence it then becomes a mirror of "noumenal" influence. This in Theosophy points to the four categories of Proclus, showing that freedom from "the unreflective imposition of mental categories and concepts" leads to the "Hall of Wisdom." — ED.



moment is lived without being either attached nor non-attached to anything. So, Joseph, is that not a fair picture of the problem before us?

Joseph:

I am sure we can talk about this further and delve into the issue for more precision but I have to say I enjoyed your summary. It is good to see that you too have found McEvelley and these other authors as important as I have. You presented your understanding clearly and it reminded me of the days when you were at college exploring philosophy.

Raymond:

It is your turn now, Joseph. I told you how this issue has influenced me so, now, how about you? You must have gone further since I heard about how you tied together not the Madyamika with Pyrrhonism as I did, but you went on to tie it into Plato. I thought that was weird but knowing you I wanted to hear from you what you have come to.

Joseph:

First of all let me say that this study has had a major impact on my thinking and will undoubtedly influence my teaching of Plato and Buddhism. I'm not sure, as yet, in what way but it will enter into my presentations. Before I explored these issues it never occurred to me that Pyrrhonism could be found in Plato's dialogues. I was really surprised to find it in Plato's Parmenides. Consider this idea for a moment, what if the basic theory of Pyrrhon has its equivalent in the thesis that Zeno presents in the Parmenides? Now, just a moment, suppose we add another question, what if we find that very thesis of Zeno's that is discussed in depth in Proclus' Commentary on Plato's Parmenides shows its absurdity?

Raymond:

Remind me, please, about Zeno's position. I can't recall it as accurately as I would like.

Joseph:

That is fair, but before I spell it out let me remind you that the basic criticism of both Pyrrhon and Nagarjuna is that when the fundamental categories of our language are attributed to our experience the result is a series of absurdities. The result of this critique is that we withdraw from mind-projections and become tranquil souls.

Zeno summarizes his view of the phenomenal world and concludes everything is both like and unlike. He expresses it simply, saying that if things are many they are both like and unlike, and he then he concludes that such a case is impossible "for the unlike cannot be like nor the like unlike". Socrates merely points out that there is nothing at all strange in "things that partake of both become both like and unlike" but he adds it really would be a "wonder if anyone could show that the idea of like itself becomes unlike." You see, Raymond, he doesn't think it strange that when these categories are applied to the "many things", or to the appearances, that such consequences follow. Proclus goes on to show that not only these ideas of like and unlike but all the forms can, indeed, be mixed and partake of community with one another without becoming the other, for by partaking of the nature of the other they yet preserve their own nature. Proclus goes further and argues that the idea of like and unlike is *contraries* and applies to four distinct levels. On the level of matter these contraries are destructive to each other and cannot co-exist; on the level of the heavenly orbiting planets they co-exist; on the level of souls they are separate while functioning together; and to intellect they are unified and are creative forces. Thus, Proclus shows that the argument of

Zeno, and hence of Sextus, applies only to the phenomenal world, so that it is only valid if that is all there is to our existence, but since there is the intelligible it lacks scope.

Raymond:

That truly is surprising to me. I'm going to have to return to Plato's Parmenides and Proclus. I'm not even sure I can state what the consequences would be if what you say is true. I would like to sit on that for awhile and get back to you later on this one. I seem to be missing something.

Joseph:

There is something more, something that I do believe you have not fully appreciated about the Platonic tradition. The difference between the Platonic tradition and those of Pyrrhonism, Stoicism, and the Cynic philosophies is that they do not pass through the Idea of the Good to reach their enlightenment, as the Platonic does. The Idea of the Good is that most brilliant light of being that, once experienced and understood, becomes the proper object of the dialectic, which brings one to the Good or the One. Thus, the dialectic has a different function in each of these systems. Once you appreciate that difference you may find it impossible to stay a Madyamika.

Raymond:

Now, that is something to say. I'll have to work on that idea. So, that is their essential difference.

Joseph:

Yes, they have no room for the intelligible in their systems. It is somewhat difficult for some people to accept the idea that when the very nature of reality is perceived by the mind, which alone can see and know it, that it experiences a wondrous beauty, a perfection of beauty, which is the goal of

those who seek to know the meaning of our existence.

Raymond:

I guess I'm one of those. I can't believe that there really is that kind of thing. I always thought of it as a creation of Plato's active imagination. So, I have been doing my yoga and got into Buddhism. In Buddhism if you cut away the delusion there is only the unnamable and unspeakable. But you are saying there is a third thing, the intelligible, right?

Joseph:

There are not two separate and different planes of existence because the intelligible penetrates the world of appearances, of becoming, and those who recognize this are the one's who speak about a pure knowledge,<sup>1</sup> justice, and temperance.

Raymond:

That's where I stop. I can't believe there is any such penetration of these ideas. You believe these ideas have some kind of independent and essential existence and I would say they are all relative to our experience.

Joseph:

Well that is what philosophy is all about, learning to see these things, and that is not easy because you can't perceive such things through the senses. And, I imagine you would also say that each of these ideas only has its meaning in relation to its negation and so you would suspend your judgment about their being real. Sure, this can be said, but as we were saying the real can be experienced and it is called being

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<sup>1</sup> *Dhyana-Marga*, "path of pure knowledge" named. Ere thou canst settle in Dhyana-Marga and call it thine, thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O Conqueror of Weal and Woe. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 65-66.)

itself, or the intelligible, or the Idea of the Good, or that most brilliant light of being so that it is not merely or only relative to its opposite or its relational.

Raymond:

Perhaps, it is as you say and perhaps not. I have an idea for our next coffee-talk. Let's invite a Pyrrhonist, a Zen Master, and a Parmenidean Platonist and get them to say hello to one another and you and I can enjoy the discussion, ask a few questions, and learn what we can from them.

Joseph:

Anything else?

Raymond:

Yes, It would be interesting if a course were offered on this at your Golden West College. But where do you see all this going, Joseph? I can't even guess what the implications are.

