

# THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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## THE HUMAN SOUL IN THE MYTHS OF PLATO

### III. THE JUDGEMENT OF THE SOUL\*

At the very root of all systems of religion and philosophy, as means of aiding man to attain to freedom and perfection, lies the idea of individual responsibility. If the soul is self-motive, it must possess free-will, and if it possesses free-will and the power to choose between various alternatives, then the responsibility for the choice rests with the soul itself and with it alone.

The symbolical account of the creation of the human soul by the Demiurgus, which is contained in the *Timaeus*, relates how the Father of Souls "showed them the nature of the Universe and announced to them the Laws of Fate, and that their first birth should be alike for all." He also bestowed on them sense-perception, desire, and "fear and anger" or the irascible nature; three faculties necessary to physical life which they were to control and use as servants. "For He said that if they should subdue these they should live justly, but if they were subdued by them, unjustly. He instructed the souls in these matters that He might not be the cause of the future wickedness of each, and thereafter sent them to their appointed habitations."

The mundane realm, in which the soul lives while in a physical body, is for the soul the world of trial and opportunity. The soul while with the body is in a certain sense undergoing a test. When it chose its life on the earth, it chose, as the Myth of Er in the *Republic* sets forth, with its eyes open and when it was in a position to see things as they are. But in its descent it drinks of the waters of Amelete and on waking up on the earth it is at first bewildered by its new surroundings and may for a long while remain oblivious of its real nature.

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\* For previous articles of this series, see issues Nos. 32 and 33.



Those who, in Plato's words, drink more of this water of forgetfulness than the due measure (not being preserved by wisdom) may pass a whole lifetime on earth without awaking to their real purpose, and without beginning on the work which their soul had long since chosen to do.

But a worse misfortune than forgetfulness may happen to the heedless soul. If instead of subduing the three-fold power of sense perception, desire, and anger it allows itself to become enslaved by these, then it may work many misdeeds in the course of its earth life, and for these transgressions it will ultimately have to atone.

If it has trusted only to its senses as means of gaining knowledge and has left undeveloped those gnostic faculties latent within it which give certain knowledge of spiritual reality, then it will eventually find out that the knowledge which the senses give is in itself only that of the exterior and apparent nature of things, and is useless to the soul unless related to the knowledge of the inner and real principles in which alone is the explanation of phenomena.

If, like a brute animal, it has blindly followed its desires, neglecting the voice of the Inner Monitor which enables it to distinguish between right and wrong action, and has become enslaved by its passions so that it has lived to gratify these without regard to the consequences to others, then, when its earthly course is run, or before, the unerring justice of the Divine Law will bring retribution.

If its irascible nature has been allowed to rule unchecked, and it has resorted to unlawful violence to gratify its ambition in the imposition of its personal will upon its fellow-beings, this, also, will in the fullness of time bring it to sorrow.

Of all such calamities the ultimate cause is ignorance, "the neglect of ourselves," as Plato calls it, the omission to find out the nature of the soul and the purpose of its life on earth.

And since the soul has within it from all eternity the Light of the Divine Ideas, and has only to turn voluntarily to this light in order to choose rightly at every point in its course; since there is with it moreover the Guardian Angel which itself has chosen and which waits with divine patience until the soul of its own free choice wills to begin in real earnest the work that it has come to do, the ignorant and erring soul will be judged here or hereafter by the unescapable justice of the Divine Law.



Although this judgement of the soul is often depicted as occurring after death, yet in a certain sense it may occur in the present life; for the soul may dwell in Hades while in a physical body, just as it may breathe the air of Heaven while still living on earth.

The Platonic Myths which deal with the judgement of the soul and the life in Hades are those of the dialogues *Phaedo* and *Gorgias* and the Myth of Er in the *Republic* already referred to.

The Myth in the *Phaedo* has an especial significance and solemnity, for it was told by Socrates to Cebes, Simmias and others, on the last evening when he discoursed with his friends, before the jailer brought him the cup of hemlock. At this time Socrates, standing fearless and joyful in the very presence of death, became prophetically inspired and delivered this final message of guidance and hope to those he left behind. Warning them against taking it too literally, his final words were "But to assert that this, or something like it, is true of our souls and their dwelling places—since the soul appears to be immortal—seems to me to be worth hazarding by him who thinks it so, for it is a noble risk; and he should, as it were, charm himself by singing it over to himself: for this reason I have given you the myth at such length. But because of this that man should have good hope for his soul, who in this life lets go the pleasures of the body and its adornments, as things foreign to his nature, and likely to do more harm than good, but has eagerly devoted himself to learning, and having adorned his soul, not with a foreign but with her own proper ornament, with temperance and justice, fortitude, liberty, and truth, so awaits the journey to Hades."

#### *The Myths of the Phaedo and the Gorgias*

"It is right, my friends, to consider this: if the soul is immortal, she stands in need of care not only in this period which we call life, but for all time, and it would seem that at this very moment he who neglects his soul is in terrible danger. For if death were the release from all, it would be a windfall to the wicked to be rid at once of their bodies, their vices, and their soul. But as it is, since the soul appears to be immortal, there can be no other safety for her nor escape from evils than by attaining to the height of goodness and wisdom. For when the soul comes to Hades she will



have naught but her education and nurture, from which, 'tis said, the departed one derives the greatest advantage or harm at the very beginning of his journey there. Moreover, it is said that when a man dies, the Angel of each, who has had care of him when alive, endeavours to lead him to a certain place where it is necessary that the souls should be collected after being judged, in order to proceed to Hades with that guide who is appointed to lead the living hence.

But there they receive the allotments due to each, and having remained for that time which is necessary, another guide again conveys them hither after many long periods of time. The journey, indeed, is not such as Telephus relates in Aeschylus, for he says that a single path leads to Hades, but to me the path seems neither simple nor single. For were it so there would be no need of guides, since none could go astray if there were one road only. But that it has many partings and cross-roads I conclude from the sacrifices and rites of the departed.

The ordinate and prudent soul follows her Angel and is not ignorant of what has befallen her. But the soul that cleaves to the body through desire, as I said just now, having fluttered for a long time about it and about the visible place, is at length after many struggles and much suffering violently and with difficulty led away. And when she comes to the place where the others are, since she is unpurified and has been guilty either of unjust slaughter or some such deeds as this—like crimes which are the works of souls her like—every other soul flies from her and turns away, and none will be her companion or her guide, so that she wanders in the greatest distress until certain times are accomplished, and when this comes to pass she is carried to her own place. But every soul that has passed her life in purity and moderation has the Gods for her companions and guides and will dwell in the place befitting her. For there are many wonderful regions of the Earth, and the Earth itself is not of such a kind nor of such a size as those who are wont to speak about it imagine—so a certain person has persuaded me."

Simmius presses Socrates for further explanation and at his request the Myth of the Earth is told.

The Earth, says Socrates, is very great and we live in but a small part thereof, like frogs at the bottom of a pool, for there are many hollows in the Earth into which water



and mists and air collect. But the Earth itself is lifted up clear into the clear Heaven, the Aether, whose sediment is that colluvies or dregs which perpetually gathers in the hollows. We imagine that we dwell on the surface, as men living at the bottom of the sea would think they were on land. We call the Air Heaven and think it is that Heaven in which are the courses of the stars, because by reason of our sluggishness and weakness we cannot get beyond the Air, and so behold the True Heaven and the True Light and the True Earth. For the earth here and all that it contains is continually corrupted and eaten away, and the things that are here are not worthy to be compared with the things that are yonder.

The Earth, looked at from Heaven, is like a ball with twelve leathern stripes, each of a different colour—purple, gold, and white and others, but fairer colours than we see here.

Everything there is more beautiful than it is here, and the gold and silver and precious stones in this true earth (of which those here are minute fragments) are not hidden but visible and found in great abundance so that it is a joy for the blessed to behold them. There are animals and men also, dwelling in different regions, some round about the Air as we by the sea, for the Air is to them what water is to us. There no disease smites, and they live far beyond the measure of our life. Groves and temples have they where the Gods verily dwell and the men who live there come into their actual presence.

In the Earth there are many hollows, some deeper than this in which we dwell, all of which are joined together by subterranean channels, wherein flow mighty rivers of fire and water and running mud, moved upward and downward by a tidal sway. A great cavern pierces through the middle of the whole Earth, which Homer and other poets call the Pit and Tartarus. To and from this cavern all the rivers flow, and each one becomes like the part of the Earth through which it flows. And as the flood surges up and down a mighty wind rushes with it, like the inbreathing and outbreathing of a living creature.

