

The Golden Verses
of
Pythagoras

A new translation with Comment

by

THE BEAST

666

9°=2° A:A:

Preface.

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

The importance attached to the Golden Verses by the Pythagoreans was cardinal. Every disciple was made to memorize them, and to repeat them daily. They were esteemed a Compendium of the Master's teaching.

The consideration of these facts induced me to conclude that the Verses must be in the nature of a Cryptogram, that the apparently commonplace phrases concealed a secret signification, a Key to the Occult and Magical Doctrine and Practice of Pythagoras.

An hour's research was sufficient to confirm this hypothesis. The Lexicon bore ready witness that the words of the text had for the most part a technical mathematical meaning; and as we know that the system of Pythagoras was expressed by him in numerical symbols, there could be little doubt that a close critical examination of the text would yield his esoteric teaching.

I have therefore made a new translation in light of the above reasoning, assisted by analogy from other occult systems. This may be accepted as a legitimate procedure, since Truth is always coherent with itself.

Coll. Ad S. S.
Cefalu.

An XVII ☉ in 29° ♃

THE GOLDEN

WORDS

Words.

E H O S I is “a Word” in its deepest and fullest sense; LOGOS is a later synonym chosen to replace it as the term for “Truth manifested in sound” because E H O S had become vulgarized by use in the course of time, to imply any words so-ever. E H O S meant (in the age of Pythagoras) not only the form but the substance of living thought. The root F E π is an onomatopoetic representation of the flowing breath (the diagamma, our W) arrested by the lips (our P or PH) so as to give form to its originally inarticulate and all but silent witness to life.

K P U S O S, gold, is a symbol of perfection, purity and splendour; it is connected with the idea of Anointing, as in the word “Christ” from X P I Ω , originally “to touch”. especially to touch the human body.

The title of this book may thus be paraphrased: “The Living Words of Truth fit to touch the human body with power to anoint it unto royal perfection.”

The sub-title₂

The Preparatory Process.

The word Π A P A S K U H means Preparation, but also Method, and even Plot.

1 [In keeping with the original's mostly typewritten format, I am preserving AC's Greek transliteration when he depicts it as an English letter – in cases where it a Greek letter is handwritten in, I will present it in Greek. This rubric will be maintained throughout the text, as will any spacing et cetera included in the original typescript- ED]

2 [Handwritten note at top of page – Ed.]

This title thus indicates that the introductory lines will describe the preliminaries necessary for initiation, the plan or method of the work of attainment, and the curriculum of the course of the aspirant.

First estimate the Norms of Necessity, that are not subject to death, in the manner ordered by Law.³

T I M A. The verb “fear” (or “reverence”) means essentially “esteem” or “value”, that is, to judge in relation to some standard. Only in the second place does it come to mean “esteem highly” and so “respect”. Here then the injunction is laid upon each student first of all to calculate the formulas of the Immortal Gods, for “the Gods” are but personifications of the various Powers of Nature. The wise man, wishing to invoke the Gods, that is, to induce them to work on his behalf, must first measure these powers, and ascertain what are their natures and their ways. Thus, he will induce the Nile-God to fertilize Egypt by building a Dam at Aswan, and propitiate the wrath of those gods who send plague and fever upon men by sacrificing rats and mosquitos in their honour.

Δ E O U S (as my Ms reads, possibly by error for ΘEOUS) means those who are bound by Necessity, those causes of phenomena whose nature is part of the fixed order of things. They are called

Α Θ Α Ν Α Τ Ο U S, “immortal”, because they are thus constituted. They are not created, or to be destroyed; they are always present and potent, even though latent. “Mars” is always favourable to those tribes who are most devoted to his worship, compelling every man to spend two or three years of his youth in making himself fit to be sacrificed on His altars whenever the God demands it, and acquiring the greatest skill in forging His sacred metal, steel, into weapons. Such is the rational interpretation of theological theorems.