Joseph:

You like analogies, don't you? Well here is one for you to consider: If the magnificent Madyamika Buddhism is transplanted Pyrrhonism and Sextus Empiricus, what would they have done if they had had Plato's Parmenides and Proclus' Commentary to meditate upon? Or, as Pyrrhonism is to Madyamika Buddhism so what would be to Plato and Proclus?

Raymond:

All I can say is that something would emerge that would be more profound and it would have more far-reaching consequences on the spiritual life of man than anything I can imagine.<sup>1</sup>

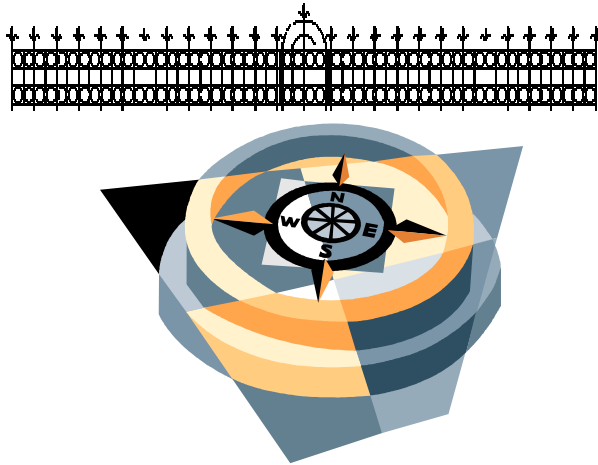
<sup>1</sup> It is here that *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Voice of the Silence* become relevant, but like all puddings — mental or otherwise — the test is in the eating.  
— ED.



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## POINT OUT THE WAY

LV

### Chapter XI

#### I. — Karma, Nirvana and the “Karmaless”

**Question:** — Isn't the habit we have of speaking of Karma and Reincarnation as separate doctrines a misleading one? Wouldn't it be better if we had one term for both of them?

**Answer:** — As a matter of fact, we have one term—“Action.” The single term in Sanskrit is *Karma*. Throughout all the old literature, Reincarnation is simply a concomitant, a resultant, an effect of Karma, but our nature is dual and all of Nature is dual; that means that there are two sides to every question. So Karma and Reincarnation are the two sides of the question of manifested Nature. We have manifested being and manifested Nature. What are the two sides of it? Karma and Reincarnation.

Have you noticed in the statement of the Fundamentals as given in *The Secret Doctrine* the immense change from the statement of the First Fundamental to the statement of the Second, and the immense difference between the statement of the Second and the statement of the Third? Take the Second Fundamental. It does not postulate cycles; nor does it postulate Karma and Reincarnation — it postulates the eternity of the universe *in toto*. That is the first fundamental; but in this universe *in toto* there incessantly appear and disappear the manifesting stars. So really the First and Second Fundamentals are a statement of Nature. Nature has two sides, the unmanifested side and the manifested side. The First Fundamental is the statement of Nature unqualified; the Second Fundamental is the statement of manifested Nature. The Third Fundamental is the statement of Nature as it appears to us; that is, a personified or individual manifestation of Nature as represented in us and about us. We have a pair of terms to distinguish everything; the thing of which we speak is a unity, whether it is phenomenon or noumenon, or the First Fundamental.

**Question:** — It is said that Spirit and Matter are a pair of opposites — but one and the same thing. Yet Karma has no effect on the Spiritual plane. How about that?

**Answer:** — Spirit and Matter are said to be the two poles of the one Life, a pair of opposites, and at the same time it is said that Spirit is unaffected by action. How *can* it be affected by action when it is unmanifested? Only that which is manifested can be affected by manifestation. You can't get burned in one house when you are living in some other house!

But we again have to distinguish

between the various uses of terms. How would you represent in the English language what is in fact represented by the word “Nirvana”? Nirvana means, literally, “without an instrument”; that is, actionless existence, because there can be no action without a body or an instrument. That is what the Aphorisms mean: “There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it.” There is no action unless there is a form or instrument of action, and Nirvana means without an instrument; therefore, it means actionless existence, unmanifested Life.

What English word shall we employ as equivalent to Nirvana? There is no other word than “Spirit.” As used by H.P.B. throughout *The Secret Doctrine* the word “Spirit” is the equivalent of Nirvana, unmanifested Nature — Nature at rest, as opposed to Nature in action. And “matter” is used fundamentally throughout *The Secret Doctrine* to mean all manifested existence in no matter what state, shape or form, highest or lowest. The Seventh *Gita* says the same thing. We say Manas — Buddhi, and think of the Spiritual; yet *The Secret Doctrine* says that Buddhi is an effect; it is matter.

**Question:** — H.P.B. says in *The Key to Theosophy* that neither Atma nor Buddhi are ever reached by Karma.

**Answer:** — Well, what is Atma — Buddhi? It is the Self, actionless in the midst of its perfection. How could there then be any Karma? All Karma represents *imperfection*. Karma is the working over of the remains — whether we work them over today from yesterday, or this Manvantara from a former Manvantara — it is dealing always with imperfection.

We fail to realize that there is a condition of consciousness which cannot respond to discord; that is, there is a

condition of Life in which there is no possibility of any consciousness of discord. In the case of the individual man, that is precisely his existence in Devachan; no discord whatever can reach the being in Devachan. He is just as unconscious of discord as we, here, are unconscious of Devachan. It is only in a world of contrasts, of impressions, that there is any possibility of pain or suffering.

Then again, the word *Spirit* is often used to distinguish man. Man is embodied Spirit as we know it, and we have but to turn to the greatest chapter on Karma and Reincarnation — the Thirteenth *Gita* — and study it thoughtfully, to see much that will clear up all our problems. Krishna says, for example, that embodied Spirit — or Purusha (individual spirit) when invested with matter — experienceth the qualities that proceed from matter. Take a being that we could imagine to be now in Nirvana. Seeing the miseries of the world, he chooses to leave and enter this earth. Then he would have to suffer the pains and pleasures of this earth. He might not permit his equilibrium to be upset by them, but if you stuck a pin in the highest of beings, he would feel it just the same as any body else would. Our idea of a Mahatma is of one who is incapable of feeling pain. If he can feel our happiness he can also feel our woe, but he is incapable of being *disturbed* by pain, being upset by pain.