There are many circulations of these rivers throughout the Earth, with seas and lakes and fountains in their course, but all flow into Tartarus again beneath the places of their outflowing on the surface. As far as the centre they fall,



but no further, for each half of the earth is a hill against the stream which flows from the other side.

Of these rivers four are chief: the greatest and that which makes the outermost circle is called Ocean, and over against him is Acheron, which flows in a contrary direction through desert places and under the Earth to the Acherusian Lake, whither many of the souls of the departed come, and these dwell for a longer or shorter space until the time is at hand for them to be born again in the flesh. Between these is the fiery river Pyriphlegethon, falling into a mighty burning lake, and last the river Cocytus issuing into a terrible and desolate place the colour of blue steel where it makes with its flood the Stygian Lake.

“Such is the nature of the Earth, and when the dead arrive at the place whither his Angel bringeth each, first they are judged, both they that have lived well and with holiness and they that have not. And those who have lived a middle kind of life journey to Acheron and, going up on to their vessels, so arrive at the Lake and there dwell and are purified, and both gain release from such sins as they have committed when they have paid the penalty of them, and receive the reward of their good deeds according to the desert of each. But those who seem to be incurable by reason of the greatness of their transgressions—they that have perpetrated many great deeds of sacrilege or shed much blood unjustly and unlawfully, or committed any such crimes as these—they their appointed Fate casts into Tartarus whence they never come forth.”

Let not the reader imagine, says Thomas Taylor, in his note on this passage, that by the word *never*, here, an eternal duration is implied; for Divinity does not punish the soul as if influenced by anger, but, like a good physician, for the sake of healing the maladies which she has contracted through guilt. For, says Olympiodorus, souls which have offended in the highest degree cannot be sufficiently punished in one period, but are *continually* as it were in Tartarus; and this period is called by Plato eternity.

“But those who are deemed to have committed sins great but curable, such as they who have done violence to father or mother through anger, and have repented thereof all the rest of their life, or who have become manslaughterers in any similar manner—for these, too, it is necessary to fall



into Tartarus, but when they have dwelt there a year the wave casts them out, the manslayers by way of Cocytus but the slayers of father or mother by Pyriplegethon. And when they are borne along by these rivers to the Acherusian Lake, there they shout and call out, some to those whom they have slain, and others to those whom they have outraged, and calling to them they supplicate and entreat them to permit them to come out into the lake and to forgive them, and if they persuade them they come out and are released from their sufferings, but if not they are borne back to Tartarus and thence again into the rivers, and they cease not from this suffering until they persuade those whom they have wronged. For this was the fate decreed for them by the Judges. But as for those who are deemed to have led lives excelling in holiness, these are they who, being set free from the places in the Earth as from prison-houses, come to the pure dwelling-place above and live on the surface of the Earth. And of these they who have thoroughly purified themselves by philosophy live without fleshly bodies for evermore, and come to mansions yet fairer than these, whereof it is not easy to tell, nor does the present time suffice. But by reason of all this which I have told, Simmias, we must do all so that we may participate in virtue and wisdom in this life; for the reward is fair and the hope great."

Together with the myth of the Earth that contained in the *Gorgias*, which tells of the Judges of the Dead, must be considered. The *Gorgias* deals with the nature and right use of rhetoric, and Socrates tells the myth in order to prove that oratory, and all methods of persuasion must be used only for the sake of justice.

"Zeus, Poseidon, and Pluto, as Homer declares, divided between them the kingdom which they had received from their father Cronus. Now in the time of Cronus there was, concerning men, this law, which ever was and still is among the Gods—that he among men who goes through life with justice and holiness shall, when he dies, depart to the Islands of the Blessed and there dwell in all felicity and immune from evils; but that he who lives unjustly and godlessly shall go to the prison-house of retribution and justice which men call Tartarus."

The myth then relates how in the earlier time both judges and judged were men and that the departed were judged



clothed and alive each on the day on which he happened to die. Zeus therefore, receiving complaint from Pluto and the Guardians of the Islands of the Blessed that many came undeservingly to either place, resolved to end such a state of affairs. He appointed that each should be judged naked and dead, by judges naked and dead "with very soul beholding the very soul of each so soon as he is dead, bereft of all his kindred and leaving on earth all his accustomed adornment, that the judgement may be just."

He therefore appointed three of his sons as judges—Minos and Rhadamanthys from Asia and Aeacus from Europe. "These, when they are dead, shall judge in the Meadow at the Parting of the Three Ways, where the two roads diverge, one to the Islands of the Blessed and the other to Tartarus. And Rhadamanthys shall judge those from Asia, but Aeacus those from Europe. But to Minos I will give the highest place and the casting-vote in judgement, if in any matter the other two be in doubt, that the judgement respecting the journey of mankind may be most just."

Death, says Socrates, interrupting his narration of the myth, is the separation of two things, soul and body. But of these each remains for some time after death in the condition to which the man had brought it when alive. In the soul, therefore, there will be evident, when she is stripped of the body, her natural dispositions and the passions which a man has developed in his soul through his habit of life.

"When, therefore, they that are from Asia come into the presence of Rhadamanthys their judge, he causes them to stand still and gazes at the soul of each, not knowing whose it is but often taking hold perhaps of the soul of the Great King or of some other king or ruler perceives nothing healthy in the soul, but sees that it is covered with stripes and full of scars by reason of its perjuries and injustice which every deed of the man has stamped indelibly upon his soul, and that all is crooked through falsehood and arrogance, and nothing straight because it was nurtured without truth. And because of its temporal power and the luxury and insolence and incontinence of its deeds he sees the soul teeming with inharmony and foulness. And seeing such a soul he sends it with dishonour straight to the prison, where it must go and suffer the appointed pains. Now it is fitting that everyone who undergoes punishment, if he be punished justly by



another, shall either become better and derive benefit, or else serve as an example to others, in order that they, perceiving his sufferings, may be alarmed and become better. And they who are benefited while receiving from Gods and men the penalty of their offences are those which have committed sins which are curable. And indeed they receive advantage both here and in Hades through their pain and distress; for there is no other way whereby they may get rid of their injustice. But they who have gone to the extreme of wickedness and through such crimes have become incurable, are examples to others, and these are no longer benefited at all, for they are incurable, but others are benefited when they behold them suffering for all time through their transgressions the greatest, most grievous, and most terrible sufferings, being in very deed examples hung up there in the prison-house of Hades, spectacles and warnings to the wicked who continually arrive there."

The punishments of these giants of injustice are still more vividly described in the Republic. They are, it is related, for the most part men who have been rulers and kings, for to them the opportunity for injustice was greater than to men of private station.

"As I said, therefore, when Rhadamanthys receives any such soul, he knows nothing concerning it, whose it is, or who its parents, but only that it is the soul of some wicked man. And beholding this he sends it away to Tartarus, putting on it a sign, according as it seems curable or incurable; but the man, arriving there, suffers that which is due.

And sometimes, beholding another soul that has lived in holiness and truth, that of a private citizen or some such man, but especially, I say, Callicles, of a philosopher, who has done his own work and not busied himself during life with a multitude of non-essentials, he is delighted and sends it away to the Islands of the Blessed.

So also does Aeacus—each of them judging with a rod in his hand—but Minos sits as president, and he alone has a golden sceptre, as Ulysses in Homer says he saw him—

'holding a golden sceptre, giving judgements to the dead.'

I therefore, Callicles, am persuaded by these tales, and I consider how I shall show my soul to her judge, healthy and sound. Wherefore, bidding farewell to the honours of



it is inflicted in vain. Neither God, however, nor any nature does anything in vain.

It is likewise necessary to know that punishment makes the soul more sane, and renders her more adapted to be purified. We must not therefore think that punishments are purification itself. For if the soul were punished without being converted to herself she would not be purified. When therefore she becomes sober and converted to herself, as being self-motive, then she is purified; since a physician also purifies a depraved body, but he does not render it strong by his purifications. The diseased person, however, recovers his health afterwards by taking care of himself, and not acting in a disorderly and irregular manner by the assumption of improper food. Again, as he who comes from health to disease forgets what he did when he was well, but as he recovers his health again remembers it; so the soul coming into the present life forgets the punishments which she formerly endured, and thus acts erroneously. For if she was always conscious of this she would not sin. This forgetfulness, however, happens to her for a good purpose; for, if she remembered, and did not err through fear, she would preserve through fear her proper good, and thus would be no longer well conditioned, or act like a self-motive nature. She becomes oblivious, therefore, that she may explore good as being self-motive; since we also love servants, and consider them as more worth when they serve us voluntarily and not through fear.