There is nothing personal or capricious about the true Gods; they are unchanging, inexorable, bound by the law of their own natures. But these Gods rule man with rods; and his only true method of religion is to estimate them both qualitatively and quantitatively, learning thereby to adjust his ambitions to their immutable wills.

Δ Ι Α Κ Ε Ι Ν Τ Α Ι, “ordered”. We calculate these formulas of Magical Power by the means at our disposal, the means necessary to our peculiar natures, and therefore the sole means appropriate. We are fools if we try short cuts, such as supernaturalism approves. Prayer, penance, faith, works, devotion, self-denial, and the rest, are all abject folly; they cannot help a man whose house on the cliffs is threatened by the envy of Neptune. If he would save it, he must observe how Neptune works, measure the

3 [Handwritten note to left of this section: “Tent.”, abbreviation for tentative – Ed.]

currents, gauge the terms of his treaty with Tempest, and the amount of the aid lent by the Sun and the Moon to his tides. He must call to his aid other gods, array an organized and adequate resistance, with stones from the Gods of the Mountains, beams from the Gods of the Woods, and bolts from the forges of Vulcan, that he may build bulwarks against the invader.

N O M O I. By Law it is appointed that he is thus “ordered” to act. Man is a part of Nature and a force of Nature no less than any other form of existence. He is bound by Gravitation exactly as a stone or a cloud is; his breath obeys the laws of its nature as any other kind of air does. His blood is bound by hydrostatic formulas, and his mind echoes the chemical reactions in his brain, no less than the mercury in his barometer and the flare of his fireworks. His fondest fetish, his free will, is, if he strip it of shams, a fatuous phantom; it is a pompous puppet driven darkly at random down a river whose course he cannot guess, by currents he cannot control or deflect, being indeed for the most part unconscious that he is their plaything.

But so far as he has even a shadow of free will, it is no more than the power to carry out his character-determined “choice” at the moment when he is swept by some eddy into a spot of comparative calm in which his spasms of struggle are sufficient (for once) to determine its drift from the deadlock of conflicting currents. Yet if even such spasms are to be more than self-nullified splashes, the swimmer must know how to measure the might, and divine the impulse, of every part of the water around him; he must know the laws of water in relation to his body, and the laws of his body itself; and he must train that body as best he may so that he may make the most advantage of his actual position, straining his muscle and mind against the point of least resistance. By these means he may continue to direct the course of his lift into what he regards as the most favourable chance, and drive down to the ocean of oblivion by the sluggish and shallow right bank instead of by the other, with its rapids that roar among rocks fallen from the crags that scowl on its sunless swirlings.

We may therefore interpret the first sentence of these Words as a general statement of the Master's conception of Nature, and of Man's proper attitude towards her.

1. Nature is bound by necessity.
2. Nature is to be understood by those who know how to observe Her ways.
3. These ways may be described by generalizing them as “Laws”.
4. These laws are immutable.
5. Everyone also is bound by the laws of his own nature.

6. These laws permit us to investigate (within our limits) all Nature, stating relations between observed phenomena, and reducing them to an ordered and intelligible system by a classification of similarities and dissimilarities which on examination shall yield a coherent group of general principles.

7. By applying these general principles, we have simplified past events, and excluded anarchy and accident, at first apparently absolute, from the Universe. We confirm our conclusions by applying them to foretell the future. We know exactly what will happen if we let a stone fall from a cliff or mix nitre with vitriol.⁴

8. We can use – within limits - this power of fore-knowledge to arrange the conditions of nature so that events fall out as we would have them.

We can combine the powers of coal, air, iron, and water so that we can travel at tenfold a man's speed. But though we can calculate an eclipse or the course of a star, we cannot perceptively affect the event.

9. It is the first task proper to the preparation for initiation to accept this view of Nature, and to acquaint oneself (in the aforesaid manner) with her Laws. In a word; on the Threshold of Religion stands the sentinel Science.

ALSO, HOLD THE OATH IN HONOUR.