Don't you think we mistake the *bondage* of Karma for Karma itself? Everybody hates work, we say; but does he? Release this man from his job and he will go out and play football or play tennis or go out on the golf course or wrestle with somebody and work four times as hard as he did on the bench or in the office! What is the difference? It is not in the expenditure of energy; he expends more energy in what he calls play than in

what he calls work. The difference is that, in what we call play, body, senses, mind and heart are all *conjoined*.

When we think of Karma, there is in the background of our consciousness a perception of something disagreeable. Action and inaction are a pair of opposites, a pair of contrasts. We can't think of one without the other. The Self may be identified with inaction; when so identified, the Self is in Alaya, in Nirvana, in Devachan. The Self may be identified with action. When it is so identified, it is in the kingdoms below us and in the state of most men. But Self has an existence independent of both action and inaction. That's the whole theme of the *Gita*. The attachment of Self to action — that is, the more or less complete identification of Self with action — is what causes our bondage.

**Question:** — You spoke of a being in Nirvana becoming conscious of our woes. Can a being in Nirvana become conscious of our woes here on earth?

**Answer:** — As a matter of fact, the being that is in Nirvana cannot. If he is in Nirvana and he is conscious of pain, he is bound to feel it, isn't he? You can't be conscious of anything without feeling it. But if he feels pain, he isn't *in* Nirvana; that is a contradiction in terms. The result of evolution is the Mahatma. What is a Mahatma? He is the being who is beyond both manifested and unmanifested Nature; that is, he is beyond Karma, which is action, and he is beyond Nirvana, which is repose. Yet, how, in what sense? Why, he knows what Nirvana is — a state of measureless bliss, happiness, peace,

perfectness. He knows what manifestation is, but he does not identify himself with either of them.

When you go to Devachan, that to you is the real; when you go to Nirvana, that is the real. It takes three and a half rounds to drag us out of Nirvana, we are so sure that that is all there is! In Nirvana, the Self is completely identified with bliss. The shadow of Nirvana, so to say, rests on every human being. What is it that everybody is longing for, working for, fighting for? For happiness; that is, for enjoyment, for repose, where *he* can't be disturbed, where *he* can't suffer. There is only one way to find that place; and that is, get off the map.

So, when it was said that a being in Nirvana who is untouched by works, fruits of works or desires, sees the woes of earth and comes here, it does not make any difference if he comes in love or compassion instead of under duress: the moment he is here he feels what goes on here.

The upshot of evolution is the Mahatma. He never identifies Self with good; he never identifies Self with evil; he never identifies Self with bliss; he never identifies Self with misery; he never identifies Self with birth, or body, or circumstances, or environment, or death, or manifestation, or non-manifestation. He *knows* there is only *That* which eternally is, and *That* I am. That is the harvest, the fruit of evolution.

**Question:** — What is the difference between the Karma of animals and the Karma of Man?

**Answer:** — Broadly speaking, this question could be answered in a single sentence: There are no moral consequences to the animal from its actions; there is no Karma as the

human being experiences Karma. Animals get the physical reaction from their actions and environment; they get the sense, or sensation — the psychic reaction — from their actions; they have no appraisal of good and evil, for this requires both self-consciousness and reason. Lacking these two balance principles, the animal can't suffer Karma in the sense that the human being does.

The difference, then, is that the real Karma of every man is moral suffering. He feels the injustice of what befalls him; that's Karma. From the standpoint of the individual being, Karma always presents, when you come to think about it, two great aspects. First, Karma is what he does; what he experiences in his actions. Second, Karma is what he feels as the *result* of what happens to him.

**Question:** — How about the Karma of what he *doesn't* do?

**Answer:** — A man may be in the world of action and refuse to act, physically. Then the result is disintegration of the body. A man may be in the mental world and refuse to act mentally. Then the result is the disintegration of the mind. We see people whose bodies are going to pieces for no other reason in the world than that they do not act. We see others going to pieces psychically, astrally, mentally, and morally because they will not act when they see that action is called for. Non-action is death, slow death.

**Question:** — Why is it that an animal has *physical* Karma? Why should an animal have any kind of Karma?

**Answer:** — Being human, and looking through human eyes, our difficulty is to avoid personifying other forms of

life in nature around about us. It is these nature stories telling about what the wolf “thinks” and how the dog “chooses” that put us on the wrong track. An animal is in a world of action and has the power of action; it lives in an environment, the environment of its body, that of its senses, that of its appetites or necessities, and a *physical* environment which reacts to its own active principles. An animal can act, and does act from the moment of birth to the moment of death. There is also the other side of its action — the reaction. But Karma in our sense does not exist for the animal.

**Question:** — If you say an animal is not a responsible being, how do you account for the suffering that some, of them undergo?

**Answer:** — It's our irresponsibility that makes the animal suffer, not its. We have to pay for it; we do pay for it in our moral suffering. Most of the moral suffering of humankind is the inarticulate groan of the whole of nature below man which reverberates in our own feeling, our own sense of futility and injustice. Mr. Crosbie often repeated that phrase of St. Paul: “Doth not the whole of creation groan in travail because of the iniquities of man?” The kingdoms below us are as absolutely in our power as our bodies are in our power. When we abuse our bodies, the body does not “suffer” from it — it is *we* who suffer from that abuse. We abuse the animal kingdom in particular. It is not the animal kingdom which “suffers” in our sense; they suffer physically; they suffer psychically to a degree. But the real suffering is our own, because we are the responsible entities in manifested nature, whereas they, having neither

self-consciousness nor reasoning power, can't suffer morally.

**Question:** — Would Karma react more strongly on an intelligent man than on an ignorant one?

**Answer:** — Don't we recall how Mr. Judge speaks about people whose mental and psychic and moral outlook is restricted? He says that the lower they are in the scale of being, the less they feel Karma, although they themselves may feel it to be very dreadful, very burdensome. The more refined and cultured a man is, that is, the more sensitive to the harmonies of life — doesn't it stand to reason that he will suffer the more when subjected to the disharmonies of life?