The explanation of the mystery of the so-called incurable souls is that in no circumstances, not even in the depths of Tartarus, is the choice of the soul coerced. If she wishes to turn to the light and be rid of her sufferings and impurities she must freely choose this. When this conversion of will has taken place, all that she suffers takes on an entirely different aspect. Instead of rebelling against the dispensations of Divine Providence which are being executed upon her by Fate as the consequence of her actions, she sees these for what they are—the evidence of divine love shining even in the lowest depths of Hades, and so taking up her burden gladly, and even rejoicing in her sufferings because she knows them to be the means of purification, she makes all that she endures to aid in speeding her upon her upward journey. But as long as she is rebellious, and struggles against her



another, shall either become better and derive benefit, or else serve as an example to others, in order that they, perceiving his sufferings, may be alarmed and become better. And they who are benefited while receiving from Gods and men the penalty of their offences are those which have committed sins which are curable. And indeed they receive advantage both here and in Hades through their pain and distress; for there is no other way whereby they may get rid of their injustice. But they who have gone to the extreme of wickedness and through such crimes have become incurable, are examples to others, and these are no longer benefited at all, for they are incurable, but others are benefited when they behold them suffering for all time through their transgressions the greatest, most grievous, and most terrible sufferings, being in very deed examples hung up there in the prison-house of Hades, spectacles and warnings to the wicked who continually arrive there."

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the multitude and practising truth, I will strive to live in reality in the best manner possible to me, and, when my time comes, so to die. And I exhort all men, to the utmost of my power, and thee especially I exhort once more, to this life and this contest, which, I say, is more worthy than all other contests of this our life."

Of the three sons of Cronus or Saturn, who preside over the whole of the manifested universe, Zeus or Jupiter has dominion over the celestial kingdom and presides over the soul's descent into generation; Poseidon or Neptune rules over the sea of generation and the soul's passage over this sea in her life on earth; while Pluto rules the terrestrial and subterranean regions and orders the purgations of the soul whereby she is enabled to free herself from the fetters of the mundane realm, and at length to pass to the Islands of the Blessed and the mansions yet fairer than these.

Plato, says Olympiodorus, agreeably to the nature of a myth divides things which always subsist together into prior and posterior. He also speaks of the imperfect prior to the perfect; when the myth, therefore, says that the judges were living judges of the living, judging on the very day that any one happened to die, and that in consequence of this they judged badly, this signifies that we judge badly, but divine judges well.

The three Judges, sons of Jupiter, may be taken to symbolize the all fore-judging powers of the Divine Intellect proceeding to the very uttermost, and, through their inflexible decrees, permitting the soul to make even its transgressions and the punishments resulting from them aids on its upward journey. Their being dead signifies that their operations are in that world which is at the uttermost extremity of things wherein only the shadow of true life is found.

Again, says Olympiodorus, let us show what is meant by the judges being formerly in bodies, but now naked. Here again the myth divides, and calls us from the more imperfect to the perfect. For our life is obscurely signified by this, both in the present state of existence and hereafter. For, in this life, both we and those that we judge are in bodies; and hence deception takes place. But in another life, both the judges and those that are judged are naked.

Asia, says Thomas Taylor, is eastern, but Europe has a more western situation. But eastern parts are analogous



to celestial natures through light, but Europe through its curvature to terrestrial natures. Through these two, therefore, viz., Asia and Europe, a celestial and terrestrial polity are signified. There is also a middle polity, which Plato signifies by the doctrine of the extremes.

The Four Rivers symbolize the four life-giving streams of Providential Energy which have an analogy with the four elements. These rivers rise in their purity on the slopes of the heavenly Olympus and proceed as far as the last of things, taking on the characteristics of each realm through which they pass, so that in Tartarus they are tumultuous and turbid, and yet even here through their purifying virtues they extend benefit to the soul.

We must not think, says Olympiodorus, that vice is natural to the soul. For since the soul is incorporeal and immortal, if it naturally possessed vice, vice would also be immortal which is absurd. When therefore Plato speaks of the natural dispositions of the soul which she preserves when released from the body, he means that which accrues to the soul through living in conjunction with things base; so that vice is as it were co-essentialized with it, the soul becoming subservient to the temperaments of the body. The soul therefore suffers punishment for this, because, being in short self-motive and connected with anger and desire, she does not harmonize these, and lead them to a better condition by her self-motive power. For the Demiurgus punishes souls as not subduing by their self-motive power the passions which were imparted to them for their good: for it is necessary that they should be vanquished and employed to a good and not a bad purpose.

In explanation of the passage referring to the "incurable" souls, Olympiodorus observes—

It is, however, worth while to doubt why Plato says they are always judged and never purified. What then, is there never any cessation of their punishment? If however the soul is always punished, and never enjoys good, she is always in vice. But punishment regards some good. It is not proper, therefore, that the soul should always continue in a state contrary to nature, but that she should proceed to a state according to nature. If, therefore, punishment does not in any respect benefit us nor bring us to a better condition,



it is inflicted in vain. Neither God, however, nor any nature does anything in vain.

It is likewise necessary to know that punishment makes the soul more sane, and renders her more adapted to be purified. We must not therefore think that punishments are purification itself. For if the soul were punished without being converted to herself she would not be purified. When therefore she becomes sober and converted to herself, as being self-motive, then she is purified; since a physician also purifies a depraved body, but he does not render it strong by his purifications. The diseased person, however, recovers his health afterwards by taking care of himself, and not acting in a disorderly and irregular manner by the assumption of improper food. Again, as he who comes from health to disease forgets what he did when he was well, but as he recovers his health again remembers it; so the soul coming into the present life forgets the punishments which she formerly endured, and thus acts erroneously. For if she was always conscious of this she would not sin. This forgetfulness, however, happens to her for a good purpose; for, if she remembered, and did not err through fear, she would preserve through fear her proper good, and thus would be no longer well conditioned, or act like a self-motive nature. She becomes oblivious, therefore, that she may explore good as being self-motive; since we also love servants, and consider them as more worth when they serve us voluntarily and not through fear.

The explanation of the mystery of the so-called incurable souls is that in no circumstances, not even in the depths of Tartarus, is the choice of the soul coerced. If she wishes to turn to the light and be rid of her sufferings and impurities she must freely choose this. When this conversion of will has taken place, all that she suffers takes on an entirely different aspect. Instead of rebelling against the dispensations of Divine Providence which are being executed upon her by Fate as the consequence of her actions, she sees these for what they are—the evidence of divine love shining even in the lowest depths of Hades, and so taking up her burden gladly, and even rejoicing in her sufferings because she knows them to be the means of purification, she makes all that she endures to aid in speeding her upon her upward journey. But as long as she is rebellious, and struggles against her



Guardian Angel, her punishments do not set her free, for she is in every deed kicking against the pricks and heaping upon herself more suffering in doing so. The self-willed and rebellious soul comes not into the presence of the Wise God, Pluto, but goes to her own place.

There is, however, no need for the purification of the soul to be delayed until her departure from the body: it is a work which can be undertaken here and now.

In the *Phaedo* one of the principal subjects of discussion is the "philosophic death" whereby the true philosopher sets free his soul from the fetters of its body even while dwelling on earth. Physical death separates the body from the soul, but so long as the soul lusts after material things she is still attached to the body and, as Plato says, "flutters about the visible place." The true philosopher, by the practice of the cathartic virtues, dies daily, like St. Paul, to the body, and thereby releases his soul to soar aloft in the contemplation of reality, the beholding of the True Heaven and the True Light and the True Earth.

This purification and liberation of the soul was the object of the Sacred Mysteries of Dionysus or Bacchus.

Initiation, says Olympiodorus, is the Bacchic mystery of the virtues. The virtues, or kinds of virtue, are spoken of by Plato as five in number—the physical, ethical, political, cathartic, and theoretic. The physical virtues are such as pertain to the health of the bodily nature; the ethical virtues give right conduct and manners; the political virtues enable men to live harmoniously in organized communities; the cathartic virtues enable the soul to purify herself from the stains of transiency; while by exercising the theoretic virtues she beholds the divine vision of reality. Thus Plato calls those who energize according to the political virtues, bearers of the thyrsus or narthex, but those who energise according to the cathartic virtues Bacchuses, since when the soul is purified of all her defilements she puts on the divine likeness. "For we are bound in matter as Titans; but we rise from the dark mine as Bacchuses. Hence we become more prophetic at death: and Bacchus is the inspective guardian of death, because he is likewise of everything pertaining to the Bacchic sacred mysteries.