SEBOU has the sense of personal fear or shame; it is connected with the honour or conscience of the inmost self. It is no craven attitude; nor (like TIMA, above) a critical estimate of a thing (apparently) outside oneself. It is a point of pride, of self-respect, of integrity in the full (mathematical) sense of the word, to possess this feeling.

ORKON. The word is from ERKOS, a fence; it implies a check, restraining force, a limit; and hence, an oath.

This Oath is the Magical Oath which every aspirant to the Mysteries must swear;

4 “Should the event contradict our expectation, the indication is that we have made some error in our calculations, or that in this particular instance we have neglected or ignored the existence of some factor in the equation. E.g. the quarrel between the physicists on the one side, and the geologists and biologists on the others was due to the ignorance of the former about radioactivity.” [Handwritten note by AC at foot of page – Ed.]

must, for else his adventure into “The Immeasurable Region” would prove disastrous; immensity would bewilder and bedevil him in a moment. It is the statement of the Laws within which and whereby he is to work.

This Oath asserts the man's True Will, which he must have found and formulated by his researches into Nature, his own and the world's, as aforesaid. He binds himself not to err from this Will, not to be lured or forced away from doing it, and thus creating a conflict within himself, which would be fatal to his progress. A nation ambitious to undertake foreign adventure cannot afford Civil War. A man in love with a girl must ignore her father's frowns and her rival's smiles.

O P K O S is primarily the object by which one swears; this being really EPKOS, a fence, a wall for protection, one swears by that which guards one. Thus to violate one's oath is to abandon one's citadel, to surrender one's soul.

A man's “wall” is his magical circle, his aura in the full sense of the term. It is that whose shape affirms that he is a God, an essence infinite and perfect, though he has chosen to formulate limits on himself in order to realize himself in terms of his relation with the Whole and with similarly segregated parts of it.

If I challenge a man to play chess, it is that I may match my mind against his, as can hardly be done by attempting to strike a balance between the totality of our respective mental achievements.

To attain a decisive issue, we agree to limit ourselves to one trivial area of thought; more, to submit our physical powers, which could hurl rocks by the hour, to slide small bits of wood a few inches at a time, and this not anywhere, as our lordly will might like, but only where the artificial and 'irrational' rules of the game allow.

Incarnation is undertaken by every soul on similar principles.⁵

To return to the Oath; this Oath is the expression of the nature of the Soul, its Word of Truth.

Hold not that Word lightly, for to deny it is to deny thyself. Moreover, fix it firmly in thy mind before thou enter on the Perilous Path, lest inadvertently thou shouldst blaspheme it!

⁵ To understand (for instance) the nature of a given curve, we proceed to examine it in detail, for which purpose we postulate axes and coordinates to which we may infer any point thereof. We ultimately discover the nature (or Law) of the curve by generalizing from these data, no one of which is by itself significant, since any point may belong to any number of different curves. [Handwritten footnote in AC's hand – Ed]

AFTER, THE NOBLE HEROES.

HPΩAS. The word Hero means a Free Man, one worth of respect for any reason; later, its use denoted skill, especially in war.

The postulant is told to hold such men in honour; for they are also of himself, having done what he is setting out to do; they are his ideals realized in history. Their success is his warrant for belief that in aspiring to tread so appalling a path as lies before him he is not chasing a phantom or attempting an impossibility.

HOLD ALSO IN HONOUR THE DAEMONS PERTAINING TO EARTH, FULFILLING WHAT IS LAWFUL.

XΘΩN, the Earth, is the mother of all men, who are thus bodily of her Substance, and to this extent partakers of her nature, and bound by her laws.

Now the Postulant is preparing to transcend the animal nature, and he must therefore hold his body in honour; for he needs it to support him sympathetically.

He must explore the mysterious region of his subtle relations with the Earth, and satisfy the spiritual conditions which obtain there.