If we are keenly sensitive to harmony in some direction, say in music, our mode of life, our use of our principles in other directions may be just the reverse of our use of our principles in the direction of music. So, on the side of music we can be elevated to the highest heaven, but not having towards everything else in life the same attitude as that which we take towards music, we suffer abominably. This may explain the so-called "artistic temperament." Devoting their lives to some one aspect of nature, to some one field of possible activity or sympathy, as if that were *all*, they are then, in fact, *out of harmony* with all the rest of life.

Where our attitude is the same towards the whole of life, we tend more and more towards stable equilibrium. It would be possible for one to be sensitive to the fall of a pin on the farthest star — assuming that they have pins there — so sensitive that he could hear a sigh perhaps from some being on that farthest star, and yet move serene through the destruction of a universe. There would be poise in him.

Why? Because the attitude of such a being will be the same towards all creatures, towards all that happens.

**Question:** — Since Karma is reaped in the place where the causes are sown, do we necessarily reap effects through the same beings with whom we set up the causes?

**Answer:** — Karma in itself, whether as a principle of action or the law of compensation, is absolutely and utterly impersonal. We are personal in most of our actions. To the extent to which we personify our relations with another, we have to settle with him. Does not that stand to reason? To the extent that his feeling is personally involved, he does not see Karma; he sees it personally just as we did. So whenever we are impersonal we learn from all, and that is the highest Karma there is. Our life is then an example to all. But we, taking the personal view, hate a given being or love a given being — this only means that we *personify* we deify. So long as that feeling is in us, it will bring us in contact with that very being over and over again, until we cease to personify anything. Then what? Then all relations are relations of will, or duty, or choice, and not under duress of any kind.

**Question:** — Isn't that making the adjustment at the point of disturbance?

**Answer:** — Undoubtedly, this is the direct answer to the question: the spot, place or focus is wherever there is a disturbance, and the adjustment must necessarily be made at the point of disturbance.

**Question:** — Supposing the one personified or deified is impersonal in



his actions towards us, but we are, personal?

**Answer:** — An impersonal being doesn't take anything personally; therefore, he has no Karma. All Karma depends upon the way you take it. Karma consists simply of but one thing seen from two points of view:

- (a) it is our action;
- (b) it is our reaction — not the other fellow's.

**Question:** — On p. 101 (2nd Indian ed.) (p. 96 Am. Ed.), what is referred to in this statement?

“...if he falls into indifference of thought and act, thus moulding himself into the general average karma of his race or nation, that national and race karma will at last carry him off in the general destiny. This is why teachers of old cried, “Come ye out and be ye separate.”

**Answer:** — Don't you feel it is perfectly clear that whoever tries to progress in anything, by that fact goes ahead of the mass? So he does come “out” from among them; he is a pioneer. Isn't it a fact that those whom we call radicals are also men who come out from among prevailing ideas or the mass mind, and seek something better? All progress, it seems, is due to that very thing.

**Question:** — While there is action, can equilibrium be established?

**Answer:** — If equilibrium is established, then there will necessarily be, under the Second Fundamental Proposition, a further period of activity. The whole thing might be said to come to rest at the centre. But there is the Spirit of Life itself, and its line of operation through its

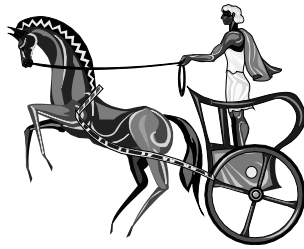
separations, always under the law of periodicity, so that there would be a *further* line of action on the basis of the experience gained. Always, where there is action or manifestation, there must be the pairs of opposites; where there is no manifestation, no pairs of opposites.

Take the question: Can there be action without a disturbance of equilibrium? Suppose I am hungry and desire food; my neighbour has food and desires to give me food; he gives me food. There certainly has been action, but has there been a disturbance of equilibrium? We forget that all disturbance of equilibrium is due to involuntary participation. Where there is *voluntary* participation on both sides, there is no disturbance in equilibrium; and there is plenty of action. All action could be without disturbance of equilibrium in the mental, moral and spiritual senses; there should be altruism *in actu* that is, action without Karma.

Don't you think there is constant danger, because our state of consciousness is a personal one, of taking a personal view of Karma? There is neither morality nor immorality, neither good nor evil, neither pleasure nor pain, in the Law of Karma. The good and the evil, the pleasure and the pain, are in us, in our attitude towards Karma. Death comes to a man and he is content to die; where is the Karma for him? Death comes to a man and he wants to go on living — bad Karma, we say. Yet Karma is neither good nor bad.

[TO BE CONTINUED]





## DNYANESHVARI

### XLIV

[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, Dnyaneshwara 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

**Shri Krishna says to Arjuna:** Just as wealth, which is going to be stolen on the following day may be eaten away today, and the wick may be put right before the lamp is extinguished; in this way before old age has arrived, every thing that would be wasted may be put to proper use. How can he be robbed on the way, who does not go out of the house? Old age can have no effect on the man of knowledge, because he is always behaving as if he was a hundred years old. The chaff from which the corn has been taken out, if beaten over and over again, will produce no more corn. Fire cannot burn ashes. So old age cannot touch a man of knowledge. Illness cannot overtake him who takes precautions. So the man of wisdom avoids attachment to the body or pleasure of the body, the loss of which occasions pain, misery and sorrow, just as he would avoid food touched by the poisonous fangs of the serpent. The door of every one of his limbs and senses where evil appears, he blocks up by means of the stone in the form of discipline. Consistent behavior of this kind indicated the master of the prosperity of wisdom (Dnyana).