Virtues, says Socrates in the *Phaedo*, when separated from wisdom, are not even a 'shadow-play' of themselves,



but are in reality signs of a slavish disposition and have in them nothing healthy or true. "But that which is in reality true virtue is a purification from every thing of this kind; and temperance and justice and fortitude and wisdom itself are each a kind of purification. And it would seem that those who instituted the Mysteries for us were not triflers, but shadowed forth in veiled sayings the truth—that whosoever cometh to the House of Hades uninitiated and impurified shall lie in the mire, but that he that cometh thither purified and perfected by the Mysteries shall dwell with the Gods.

For, say they who speak concerning the Mysteries—

'The thyrsus-bearers are many, but the Bacchuses are few.'

These few, in my opinion, are none other than they who have been true philosophers, and that I may be counted among their number I have left nothing undone that was within my power throughout all my life, but have in every way most zealously striven."

(*To be continued.*)

## JEWELS

None can fly thither except such as escapeth out of himself, namely, out of his own will, his own wisdom, his own deductions, and his own beaten tracks. Paradise is not far away from thee, but it is everywhere where the love of God shineth forth.

—*Morgan Llwyd*

\* \* \*

The discourses of Socrates resemble cubes, because they remain firm wherever they might fall.

—*Hierocles*

\* \* \*

Having purified herself from the body, the soul will remember that which she has lost during this life.

—*Plotinus*

\* \* \*

The Bodhisattva thinks thus: all sentient beings commit innumerable evil deeds, on account of which they suffer innumerable sufferings, do not see the Tathagata, do not hear of the Good Law, do not recognize the pure Sangha. As they are loaded with innumerable evil deeds and their Karma, they are bound to suffer infinite pains. Therefore, I will stay for them in the evil paths and suffer their sufferings so that they may enjoy emancipation. I will never abandon them because it is my desire to bear all sentient beings on my shoulders and to save them from such ills in birth, old age, sickness, and death, and to release them all from false philosophy, ignorance, and evils.

—*Avatamsaka Sutra*



## JEWELS FROM THOMAS TRAHERNE

Very little is known about Thomas Traherne, and although he had some reputation as a writer and a scholar in the seventeenth century in which he lived, his work passed completely into oblivion until about thirty years ago, when some manuscripts containing work of high quality were discovered on a bookstall. These manuscripts were unsigned and were thought to be the work of Thomas Vaughan, until the discovery of another volume of manuscripts established Thomas Traherne as the author of both.

Thomas Traherne seems to have lived a quiet life, a true expression of that inner serenity which is so much in evidence in his writings.

He was the son of a shoemaker at Hereford, and took his degree at Oxford first as Bachelor and later as Master of Arts. He then entered Holy Orders in the Anglican Church and subsequently became private chaplain to the Lord Keeper, Sir Orlando Bridgeman, whose appreciation of him was such that he kept him in his household until his death.

In the works of Thomas Traherne we find that wholehearted enjoyment of Nature as the perfect expression of the Perfect ONE, together with a lively realization of the immanence as well as the transcendence of the ONE and the GOOD, the TRUE and the BEAUTIFUL.

To think well is to serve God in the interior court:  
To have a mind composed of Divine Thoughts, and set in frame,  
is to be like Him within.

\* \* \*

What is more easy and sweet than meditation? Yet in this hath God commended His Love, that by meditation it is enjoyed. As nothing is more easy than to think, so nothing is more difficult than to think well.

The easiness of thinking we receive from God, the difficulty of thinking well proceedeth from ourselves. Yet in truth, it is far more easy to think well than ill, because good thoughts be sweet and delightful: Evil thoughts are full of discontent and trouble. So that an evil habit and custom have made it difficult to think well, not Nature. For by nature nothing is so difficult as to think amiss.

\* \* \*

You never know yourself till you know more than your body. The Image of God was not seated in the features of your face, but in the lineaments of your soul. In the knowledge of your Powers, Inclinations, and Principles, the knowledge of yourself chiefly consisteth, which are so great, that even to the most learned of men, their Greatness is Incredible; and so Divine that they are infinite in value.



They that quarrel at the manner of God's revealing Himself are troubled because He is invisible. Yet it is expedient that He should be so: for whatsoever is visible is a body, whatsoever is a body excludeth other things out of the place where itself is. If God therefore being infinite were visible He would make it impossible for anything to have a being. Besides bulk as such in itself is dead. Whatsoever is visible is so in like manner. That which inspireth bulk with motion, life, and sense is invisible; and in itself distinct from the bulk which it inspireth. Were God therefore pure bulk, He could neither move, nor will, nor desire anything; but being invisible he leaveth room for and effecteth all things. He filleth nothing with a bodily presence, but includeth all. He is pure Life, Knowledge, and Desire from which all things flow: pure Wisdom, Goodness, and Love to which all things return.

\* \* \*

The brightness and magnificence of this world, which by reason of its height and greatness is hidden from men, is Divine and Wonderful. It addeth much to the Glory of the Temple in which we live. Yet it is the cause why men understood it not. They think it too great and wide to be enjoyed. But since it is all filled with the Majesty of His Glory who dwelleth in it; and the Goodness of the Lord filleth the World, and His Wisdom shineth everywhere within it and about it; and it aboundeth in an infinite variety of services; we need nothing but open eyes, to be ravished like the Cherubim. Well may we bear the greatness of the World, since it is our storehouse and treasury. That our treasures should be endless is an happy inconvenience: that all regions should be full of Joys: and the room infinite wherein they are seated.

\* \* \*

You never enjoy the world aright, till you see all things in it so perfectly yours, that you cannot desire them any other way: and till you are convinced that all things serve you best in their proper places. For can you desire to enjoy anything in a better way than in God's Image? It is the Height of God's perfection that hideth His bounty; and the lowness of your base and sneaking spirit that maketh you ignorant of His perfection. God's bounty is so perfect that he giveth all things in the best of manners: making those to whom He giveth so Noble, Divine, and Glorious, that they shall enjoy in His Similitude. Nor can they be fit to enjoy in His presence, or in communion with Him, that are not truly Divine and Noble. So that you must have Glorious Principles implanted in your nature; a clear eye able to see afar off, a great and generous heart, apt to enjoy at any distance; a good and liberal soul prone to delight in the felicity of all, and an infinite delight to be their Treasure: neither is it any prejudice to you that this is required, for there is great difference between a worm and a Cherubim. And it more concerneth you to be an Illustrious Creature than to have the possession of the whole world.



## CONFUCIUS AND HIS DOCTRINES

One of the greatest figures in the history of China is Confucius.

Although he was not a religious founder like Buddha, his message being more ethical than religious, yet his influence over the five hundred million people of the Chinese Empire has been of such vast and far-reaching importance, and has extended through such a lengthy period of time, that he has taken his place among those who have permanently influenced the thought and even more especially the actions of the human race.

Confucius was born in the year 551 B.C. in that part of China which is now called Shan-tung, in a small village in the Land of Lu. His father was of distinguished ancestry and held a government office at the time of the birth of his illustrious son.

Very little is known concerning the childhood of the Sage, save that even in his tender years he gave evidences of that profundity of thought and fondness for ritual and ceremonial which characterized his later life.

Confucius was married early, according to Chinese custom, and was the father of a son and a daughter.

His name is really K'ung fu-tsze, K'ung being the family name, fu a title of respect, and tsze meaning philosopher or master. In other words, he is 'The Philosopher K'ung,' which has been latinized as Confucius.

These were turbulent days in China. The Empire, although nominally a unity was, in practice, a group of small independent states, each with its own ruler, a law unto himself and a terror to his less powerful neighbours.

With this condition of affairs before him, it is small wonder that the youthful philosopher looked about him for a remedy, and also that he looked for it in the mundane order where it was most needed: a pragmatic remedy for the cure of a defect of the body politic.

In the year 531 B.C. Confucius entered the service of the State in various minor capacities, and two years after this he became a teacher. He tells us in the *Analects* (VII, 7) that he never refused his teachings even to him who was only able to bring as payment a bundle of dried fish. Thus he



soon gathered about him a band of earnest students, desirous of the wisdom which even in these early days he was beginning to impart.