It would be folly to start on horseback for the desert, unless well assured that the horse would not fail one, either by disobedience, idleness, may be sickness, by natural incapacity to endure the climate, or by lack of proper provision for the projected journey.

Before one leaves one's earthly interests, it is prudent policy to make sure that they will not suffer too disastrously from one's inattention, and perhaps choose the critical moment when the wanderer most needs his freedom to rivet their irons on his limbs.

ΔAIMONAS. A Daemon is a God or Goddess, no less than ΘEOS, in its original use. It is connected with Deva, Deus, and is probably in its primary significance no more than “shining, glittering”.

Homer uses the word to denote any “divine essence” which causes such events beyond human power as many not be assigned to the activity of any known and named deity. This led to the use of the word to mean “fate, fortune, good or bad”, to explain anything provisionally which was not thoroughly understood. Fear of the unknown worked on men's minds so that they came to define a Daemon as an evil power, capricious and malefic, as an artist appears to the bourgeois.

Men – at least, those few capable of serious thought – began early to refer cosmic phenomena to Law. The regularity of the great Gods inspired confidence. The Sun never missed a morning, or the Moon a month. The Seasons were applauded for punctuality; even the nearer dearer gods whose importance awoke suspicious anxieties as to their actions, the gods of corn and wine and oil, gained credit in the long run. But in the deep and dark and dire, inscrutable, not to be appeased, still lurked in dreadful dens – hidden hosts of Daemons, Earth's spawn detestable and deadly, not slain outright in their war with the Gods, but made more desperate by defeat, bent on vile vengeance waging implacable guerrilla.

There was no regularity of repetition, no evident cause, in most of the more intimate matters of life. Disease, madness, storm, love – they came, and none knew why. It was the Daemons' work. From this belief grew Tabu and Theism. Tibetans hung up rags as they crossed a pass, and Englishmen drove charred stakes through the hearts of dug-up 'vampires', prayed for rain, and invoked divine vengeance upon Gaels sufficiently enough to fight for their freedom.

Pythagoras knew better; he knew that a throw of dice is as much subject to Law as the motion of Aldeboran, that the issue of the collision of two armies could be calculated by one who possessed the data no less rigidly than the vector of two lines of force.

So he bids the Postulant complete his preparation by attending to the Laws of his bodily welfare, the “Earthly Daemons” his brethren, making all necessary adjustments, lest some lack of harmony between the material basis of his actions and its environment should venture to interrupt him during his initiation.

Indian adepts always insist on this point – the body must be brought under control, taught to be silent, to Work regularly and restfully, so that the mind be free of its fleshly Xantippe, and be able to undertake the task of submitting its own distractions to discipline.

The Preparation of the Disciple has then these parts:

1. The scientific study of Nature.
2. The consecration of the Self to its proper object.
3. The affirmation of Brotherhood with the Body of Free Men.
4. The proper disposition of the physical body to undertake Initiation freely.

Before proceeding to the Katharsis, I may observe that the Buddhist, when he “takes refuge” in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, is not far from this way of Pythagoras. The Buddha is the Light of Truth, the Dhamma the Law, and the Sangha the “heroes” of Buddhism, whose rules of life are intended to master the “Earthly Daemons”, and whose Oath is similar in intention to that Orkos of ours.

But the parallel ceases here; the metaphysics of Buddhism only touch the Pythagorean doctrine at a few points.

The sub-title.6

THE CLEANSING.

K A Θ A P S I S is connected with our word Chaste; the Sanskrit is cudh, to purify. The idea of chastity is essential in initiation, no matter what the system may be, so it be true to itself. But the sexual implication is quite secondary, for aught sex-obsessed maniacs and degenerates may say.⁷

A clean collar is not a morally irreproachable collar, but one free from additions to its original nature.

A pure bull-dog is not a virgin bull-dog, but one free from any element alien to the breed.

A chaste man or woman has come to mean one who never unites carnally with anybody; or else, one who after making oath to do so with one person only, keeps faith. But that is our modern prurient preoccupation with perverse images of physical pleasure.