The man of wisdom is as indifferent towards the body as a traveller is towards his

temporary residence for the night. He has more consideration for the trees that give him shelter on the way than for his own home. His attitude towards his wife is that of unconscious detachment in the same manner as one looks upon one's own shadow that always goes with him. He regards his children with the same attitude as travelers regard each other under a tree or as cows gathering under the shade at noon. In affluence, he behaves as a mere spectator passing along the road (without attachment). He considers himself bound by the tenets of the Vedas in the same manner as a cocateel is confined within the sides of the cage. Towards wife, family and home he has no attachment. To the man of wisdom, gain and loss make no difference, just as the change of seasons makes no difference to the ocean. Just as the sun remains the same in the morning, afternoon and night, so does his heart when faced with happiness or misery. His equanimity is like the sky seen from every point. This equable state of mind is an index of knowledge. He has in his body, speech and mind firm faith that there is nothing in this world except God and his body, speech and mind obey this faith in every respect. There is no path open to him except that of God. His devotion is unique like that of a devoted wife who has no apprehension either in her limbs or in her mind when approaching her husband. ... He does all this in spite of his being Myself, in the same manner as the light of the sun in the sun and disappears in the sun. When water rises above water, it is called a wave, but it is really water. He who devotes himself thoroughly with a simple purpose to Me, in spite of being Myself, is the man of wisdom. He likes sacred places, forests and caves helpful to ascetic practices. He lives there or on the bank of a lake and he intensely dislikes living in the city. Solitude is to his liking. A crowd troubles his mind. Such is the man of wisdom. He believes firmly that only that is true wisdom (Dnyana) which shows the existence of the Supreme Self. All other learning relating to this world is unwisdom.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## ***IAMBlichus: A TREATISE ON THE MYSTERIES.***

TRANSLATION, BY PROFESSOR  
ALEXANDER WILDER, F.T.S.

### **PART V**

[Continued from Vol. IV, #10 Supplement.]



## **CHAPTER VI**

### **THE ORDER EXHIBITED AT THE RITES**

Besides, there takes place at the Autopsies an exhibition of the order which those that are beheld, carefully maintain, namely:

That of the gods, having gods or angels around them.

That of the archangels, having angels either that precede them, keep in line with them, or follow after; or else being accompanied by another company of angels acting as an escort.

That of the angels exhibiting the peculiar operations of the order to which they have attained.

That of the good demons presenting for contemplation their own works and the benefits which they bestow.

That of the avenging demons displaying the forms of vengeance.

That of other evil demons encompassed by hurtful, blood-sucking and fierce wild beasts.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Sometimes," says Potter, "terrible apparitions astonished the trembling spectators" at the Perfective Rites. This was the case everywhere. In the Chaldæan Oracles mention is made of these direful creatures. They are called "dogs of the earth." "Thy vessel (the body) the chthonian beasts shall make their home." This implies

That of the archons (of the cosmos) exhibiting along with themselves certain regions of the universe.

That of the other class of archons attracting the disorder and discord of the realm of matter.

That of a soul that is entire and not held fast in a specific form; it is beheld around the whole cosmic region as a formless fire, indicative of the Soul of the World, entire, one, undivided and without form.

That of the purified soul; the glowing shape is seen, the fire pure and without mixture. Then are seen its innermost luminance, and the form pure and steady; and it follows after the upward leading guide rejoicing with hearty good will and itself by its operations showing its proper rank.

The soul, however, that bows, carries along with it the symbols of bonds and punishments, and is not only weighed down by groups of spirits belonging to the realm of matter, but it is also held fast by the anomalous disorders incident to that realm, and there are also seen demons of the generative order placing their authority directly before it.

In short all these races make their respective orders duly distinguishable, and they show at once the regions which have fallen to them, and the allotments in which they abide. Those that are of the air display ærial fire; the earthly ones a chthonian and darker light, and the celestials a more splendid luminance. All these races are distributed in these three regions (the earth, air and superior heaven) in the threefold order of beginning, intermediary and last; those of the gods displaying the highest and purest causes pertaining to this threefold order; those of

obsession and evil influences from the spiritual [? Astral] world. — A.W.

the angels being reckoned from the archangels; those of the demons being manifest as attendant upon these and those of the half-gods in like manner ministrant — not indeed after the same services as the demons, but after other and different ways of their own. Those of the archons have the allotment which is set apart to them; to one class the superintendence of the cosmic world and to the other that of the realm of matter. Those of the souls are classed as the last of the superior races.

Hence they all indicate their places by themselves; the first classes having the first; the second class the second, and the third class the third, and the others are arranged as belonging to some of these.

#### OTHER PHENOMENA AT THE RITES

Meanwhile, the gods beam forth light to such a degree of thinness that the bodily eyes are not able to sustain it, but are affected in the same way that fishes are when they are drawn from a muddy and thick fluid into rare and transparent air. For the men, the Beholders of the Divine Fire not being able to breathe because of the thinness of the fire, become enfeebled as they come to the sight, and are excluded from natural respiration. Archangels also give forth a luminant atmosphere which is not endurable for breathing; yet they neither shine with the same pure light, nor are they as overpowering as the gods their superiors. The presence of the angels makes the temperature of the air endurable, so that it is possible for the theurgic priests to approach them. In the case of the demons there is nothing to affect the air, and in consequence the atmosphere around them does not become more tenuous; a luminosity does not precede them, in which their form might be come visible from being taken and fixed by the air, and there occurs no radiation around them. In the case of the half-gods, certain parts of the earth are moved as by an earthquake, and noises

echo around; but the air does not become at all thinner, or unsuitable for the theurgic priests, so as to render it impossible for them to endure it. In regard to the archons, whether those of the cosmic worlds or those that belong to the realm of matter, an assemblage of many luminous apparitions, hard to endure, surrounds them; but there occurs no attenuation of the air, such as is incident to the supramundane region, or to the Zodiacal signs on high.<sup>1</sup> But with the manifestations of the souls the air is evidently affiliated more closely, and being united to them receives in itself their limitations.