When he was twenty-four years of age his mother died, and he retired from active life, as was the custom, for a period of twenty-seven months. It was during this time that he began his life-long work of editing and arranging the ancient Chinese literary fragments and traditional sayings, that they might be preserved for all time in harmony and order.

When he emerged again from his retirement, into the world, he took up the study of music and became proficient in playing the lute.

There are several, perhaps legendary, but very interesting accounts of meetings between Confucius and Lao-tsze. The former is recorded to have said to his disciples: "I know how birds can fly, how fishes can swim, and how animals can run. But the runner may be snared, the swimmer may be hooked, the flyer may be shot by an arrow. But there is the Dragon. I cannot tell how he mounts on the wind through the clouds, and rises to heaven. To-day I have seen Lao-tsze, and can only compare him with the Dragon."

This symbolism is significant of the different viewpoint of the two great Chinese sages. Confucius proclaims: "While you are not able to serve men, how can you serve God." He begins as it were from below. Lao-tsze, on the other hand, tells us that Tao or God does all things while appearing to do nothing, and that the true servant of God is best employed by paradoxical "activity in inactivity." The one is the practical Sage: the other is the transcendental Mystic, yet they both have their place and each forms the complement of the other.

The "Great Man," according to ancient Chinese philosophy, stands with his feet planted on the earth, but with his head reaching even unto heaven.

He includes the above and the below, the inner and the outer, the mystical and the pragmatic, and when he manifests, both must be used and given full exercise, for withal he is but one man. Thus it is that side by side in the realm of Chinese thought we find Confucius and Lao Tsze, the former teaches the way of Earth, the latter the way of Heaven; the former teaches the way of action without, the latter indicates



the way of mystical "action-in-inaction" within; the former said that to know mankind was wisdom, the latter said that to know the Eternal leads to Integrality.

It can easily be seen that for profundity and depth the mystical philosophy of Lao Tsze is far in advance of the worldly wisdom of Confucius, but it is also undoubtedly true that the Master K'ung has exerted a more direct influence on the great masses of the Chinese people than any other figure in their whole history.

During nearly the whole of his lifetime the China that Confucius knew was in an almost constant state of civil war. The various dukes battled with one another for supremacy and the Emperor was powerless to prevent them.

Confucius moved about to avoid, as far as possible, the confusion resulting from all this turmoil, seeking always for the remedy for worldly strife, and finding it in the canons of the moral law, and a synthesis of the wise rulership of the past.

He journeyed in the year 517 B.C. (when he was thirty-four years of age) from his native state of Lu into the neighbouring land of Chi, and from this time onward gathered about him the band of disciples which steadily increased in numbers and enthusiasm.

He must undoubtedly have been an extraordinary man. A little cold and austere perhaps, and impenetrable like his race, disliking to show any emotions, punctilious, and scrupulously honest. If his mat was not straight he would not sit on it; yet he was human enough to weep bitterly at the passing of a favourite disciple.

His diligence and scholarship were enormous, for he revised and edited "The Five Classics," and particularly the "Shu King" or Book of History, for he held that a knowledge of China's Ancient Golden Age of perfect rulers was necessary, that the return to a perfect state might be achieved.

Confucius soon had an opportunity of putting his precepts into practice. The turmoil in Lu subsided; he returned and was appointed governor of the township of Chung-too, and in a very short time made so vast a difference in its behaviour as to amaze all concerned. It became under his beneficent rule a model of all that a town should be.

This came to the ears of the Duke Ting who called Confucius to him, asking if he could govern a whole state on



similar lines, and on being assured that this was possible he appointed him to a high office in which he still further exemplified his ability to rule wisely and well. An unprecedented prosperity prevailed the land of Lu; crime became almost unknown, and peace and joy reigned supreme.

So great was the success of the wise and kindly rulership of the Sage that neighbouring states became jealous and the rival Duke of Tsze devised a plan to humiliate Confucius. He sent to Duke Ting a present of eighty beautiful dancing girls. The gift was accepted and no court was held for three days. Whereupon Confucius resigned his post and started upon his wandering over the vast land of China, accompanied by his band of faithful disciples, seeking a wise ruler whom he might serve, one sufficiently enlightened to wish for the well-being and permanent good of his subjects.

On the whole, he was well received, but never again was he offered a post he felt justified in accepting. For thirteen years he wandered thus, returning at last, through the instrumentality of one of his disciples to his native land in the year 484 B.C. at the advanced age of 67.

The last five years of his life were spent in peaceful study and writing. To the *Yi King* or *Book of Changes* he devoted particular attention. He is said to have been so zealous in the study of this work that the leather thongs with which his copy of the volume was bound together had to be more than once renewed. The appendices of the *Yi King*, which are even more voluminous than the text, are attributed to Confucius himself.

His energy and industry were prodigious up to the very end. When it is considered that before his time the ancient writings were in a chaotic and disorganized condition, consisting largely of isolated and unarranged fragments, and that it is mainly to Confucius that they owe their ordered presentation and preservation, it can easily be seen why he is so greatly venerated by his fellow countrymen. So wisely and so well did he labour that even to this day his work stands as a monumental testimony of the permanence of that which is real and basic in the laws and principles which govern all human actions.

Confucius passed from the world of transiency to join the great company of the Venerable Ones in the year 479 B.C. at the age of seventy-two. There are no miraculous occur-



rences recorded in connection with his passing. He departed from this mundane existence, as he had lived, quietly and decorously. His work was finished, and he said: "My time has come to die." After seven days in his bed he peacefully passed onward to the larger life.

So great was the veneration of his disciples that they erected a pavilion at his grave and for three years many of them took up their abode there, performing the usual rites in veneration for the departed. Some are even said to have remained in attendance for a period of six years.

In the writings of Confucius there is very little to be found concerning God or the Soul or a future state of existence, but this does not mean that Confucius himself was not a profoundly religious man. He carefully observed all the religious practices of his race and time, and ceremonially venerated his ancestors and the great sages of the past according to the immemorial Chinese custom; but above and beyond all this he realized the profound truth that the Above is reflected in the Below, that the Laws of God are to be found expressed and in operation in the Laws of Nature, and that the Cosmos is a vast Book of God which man may read.

This does not imply that man should merely *follow* nature. The natural part of man must to a certain extent conform to the natural laws, in order to be efficient in its own sphere; but man as Man is more than nature: his body is the culminating production of it, his Soul is above it and, if it so wills, unrestricted by its limitations, and his Spirit is a Spark of the Divine Illumination, the Light of God in Man.

Confucius realized these things, as all the inspired teachers of mankind have done, but in practice he deliberately restricted his message to the manifested universe and the sphere of external conduct and activity.

Great teachers have always come to Humanity to fill a particular need at a particular time, and their message has been the one that subserved the greatest good at the particular time and in the particular circumstances.

China at the advent of Confucius was in a condition of pragmatic chaos and needed an ethical and moral code based on Divine Law, and exemplified and illustrated for its more easy understanding by examples of the praiseworthy standards of conduct in the past. This is what Confucius gave to his time and to posterity.



There is little in the writings of Confucius that may not be understood by the simplest mind. That is why his teachings have been so popular, so widely read, and so universally admired by his fellow-countrymen even up to the present day.

The Confucian books are learned by heart by all who aspire to be scholars in China, and thus not only have the principles of moral truth and virtue been preserved and cultivated by the race as a whole, but the very texture of the language has been retained in its ancient purity.

The Chinese are justly renowned for their honesty, filial piety, and learning, and most certainly the foundation upon which these rest is built upon the ground plan laid down by the Venerable Confucius over twenty-four hundred years ago.

#### THE CONFUCIAN CANON

The Confucian Canon, as now constituted, consists of nine works, which are sub-divided into "The Five Classics" and "The Four Books," and no Chinese Scholar is unfamiliar with their contents. They are as follows:—

##### *The Five Classics*

- I. The Shu King, or Book of History.
- II. The Shih King, or Book of Odes.
- III. The Yi King, or Book of Changes.
- IV. The Li Ki, or Book of Rites.
- V. The Ch'un Ch'iu, or Spring and Autumn Annals.

##### *The Four Books*

1. The Analects of Confucius (LUN YU).
2. Mencius.
3. The Great Learning (TA HSUEH).
4. The Doctrine of the Mean (CHUNG YUNG).

There is also another book called the "Classic of Filial Piety" which records the conversations of Confucius with one of his disciples on this important topic, and although this is a treatise of very great popularity in China, and emperors have praised it, yet it is not to be considered in the same category as the nine foregoing works.

The commentaries on the Confucian Canon, as might be expected, are numerous and varied, and constitute a vast literature in themselves, but for present purposes it will be sufficient to indicate briefly the subject matter and general import of the nine volumes themselves.



## I. THE SHU KING, OR BOOK OF HISTORY

This was compiled by Confucius from numerous pre-existing sources, numbering, it is said, about a hundred in all.

The History begins in the Legendary period of the Golden Age of China in the twenty-fourth century B.C. in the reign of the Emperor Yao, and ends in the eighth century B.C., from which point Confucius carries it forward to his own time in the "Spring and Autumn Annals," the fifth of "The Five Classics."

The *Shu King* and many of the other Chinese Classics narrowly escaped destruction and complete oblivion at "The Burning of the Books" in B.C. 213. The Emperor Khin, wishing all existing learning to date from his reign, ordered the wholesale destruction of all ancient manuscripts with a few exceptions, and any scholars retaining copies, or even meeting together to discuss them, were to be sent to work on the Great Wall or, in certain cases, were even to be buried alive. For nearly twenty-five years this edict remained in force, but when it was repealed the ancient works again re-appeared from secret hiding places and from the memory of the faithful ones who had cherished and preserved them during the dark times.

A complete English translation of the *Shu King* is to be found in the "Sacred Books of the East," Vol. III.

## II. THE SHIH KING, OR BOOK OF ODES

This consists of a collection of three hundred and five poems, which are commonly known as the "Three Hundred." They were selected by Confucius from a much larger number, as worthy of preservation and emulation, and they form the basis and model of all subsequent Chinese poetry.

Many of the verses have an allegorical meaning, and they deal with all the usual subject matter of man's activities: love and war, seed-time and harvest, and religious devotions.

The earlier odes in the *Shih King* are those of the temple and altar, or the "Sacrificial Odes." They are concerned with most interesting descriptions of the early Chinese custom of paying respect to departed ancestors, which is a fundamental part of their devotional life and deeply ingrained in their character.

The whole collection is like a set of rare old Chinese porcelain or lacquer, gay with the figures of emperors and



warriors, of priests and tillers of the soil. The background is the pleasant landscape of China with its mountains and rice fields made resplendent with rainbows and gaily coloured birds.

The subject matter of the poems embraces the philosophy of life of those early days in China, not worked out as a system but expressed in glittering fragments which were calculated to impress themselves upon the minds of the people with a vividness that made them of enduring value. Confucius considered the Odes of great importance and that no man of intelligence could afford to be ignorant of them.

### III. THE YI KING, OR BOOK OF CHANGES

Of all the Confucian works this is the strangest and most difficult to understand, but it is well worth studying, as it contains much that is basic and enduring.

Confucius himself in his mature age said that if he were to live a hundred years longer he would devote fifty of them to the study of the *Yi King*. This indicates the great veneration in which he held it.

The Trigrams, or three lines, either whole or broken, which constitute the original symbolism on which the *Yi King* is based, are said to have originated with Fuh-Hi, the first Emperor of China, an almost legendary person.

The three whole lines represent Heaven and the three broken ones Earth, while the various combinations of them symbolize: Water, Fire (or Sun), Thunder, Wind, Moon (or Clouds or Rain) and Mountains.

The whole lines are the Yang, the broken lines are the Yin; they are positive and negative, masculine and feminine active and passive; in fact, they are all the pairs of opposites, in the realm of manifestation.

Tradition tells of a dragon-horse that emerged from the waters of the Yellow River, with the diagram of the trigrams upon his back, in order that Fuh-Hi might use them in his philosophy.

At a later date the eight trigrams were extended into sixty-four Hexagrams by Wen Wang and these with commentaries form the basis of the *Yi King*. It consists of sixty-four chapters, each bearing the name of one of the hexagrams, and following these are the ten appendixes, or "Ten Wings," which are attributed to Confucius himself.

A true understanding of the *Yi King* is said to lift the student above the pairs of opposites,



“Heaven and earth exert their influence and all things are fabricated. The Venerable Ones exert their influence on posterity, and there is peace and tranquillity below as well as above. If we study these influences we attain to a knowledge of earth and heaven.”

The *Yi King* has been extensively used as a book of divination and, as such, it escaped destruction at the “Burning of the Books,” as works on this subject were spared together with those which treated of medicine and agriculture. It is however much more than this, or it would not have been so long preserved and revered, or so profoundly have impressed the mind of Confucius as to cause him to study it as he did, and comment upon it at such length.

Symbolically considered, it represents the emergence of the Many from the ONE, and all the stages of unfoldment may be followed by any one who possesses the key which unlocks the mystery of numerical progression, or has the patience to persevere until it is at length revealed.

#### IV. THE LI KI, OR BOOK OF RITES

The Chinese, as a race, delight in ceremonies. From the most remote times they have had a particular way of performing all their social and religious acts, and all these observances have been gathered together and crystallized in the *Li Ki*.

Confucius himself tells us in the Analects that “Without a fitting ceremonial observance, courtesy becomes fussiness, heed turns to timidity, courage becomes turbulence, and straightforwardness becomes rudeness.” (VIII, 2).

A race venerates great men who have the characteristics they most admire. The courtesy, politeness, and love of ceremony of Confucius are proverbial, and all his sayings and doings bear witness to this. It is also true that great men model their race and time. They lead and others follow. Confucius in the *Li Ki* collected together the ceremonial observances of the past that he deemed worthy of preservation, adding his own comments, and he welded the whole into a most amazing structure, for there is hardly an occasion when men need to act together for a given purpose that is not provided for in this work.

There are ceremonies for the various parts of the day, month, and year, and all that appertains thereto. Music and numerical sequence have their place, and there are correspondences mentioned which refer to animals, birds,



and fishes. The points of the compass and the days of the week are considered in their symbolical and ritualistic significance, as are the colours and the elements. Dress, vestments and ceremonial appurtenances for every conceivable occasion are also fully discussed.

The right way to perform ceremonies and the right time and place of their enactment are, as would be expected, fully expounded, and there is the much needed warning, often repeated, that reverence is of greater importance than slavish perfection and too rigid an adherence to details, at the expense of the ultimate significance of the rite.

The ceremonial of family relationships is most elaborate, and has to do with precedence, decorum, dress, and many other things. A funeral or a marriage is attended with details of elaborate complexity, increasing with the dignity and importance of the family or families involved.

The *Li Ki* is very human and it pulses with the life of the people which has not changed so very greatly since those ancient days.

#### V. THE CH'UN CH'IU, OR SPRING AND AUTUMN ANNALS

The last of the five "Kings" is that short historical work by Confucius himself in which he continues and brings up to his own time the records of events from where they terminate in the *Shu King*.

The ancient Chinese year was divided into two parts by the Spring and Autumn Equinoxes; thus Spring included Summer, and Autumn included Winter.

The records of events in the *Annals* are, however, more than mere history, for they contain many hidden meanings which have been expounded and elaborated in the voluminous commentaries of Tso Chuan whose wonderful vividness of style makes this work a much cherished treasure of the Chinese people. Confucius, as it were, announces the theme, and Tso Chuan gives us elaborate variations upon it.

There are other and later commentaries on this work, but none so able or so generally venerated.

Confucius considered the *Spring and Autumn Annals* his greatest achievement, but posterity has ascribed greater importance to others of his works.

The *Four Books* are much shorter than the *Five Classics*: in fact, two of them (*The Great Learning*, and *the Doctrine of the Mean*) are both chapters in the *Li Ki* or *Book of Rites*.



The Chinese student usually begins with these Four Books as a preliminary study before going on to the larger works, and their very brevity and compactness make them a useful introduction to Chinese thought for the European inquirer who would know more of the outlook of his Oriental brother.

#### I. THE ANALECTS OF CONFUCIUS (LUN YU)

It is by his Analects that Confucius is most widely known.

The Analects are a collection of the sayings of Confucius and give what many consider to be his actual words as recorded by his disciples.

A few examples, with comments, will indicate the style and import of this delightful book.

“Confucius said: The best men are born wise. Next come those who easily acquire wisdom by study, next learned narrow minds. The lowest of all are those who will not learn.” (XVI, 9)

Confucius knew that true wisdom is a gift from God, and that the only hopeless ones are those who deliberately turn their backs upon the Light of Wisdom and will not learn.

“Only the very wise and the stolidly ignorant do not change.” (XVII, 3)

The very wise touch that which is changeless above, the stolidly ignorant are immersed in that which is changeless below, nature and her inexorable laws. All others change as they progress and unfold their faculties. The wise are conscious of the reality of their stability, the ignorant are only alive in an unconscious way, like animals. When they begin to change they are no longer ignorant.