#### ACQUIREMENTS FROM THE SUPERIOR RACES

Accordingly, at the last stage, when the gods appear, the dispositions of soul of those who are invoking them, realize a thorough removing of passive conditions and the transcendent perfection, and not only the energy superior in every respect, but they also participate in divine love and a tranquillity of mind, almost beyond estimation. When the archangels are beheld, these dispositions acquire a pure constancy of condition, spiritual insight and stable power. At the coming of the angels into view, they receive an allotment of wisdom and truth, and likewise of pure excellence, sure knowledge and order in harmony with these bestowments. But when the demons are contemplated the tendencies take on eager desire incident to the sphere of generated nature, and likewise not only acquire zeal for the completing of the Performances according to allotment of such exercises. If there is a view of the half-gods, then they are not only borne away by other such impressions, but also share in many anxieties of a character relating to a communion of souls. But when the

<sup>1</sup> The Supreme elements, ἀκρῶ στοιχεῖα, are the signs of the zodiac, which constituted an important feature in theurgy as allied to astrology. — A.W.

archons are brought within purview, then movements are set up in the soul, cosmic or such as pertain to the realm of matter, as the case may be. And with the visions of the souls, there are brought into activity the generative appetites and natural solicitude as regards the care of the bodies and such other matters as relate to these.

In connection with these things, the apparition of the gods imparts sincerity and power, and likewise success in undertakings, and also gives<sup>1</sup> the greatest benefits; and at the appearing of the others everything is bestowed abundantly as it may be consistent with the rank of the several orders. For example that of the archangels, gives the perception of what is true, not simply in regard to all things collectively but definitely in relation to specific matters, and this not at all times but occasionally — not indefinitely to all or everywhere, but singly in a particular manner or to some special purposes. In short it does not confer power in like manner neither upon all, nor at all times, nor everywhere, but only sometimes and in some particular way. At the appearing of the angels, there are still narrower limitations than these in the circuit in the bestowing of benefits. The coming of the demons into view does not impart gifts good to the soul but either those of the body or which relate to the body. These they dispense wherever the order of the universe permits. According to the same conditions, the presence of the half-gods imparts benefits of the second and third order, aiming to acquire supervision of the entire polity of souls, but those of the earth and those of the cosmic realm. At the manifestation of the archons, the cosmic and the other class, the former confer blessings of a cosmic nature and those of this life; but those of the inferior rank bring out not a few advantages incident to the realm of matter, they exhibit to the

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<sup>1</sup> Original had "gifts." — ED. A.7.

Beholders things which contribute to the welfare of human life.

Thus we have set forth particularly the boons received from these superior races according to the respective order of every one, and have likewise made a complete answer to what thou hast asked in regard to matters of importance in relation to their appearings to view. So much, then, let us set forth respecting these subjects.

#### **BOASTFUL SPEECH AND DECEPTIVE IMAGES**

The matter, however, which thou hast brought to us for a decisive solution respecting these superior races, whether as thy own opinion or whether as what thou hast heard from others, is neither correct nor rightly expressed. Thou sayest: "It is a common thing for the gods and demons alike, and with all the Superior races, to speak boastfully, and to project an unreal image into view."

Such is not the fact as thou supposest. For a god, an angel, and a good demon (when they appear at the Rites) give instruction freely to human beings, in regard to their own essence, but never in addition, make use in their teachings, of any expression greater than their transcendent power or inherent good qualities. For truth is essentially coexistent with the gods as light is coexistent with the Sun. At the same time we affirm that a God is in no want of excellence or any virtue which can be added to him through words. Besides the angels and demons always receive truth beforehand from the gods;<sup>2</sup> hence they never say anything else than this. Being every one of them perfect in their essence, it is not possible to add anything more to it by praising.

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<sup>2</sup> Damascius also declares that "a general distribution takes place from the One Origin of all things, and Plato calls this, the Truth." — A.W.

When, therefore, does the untruthful act of “speaking boastfully” mentioned by thee, take place? When there occurs some errancy in the theurgic technique, and the images which ought to be at the Autopsia are not, but others of a different kind are encountered, then the inferior races assume the guise of the more venerable orders, and pretend to be the very ones which they are counterfeiting;<sup>1</sup> and in such cases they abandon themselves to boastful speeches and pretensions of power which they do not possess. For I think that if anything spurious grows out like an excrescence from the first beginning, there will a great mass of falsehood flow forth from the perversion. It is necessary, therefore, for the priests to learn this thoroughly from the entire arrangement among the apparitions, and being on their guard against this, they can detect and reject the misleading assumptions of these pretenders as not being spirits that are good and true.

It is not proper in the faithful judging of things to bring forward conspicuously the errors. In the case of other sciences or arts we do not pass judgment from the failures that may have occurred in them. Things, therefore, which through inexpertness in evocation are hardly ever performed quite successfully in ten thousand representations thou shouldst not characterize from the untoward incidents, but shouldst instead bring to notice something different in respect to them. For though the performances at the self-revealing display<sup>2</sup> are such failures as thou sayest, boastful and false, those of the true adepts around the Fire are both genuine and true. For as in regard to everything

else, the ruling powers begin first by themselves and furnish to themselves that which they bestow to others — as for example, in essence, in life, in action — so also supplying the truth abundantly to all beings, they are true first of all in respect to themselves and at the very outset show their own essence to the Beholders. Hence, likewise, they exhibit the Autoptic fire to the theurgic priests. For it is not the operation of heat to freeze, nor of light to make dark or to hide anything from view, nor in anything else the function of which is to accomplish a particular thing, is there the power to perform some contrary operation at the same time. But on the other hand those that are not of that nature and are contrary to them in essence are able to receive these contrary impulses, or are naturally disposed to fall into evil.

We say the same things now in regard to phantasms, or apparitions.<sup>3</sup> For if these are not themselves genuine, but others of the kind are so, that really exist, they certainly will not be among the self-revealing spirits, but are of the kind that display themselves ostentatiously as genuine. These participate in deception and falsehood after the manner of the forms that appear in mirrors; and they thus attract the understanding to no good purpose, in regard to matters which never will be true of the superior races but will be among fraudulent deceptions. For the counterfeit of that which really is, and that

<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Swedenborg, in his *Memoirs and Spiritual Diary*, describes spirits of this character. — A.W.