“To keep the ancient knowledge aflame, and with it enkindle the new, makes the true teacher.” (II, 11)

Confucius exemplified this in his own life and work. He always venerated the past, but he did not leave the work of his ancient predecessors without adding to it that which he had to give. Thus he became an ideal teacher.

“Shall I teach you what is wisdom? To know what we know, and to know what we do not know, that is indeed wisdom.” (II, 17)

To be ignorant that we are ignorant is the uttermost depth of ignorance; to know that we do not know is the beginning of wisdom; to be one with the Source of all Wisdom is to be truly Wise.



“ Love is to conquer self and turn to courtesy. Could we conquer self and turn to courtesy for one day, all below heaven would turn to love.” (XII, 1)

## 2. MENCIUS

A hundred years after Confucius came Mencius, whose great regret was that he was not a contemporary of his illustrious predecessor.

Not being able to remedy this state of affairs, he did what he could by becoming the disciple of a worthy descendant of the Sage, Tsze Sze, and under him advanced rapidly in his knowledge of the Confucian doctrines.

Soon he became generally acknowledged to be one of the leading exponents of the teachings and his fiery enthusiasm led him even to the courts of Dukes and Kings.

The Chinese are great respecters of learning and so it was not difficult for him to gain an audience even of the highest in the realm, but to get them to accept his teachings was another matter.

It was much the same as it had been in the time of Confucius. Now they listened to Mencius, were interested, and went on much as before. Mencius, therefore, decided to devote himself to writing and to the teaching of those who would profit by his precepts.

“ If you love others and they do not show affection for you, examine your benevolence. If you rule men and they prove disorderly, examine your tact. If you show respect to others and they do not return it, examine your own respect. If you do not succeed according to your wishes, turn inward upon yourself. If you be correct in your own conduct, all under heaven will be in harmony with you. He whose mind accords with Divine Reason, attains abundant bliss.” (VIII, 4)

“ The tendency of man's nature to goodness is like the tendency of water to flow downwards. There are none but have this tendency to goodness, just as water flows downwards.” (VI, 2)

The Goodness of God is reflected in the goodness of man. That which is not good, or less good than is due, is a broken reflection caused by man's misunderstanding and misapplication of the Law Divine. The waters of Divine Providence are always flowing downwards.



“ There is a nobility of Heaven, and there is a nobility of man. Benevolence, righteousness, self-concentration, and fidelity, with unwearied joy in the goodness of these virtues—these constitute the nobility of Heaven. To be an eminent person and exalted—this constitutes the nobility of man.

The Venerable Ones of antiquity cultivated the nobility of Heaven and the nobility of man came in its train.” (VI, 16)

By seeking the highest all other things are added.

### 3. THE GREAT LEARNING (TA HSUEH)

These last two of the Four Books are unquestionably the most profound and philosophical of all the Confucian Canon.

The Great Learning is a treatise on the way of attainment. The short text is by Confucius and the commentary by one of his disciples. The first part of the text itself will be enough to indicate the significance of the work.

“ The Great Learning educes the intellectual and moral powers, uplifting all men and resting only at the summit of the highest excellence. The summit of virtue once discovered, the mind determines to attain it; the determination once fixed, the mind becomes stable; being stable, it becomes calm; being calm, it can fully deliberate; having fully deliberated, it attains at last illumination.

Things have an origin and a consummation; actions have first principles and ultimate consequences. He who understands the universal order of things has reached perfection.”

The commentary unfolds every sentence, indicating in detail how perfection may be attained. It is a work which has been studied by thousands of aspirants to the perfect life, and the influence for good which it has exerted, small in compass though it be, is immeasurable.

### 4. THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN (CHUNG YUNG)

This is probably the most extraordinary work of all those we have been considering.

It was passed on from Confucius to his immediate disciples as an inner teaching, but Kung Chi, the grandson of the Sage, fearing lest it should be lost or corrupted, committed it to writing, adding to it and enriching it, for to the profundity of Confucius he brought a subtlety that was his own.



Prefixed to the Chinese edition of the work is a short preface by the great commentator Chu Hsi which explains the meaning of the title (Chung Yung) and praises the work itself.

“ Being without inclination to either side is called Chung; admitting of no change is called Yung. By Chung is denoted the correct course to be pursued by all under heaven; by Yung is denoted the fixed principle regulating all under heaven. This work contains the law of the mind, which was handed down from one to another. It first speaks of one principle; it next spreads this out and embraces all things; finally, it returns and gathers them all up under the one principle. Unroll it, and it fills the universe; roll it up, and it retires and lies hid in mysteriousness. The relish of it is inexhaustible. The whole of it is solid learning. When the skilful reader has explored it with delight till he has apprehended it, he may carry it into practice all his life and will find that it cannot be exhausted.”

The work itself, like the *Ta Hsueh*, is composed of a text and a commentary. The following is a translation of the text, the exegesis of which will be dealt with in a subsequent article.

“ What heaven has projected is called nature. To accord with nature is called Tao (the Way). To cultivate Tao is called enlightenment. Tao may not be departed from for a single moment. That which may be departed from, is not Tao. There is nothing more open than what is concealed, and nothing more manifest than what is minute. Hence the truly virtuous man is careful how he acts even when alone. When the passions of joy, anger, grief, and delight are not manifested, they are said to be in Chung (in the due medium or state of equilibrium). When they are manifested and all in their proper order they are said to be in Ho (or Harmony). Equilibrium is the great foundation of all things and Harmony is the all pervading principle of the universe.

When Equilibrium and Harmony exist in perfection, heaven and earth both do their appointed work and the universe becomes a cosmos.”



## THE MUSIC OF WORSHIP

The Art of Music may be defined as the expression of ideas by means of right succession of sounds. Thus music may be said to be symbology in sound.

Natural sounds provide the musician with the material of his art.

Sound is one of the qualities whereby everything in nature expresses its internal characteristics. Natural sounds, therefore, are likewise symbolical. The outer symbol corresponds to the inner significance: the uttered sound to the idea which is soundless.

Wherever there is Being there is Expression.

The Law of Expression is universal: it applies from the uppermost even to the very last of things, and there is an intimate parallelism and an inseparable analogy throughout. Hence every real symbol must bear some relationship to the Infinite Being, and its highest and deepest significance or symbolism is that which represents this relationship with Him.

All real symbols, therefore, whether of sound, colour, or form may be a means of leading from the exterior to the interior, from the objective to the subjective, from the material to the spiritual.

The musician who fails to recognize any significance in the music of Nature other than that which is solely outward, merely imitates nature. He portrays only sensible beauties. And inasmuch as nothing can rise higher than its source, the admiration which his music sympathetically calls forth is but the admiration and veneration of nature. Moreover, since like is only appreciable to like, only the sensible nature of man is affected.

But man is a microcosm, a miniature of the Great World in which he moves, and repeats in terms of himself every aspect of its marvellous symbology.

If he identifies himself exclusively with the outer, lower, and sensible aspects and ignores or fails to understand the inner, higher, and intelligible, then he is obviously unable to comprehend their full meaning. But the more he realizes the inner significance of these cosmic symbols, the nearer he comes to a knowledge of the Cosmos, of himself, and of the Divine Source of both.



The musician who attains to such a knowledge uses his art to express analogically Divine Beauties, and pours forth his adoration, praise, and love in music symbolical of his worship.

Divine Worship may be defined as the Practice of the Presence of God. The music of Divine Worship is, therefore, the music which contributes to this end.

The Science of Music, as far as the West is concerned, was first formulated by Pythagoras. Tradition relates that he derived his knowledge from the Egyptians, who in the time of their Golden Age, were the most learned and most religious people who have ever inhabited this planet.

Nothing is known of the actual music of the Ancient Egyptians beyond the fact that it formed a vital part of their wonderful ceremonies, for the Priest Hierophants were musicians as well as theologians and philosophers.

## I. THE THEORY OF MUSIC

It is recorded that Pythagoras founded his system of music on the Cosmic Harmony or music of the spheres, which he himself is said to have heard.