<sup>2</sup> Greek, *αὐτοφανοῦς δειξεως* Perhaps this refers to the fact also that at the final vision witnessed at the Perfective Rite, or Autopsia, the Beholder was revealed to himself in the impression which it gave him. Certainly Plato and Alcibiades regarded it with different sentiments. — A.W.

<sup>3</sup> Professor Taylor Lewis defines φάντασμα (phantasma) as signifying an apparition. Chrysippus, the philosopher, gives the following meanings: φαντασία, *phantasia*, imagination which leads to contemplation of the Cause or origin: φανταστόν, *phantaston*, something to impress the imagination; φανταστόνικόν, *phantastikon*, a fancy or vain impulse from the mind proceeding from nothing truly imaginable; φαντασμα, *phantasma*, a phantom to which we are drawn by fanciful attraction. Liddell and Scott would define a *phantasia* as an opinion presented from sensation; *phantaston*, as something leading to such opinion; *phantastikon*, as the faculty of such presentation; and *phantasma*, as an image presented to the mind by an object. — A.W.

also which resembles it faintly, as well as that which has become a source of deception, are characteristic of the races that are genuine and distinct to the view. On the other hand the gods and those that came after the gods reveal true likenesses of themselves, but never project apparitions such as are formed in water or in mirrors. Why should they exhibit these phantasms? Would it be to bring evidence of their own essence and power?

On the contrary these things are not at all necessary. They become a source of error and deception to those who believe, and they draw away the Beholders from the genuine knowledge of the gods. What useful thing do they bestow on those who are contemplating these things in the epoptic vision? What profit can be derived from that which is false? Yet unless divinity has this nature will it project a phantasm from itself? How possibly can a race that is stable and firmly established in itself and that is the source of essence and that which is genuine, create in an alien seat, a deceptive counterfeit from itself? By no means, certainly, does a god either transform himself into phantasms or project them from himself into other things, but he causes to shine forth from himself true intuitions in the true moral nature of the souls. According to these facts, they also who accompany the gods are zealous in regard to the genuineness of the gods that appear at the Autopsias.

Next, however, thou affirmest that it is "a common thing for the gods and demons and other races to make likenesses and speak boastfully of themselves." Such a mode of speaking confounds all the races of superior beings with each other, and leaves no difference between one and another. For in this view of the matter all qualities will be common with them and nothing that is choice will be conceded to the exalted ones. It is more just, therefore, to ask by way of denial: "in what way,

then, will the race of gods be superior to that of the demons?" But the fact is, that these races have no common plane: it is not imaginable, and it is not proper to argue from the last and lowest races and from the false steps among the last races, in regard to the first orders and the genuine impressions seen of them. Any one thus thinking in regard to these matters will come close to what is right, and will become acceptable to the gods.

#### **BECOMING AT ONE WITH DEITY**

Thou also affirmest that "ignorance and delusion in respect to the gods is irreligiousness and impiety," and submittest the true doctrine in relation to these things. In all this there is no conflict of sentiment, but it is confessed by all alike. For who will not agree that the superior knowledge which is possessed of real being is most closely affiliated to the gods, but that the condition of not knowing falls infinitely far away from the divine causes of true ideals, sinking down to non-being? As, however, there has not enough been said upon this matter, I will add what is wanting; and because thy statement is made in a philosophic and logical manner rather than according to the working technique of the priests, I think it necessary to say something of a more theurgic character in regard to these matters.

Be it so that "not-knowing and delusion are discord and impiety." It does not follow on this account that the offerings and invocations which are made particularly to the gods, and also the Divine Performances are thereby made fallacies. For it is not the concept that unites the theurgic priests to the gods: else what is there to hinder those who pursue philosophic speculation contemplatively, from having the theurgic union to the gods? Now, however, in actual truth, this is not the case. On the other hand, it is the complete fulfilling of the arcane

performances, the carrying of them through in a manner worthy of the gods and surpassing all conception, and likewise the power of the voiceless symbols which are perceived by the gods alone, that establish the Theurgic Union. Hence we do not effect these things by thinking.<sup>1</sup>

For thus the spiritual energy will be of these things, and imparted from ourselves; neither of which suppositions is true. For even when we are not revolving these things in mind the sacred emblems themselves are accomplishing their own work, and the ineffable power of the gods to whom these emblems belong, recognizes of itself its own likenesses. This, however, is not from having been aroused by our intelligence; for it is not in the nature of things that those that encompass should be set in motion by those that are encompassed, nor things that are perfect by those that are imperfect, nor wholes by parts. Hence, the divine causes are not called forth beforehand into operation by our acts of thinking; nevertheless it is necessary to acknowledge these and also all the best conditions of the soul, and the purity pertaining to us as certain joint causes before existing. Yet the things which arouse the divine will as by authority are the divine countersigns themselves. Thus the activities of the gods are set in motion

<sup>1</sup> Here Abammon makes a new departure in the New Platonic philosophy. Plotinus and Porphyry had taught a system of doctrine analogous to the later Persian scheme, with the Absolute One at the summit, from whom proceeded by emanation, the Over-Mind, the Universal Soul, and Nature. To this Absolute, there might, by philosophic discipline, contemplation and ecstasy, be attained for brief periods, the enosis or intimate union. Iamblichus, however, seems to discard this doctrine with its theory of impassiveness, and to make theurgic or sacerdotal virtues the condition of excellence by which the divine part of the Soul exalts itself even above the Over-Mind, and becomes at one with the Absolute. Hence he inculcated the utility of religious rites and initiations as explained in the reply of Abammon. He was followed in this path by Eunapius, Syrianus and by Proclus, the great light of the later philosophy. — A.W.

by themselves and do not receive into themselves from an inferior source any principle of their characteristic energy.

I have prolonged this discussion to this extent in order that thou mayst not be led to think that all command of the operation in the Theurgic Rites is from us, and that thou mayst not suppose that the genuineness of these performances is actually regulated by conditions in our acts of thinking, or that they are made false by deception. For although we may know the peculiarities which are incident to each race of the superior beings, we may fail to hit upon the truth in regard to their operations. Yet without this knowledge the mystic union never takes place; nevertheless the union and the knowledge are by no means the same thing.<sup>2</sup> So, the divine purity is in no sense by means of the right knowledge, as that of the body is not through health; but on the other hand it is more completely one and more pure than knowledge. Nothing, therefore, of such qualities in us, or anything whatever that is human, helps in any way to the accomplishment of the divine exercises.

<sup>2</sup> Here again — and in the entire preceding discussion — Abammon is indicating, that until we grow an active seed of the Gods and Superior Races *inside our being* it is impossible that we would properly conduct the evocation.

The Egyptian Mysteries were in a state of decay compared to former periods because of a problem pointed out in *The Secret Doctrine*: "The Egyptian priests *have forgotten much, they altered nothing*. The loss of a good deal of the primitive teaching was due to the sudden deaths of the great Hierophants, who passed away before they had time to reveal *all* to their successors; mostly, to the absence of worthy heirs to the knowledge. Yet they have preserved in their rituals and dogmas the principal teachings of the secret doctrine." (I, 312) — ED., A.T.

Abammon is quite frank in admitting this problem of failure due to lack of growth in those conducting the rites. If that *One* at the eye of the pyramid were worthy, then all doors were open, but without a worthy successor to the Hierophant, the light grew dim. Yajna Vidya without Atma Vidya is a surface science. The Hierophant needed the synthetic power of Atma Vidya to make the work of the Assistants come to life. — ED., A.T.



Accept this accordingly which indeed is said in addition but is a sufficient reply to thy whole conception in regard to technique of Theurgy. But those statements of thine have the same force with these in which thou acknowledgest that "the superior knowledge in respect to the gods is holy and helpful," and callest the not-knowing in respect to things revered and beautiful "Darkness," but the knowing of them, "Light" — adding that "the former condition will cause human beings to be beset with every form of evil through ignorance and restlessness, and the other will be the source of everything beneficial." For all these things tend in the same direction<sup>1</sup> with those which have

<sup>1</sup> Iamblichus used his teacher's name, Abammon, as a pseudonym in writing *The Egyptian Mysteries*. Madame Blavatsky, under the discussion of "Iamblichus" in *The Theosophical Glossary*, correlates much of the above to our seven principles, and asserts that *theurgy* is "the highest and most efficient mode of communication with one's Higher Ego, through the medium of one's astral body."

**IAMBlichus:** (*Gr.*) A great Theurgist, mystic, and writer of the third and fourth centuries, a Neo-Platonist and philosopher, born at Chalcis in Coele-Syria. Correct biographies of him have never existed because of the hatred of the Christians; but that which has been gathered of his life in isolated fragments from works by impartial pagan and independent writers shows how excellent and holy was his moral character, and how great his learning. He may be called the founder of theurgic magic among the Neo-Platonists and the reviver of the practical mysteries outside of temple or fane. His school was at first distinct from that of Plotinus and Porphyry, who were strongly against ceremonial magic and practical theurgy as dangerous, though later he convinced Porphyry of its advisability on some occasions, and both master and pupil firmly believed in theurgy and magic, of which the former is principally the highest and most efficient mode of communication with one's Higher Ego, through the medium of one's astral body. Theurgic is *benevolent* magic, and it becomes *goëtic*, or dark and evil, only when it is used for necromancy or selfish purposes; but such dark magic has never been practised by any theurgist or philosopher, whose name has descended to us unspotted by any evil deed. So much was Porphyry (who became the teacher of Iamblichus in Neo-Platonic philosophy) convinced of this, that though he himself never practised theurgy, yet he gave instructions for the acquirement of this sacred science. Thus he says in one of his writings, "Whosoever is acquainted with the nature of *divinely luminous appearances* (φασματα) knows also on what account it is

been mentioned, and obtain a fitting notice with them. It is necessary, therefore, to pass them by, and to proceed with the inquiries respecting the Oracular Art, in order to resolve them.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



requisite to abstain from all birds (and animal food) and especially for him who hastens to be liberated from terrestrial concerns and to be established with the celestial gods." (See *Select Works* by T. Taylor, p. 159.) Moreover, the same Porphyry mentions in his *Life of Plotinus* a priest of Egypt, who, "at the request of a certain friend of Plotinus, exhibited to him, in the temple of Isis at Rome, the familiar *daimon* of that philosopher." In other words, he produced the theurgic invocation.

The popular prevailing idea is that the theurgist worked wonders, such as evoking the souls or shadows of the heroes and gods, and other thaumaturgic works, by *super-natural* powers. But this never was the fact. They did it simply by the liberation of their own astral body, which, taking the form of a god or hero, served as a *medium* or vehicle through which the special current preserving the ideas and knowledge of that hero or god could be reached and manifested. [*T.G.* 330] In short, they produced the invocation by which Egyptian Hierophant or Indian Mahatma, of old, could clothe their own or any other person's astral *double* with the appearance of its **Higher EGO**, or what Bulwer Lytton terms the "**Luminous Self**," the **Augoeides**, and confabulate with It. This it is which Iamblichus and many others, including the mediæval Rosicrucians, meant by *union with Deity*. Iamblichus wrote many books but only a few of his works are extant, such as his "*Egyptian Mysteries*" and a treatise "*On Dæmons*," in which he speaks very severely against any intercourse with them. He was a biographer of Pythagoras and deeply versed in the system of the latter, and was also learned in the Chaldean Mysteries. He taught that the One, or universal MONAD, was the principle of all unity as well as diversity, or of Homogeneity and Heterogeneity; that the Duad, or two ("Principles"), was the intellect, or that which we call Buddhi-Manas; three, was the Soul (the lower Manas), etc., etc. There is much of the theosophical in his teachings, and his works on the various kinds of dæmons (Elementals) are a well of esoteric knowledge for the student. His austerities, purity of life and earnestness were great. Iamblichus is credited with having been once levitated ten cubits high from the ground, as are some of the modern Yogis, and even great mediums. (*Theosophical Glossary*, p. 149-50) — ED., A. T.