“Employing a certain ineffable divinity and which it is difficult to apprehend, he extended his ears, and fixed his intellect in the sublime symphonies of the world; he alone hearing and understanding, as it appears, the universal harmony and consonance of the spheres and the stars (i.e., planets) that are moved through them, and which produce a fuller and more intense melody than anything effected by mortal sounds. This melody also was the result of dissimilar and variously differing sounds, celerities, magnitudes and intervals, arranged with reference to each other in a certain most musical ratio, and thus producing a most gentle, and at the same time variously beautiful motion and convolution. Being therefore irrigated, as it were, with this melody, having the reason of his intellect well arranged through it, and as I may say, exercised, he determined to exhibit certain images of these things to his disciples as much as possible; especially producing an imitation of them through instruments and through the mere voice alone.”

—*Iamblichus' Life of Pythagoras.*

Another writer, Simplicius, in his commentary on the Second Book of Aristotle's “Treatise on the Heavens,”



mentions that "the Pythagoreans said that an harmonic sound was produced from the motion of the celestial bodies and that they scientifically collected this from the analogy of their intervals, since not only the ratios of the Sun and Moon, of Venus and Mercury, but also of the other stars (planets) was discovered by them." To justify the truth of this statement, Simplicius adds "All things are not commensurate with each other, nor is everything sensible to everything, even in the sublunary region. This is evident from dogs who scent animals at a great distance, and which are not smelt by men. How much more, therefore, in things which are separated by so great an interval as those which are incorruptible from the corruptible; and celestial from terrestrial natures, is it true to say that the sound of divine bodies is not audible by terrestrial ears? But if any one like Pythagoras, who is reported to have heard this harmony, should have his terrestrial body exempt from him, and his luminous and celestial vehicle and the senses which it contains purified, either through a good allotment, or through probity of life, or through a perfection arising from sacred operations, such a one will perceive things invisible to others and will hear things inaudible by others. With respect to divine and immaterial bodies, however, if any sound is produced by them, it is neither percussive nor destructive, but it excites the powers and energies of sublunary sounds and perfects the sense which is co-ordinated with them. It has also a certain analogy to the sound which concurs with the motion of terrestrial bodies. But the sound which is with us, in consequence of the sonorific nature of the air, is a certain energy of the motion of their impassive sound. If, then, air is not passive there, it is evident that neither will the sound which is there be passive. Pythagoras, however, seems to have said that he heard the celestial harmony, as understanding the harmonic proportion in numbers of the heavenly bodies and that which is audible in them."

"All things are Numbers," declared Pythagoras.

The Pythagorean Diogenes Laertius says: "The Monad (the ONE) is the Principle of all things: from the Monad comes the indeterminate Duad and all numbers."

The Divine Numbers of Pythagoras symbolize the Powers and Attributes of the Infinite ONE and thus constitute the



primary principles of all symbology whereby the relationships and correspondences of all things—of God—of the Cosmos and of Man can be unfolded. Pythagoras composed his doctrine of the harmony or music of the spheres on the Number Seven, which symbolizes the Sevenfold Principles behind and within all creation.

The distances between the various planets were divided by Pythagoras into tones or parts of tones—seven in all—these Seven Cosmic Intervals are said to be analogically repeated in the many septenaries throughout nature as well as in man, man being a microcosm of the macrocosm.

“ For He, having Light and Life and the Harmony of the Seven Spheres, Nature delayed not, but immediately produced septenary man in correspondence with the nature of the Seven.”—*Divine Pymander*.

“ His intellectual principle is analogous to the sphere of the fixed stars, but his reason, which is theoretic, is analogous to the planet Saturn, while his ordinative and political part is compared to Jupiter, his irrational and irascible nature to Mars, his power of expression and speech to Mercury, that which is epithumetic to Venus, that which is sensitive to the Sun, and that which is vegetative to the Moon. The luciform vehicle is analogous to the heavens but the mortal body to the Sublunary region.”—*Proclus on Timaeus*.

It was said of Pythagoras that when in Egypt he was initiated into the Sacred Mysteries, the mysteries of the Purification and Ascent of Man to his ideal state. The way of the Ascent is thus mystically unfolded in the Divine Pymander of Hermes Trismegistus: “ Firstly when thy material body is to be dissolved, the body is surrendered by itself to the work of transmutation: thus the form which thou hadst becomes invisible and thou surrenderest thy habit of life, void of energy, to the Guardian Angel. The senses of the body then return to their respective sources, become separate, and are again resurrected as energies; while thumos and epithumia (the vegetable and animal principles) withdraw into the irrational nature, and thus the part of man which remains doth speed upwards through the Harmony (i. e., the Seven Zones or Spheres).

To the first sphere he giveth up the energy of augmentation and diminution; to the second, the tendency to evil, now purged; and unto the third, the deception of incontinence, now impotent; to the fourth, pride and ambition are sur-



rendered and nullified; and to the fifth, profane boldness and unseemly rashness; to the sixth, evil covetousness and avarice are given up, now mortified; and to the seventh zone, insidious falsehood. And then, denuded of all the energies of the seven spheres, clad in his proper Power, he cometh to that nature which belongeth to the Eighth Sphere, and hymneth the Father together with those who are there. They who are there rejoice at his coming, and he, being made like unto them, hears the Powers of the Ogdoad (i.e., Eighth Sphere, which is above the seven natural zones) who are above Nature hymning unto God in the sweet voice that is their own"—(I. 24, 25, 26).

Harmony, says Plato in the *Timaeus*, having her movements related to the revolutions in our soul, was given to mankind by the Muses to be a helper unto him who shall use their art with understanding, not for that which is now esteemed to be the use of music, the getting of emotional pleasure, but for the ordering of that circle of the soul which has become unharmonious in us, and the rendering of it concordant with itself.

It is worthy of note that Pythagoras gained for himself the title "the Trainer of Souls." In the training of his disciples, music played a considerable part, for, having heard the universal harmony, "he determined to exhibit certain images of these things to his disciples as much as possible; especially producing an imitation of them through instruments and through the mere voice alone."

Appropriate melodies were chosen to accompany the various religious celebrations of the day and also for other circumstances and occupations, each of which had its own special significance in accordance with his symbolical system.

Music was thus used by Pythagoras as a means of purifying and ordinating the human nature so that it might be brought into conformity with the Divine Nature and thereby enable the soul to worship in spirit and in truth. For in true worship the whole nature is prostrated before the Divine. The inner nature worships in spirit, but the truth of this interior act must be expressed to the outermost.

"If thou dost not make thyself God-like thou canst not know God; for like is intelligible only to like."—*The Divine Pyramander*. \*

\* Subsequent articles will deal with the History and Essentials of the Music of Worship.



## PRAYERS OF THE MYSTICS

Give me, O Lord, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength, the Spirit of knowledge and godliness, and of Thy fear. Most high, eternal, and ineffable Wisdom, drive away from me the darkness of blindness and ignorance; most high and eternal Strength, deliver me; most high and eternal Light, illuminate me; most high and infinite Mercy, have mercy on me.

\* \* \*

O my God, by whose loving Providence, sorrows, difficulties, trials, dangers, become means of grace, lessons of patience, channels of hope, grant us good will to use and not abuse these our privileges; and, of Thy great goodness, keep us alive through this dying life, that out of death Thou mayest raise us up to immortality.

—Christina A. Rossetti

\* \* \*

O God, animate us to cheerfulness. May we have a joyful sense of our blessings, learn to look on the bright circumstances of our lot, and maintain a perpetual contentment under Thy allotments. Fortify our minds against disappointment and calamity. Preserve us from despondency, from yielding to dejection. Teach us that nothing can hurt us if, with true loyalty of affection, we keep Thy commandments, and take refuge in Thee.

—William Ellery Channing

## SEED THOUGHTS

### *Positivity*

To the living and affirmative mind difficulties and unintelligibilities are as dross, which successively rises to the surface, and dims the splendour of ascertained and perceived truth, but which is cast away, time after time, until the molten silver remains unsullied.

—Coventry Patmore

### *Art and Religion*

There is only one perfection and only one search for perfection, and it sometimes has the form of the religious life and sometimes of the artistic life; and I do not think these lives differ in their wages, for 'the end of art is peace,' and out of the one as out of the other comes the cry: *Sero te amavi, Pulchritudo tam antiqua et tam nova! Sero te amavi!*

—W. B. Yeats

## EDITORIAL

We are pleased to announce that Manual No. 9, "A Synthesis of the Bhagavad Gîtâ," was published early in November and is now available, price 3s., post free. We hope to be in a position to publish shortly further Manuals, notably The Golden Verses of the Pythagoreans, The Chaldean Oracles, and Three Platonic Dialogues. The Shrine Manual Fund, for this purpose, is still open, and we take this opportunity of thanking all those who have supported it in the past.