“Jesus” well said that the thought was as sinful as the act.

I define a man as 'pure' or 'chaste' when his love never wavers from the one object which whole satisfies his True Will.

Need I add that such Love as this stands no chance of contentment? At best he may find a still pool to reflect his own image, or a sensitive plate to present him with more or less flattering miniatures. If he be 'faithful' to his wife, it argues a perseverance in self-hypnotism which is painfully pitiful.

6 Add note on the Circle = Cas Casa, Casarum +c [on margin. Also, “The sub-title” handwritten as previous example. – Ed.]

7 The sexual instinct must be classed with other physiological appetites. Its action upon consciousness is in all respects parallel to theirs. The sensation of relief and lassitude after a meal, the melancholy induced by an overcharged liver, the nausea caused by blood-poisoning, etc., are of the same order of phenomena as the effects of “love.” [Handwritten note at bottom of typescript page – Ed.]

I prefer the debauchee deluded into adoring one harlot after another by the drunkenness of his love, and discarding each one as his first sober moment shows him his error.

But Pythagoras does not over-emphasize the question of sex. He does not, like Freud and the Phallicists, see it everywhere, in the dream of a horse as in the shape of a door. With him, to be chaste is to love the one thing that one wills, to go unswerving on the Path that is proper and peculiar to one's godhead.

This section of The Cleansing will thereafter instruct the aspirant how best he may asperge for the past, and avoid for the future, all possible contaminations.

To erase the effect is not enough; error is an infection not to be exorcised by soothing its symptoms. One must cut clean to the cause, though it hide in the heart, chancing death on the chance to destroy it.

The body must bend every cell to the sole purpose of serving the brain; if the liver revolt to serve Cancer, conflict breeds chaos, chaos catastrophe; all ends in corruption.

The mind must compel every cell to serve wholly the will of its master; if one thought-troop intrude its desire upon it, if one fear-flock scamper across it, it trembles and totters; the steed stumbles and throws its rider; in its panic it tramples his life out. Insanity is violent awhile, then drowns in dementia and death.

Therefore in this Katharsis we may expect to find those rules of life which the experience of Pythagoras endorsed as fittest to free the disciple from being disturbed in his 'love under will', which is his 'law', by any cause soever.

The master, it will be seen at once, did not advise withdrawal from society, as did the Buddha; but, like the Rosicrucians, he laid down rules for living a quite ordinary life, mastering its temptations, and dominating its distractions. He understood that Klingsor could not attain to chastity but also to ignoble impotence by way of surgery; that the Crusader, locking his lady's girdle, had guarantee against one grossness only, while the iron so irked that her flesh cried to her mind for vengeance.

He knew that undue abstinence from food bred phantoms in the bloodless brain. He knew how pride, loosed from restraint, grew to the phrenzy of meglomania. With equal eye he saw what follows undue abstinence from a function holier and hardly less imperious than nourishment, being rooted in responsibility to the race by Nature, who lets individuals succumb with supine sloth. He knew how the gorged vessels groaned, how in their aching agony they sent out signal after signal to the pitiless pervert whose

fears of hell and hospital, exaggerated by his ignorance (on which fanatical, imbecile, or fraudulent elders had imposed) till they burst like gas-bombs in his mind, and poisoned every thought, so that sex and sin were all in all, the names of his fear – that fear that is nameless! He knew that this cowardly desertion from duty never escaped punishment, unless the man were physically unfit to do it. In full-fashioned men if the seed were stored too long, it swelled and rotted, so that a putrid slime oozed from the granary, fouling the wells.

The mind of such grows morbid; it thinks in terms of nightmare. Sex squats on them, supreme; in their flight from themselves they craze at sight of the frantic fear and bestial appetite which they have made for themselves to divert them from the reality they dared not face. They slobber 'Saint!' over a murderess if she mentions that her motive was to ward her virtue, or if her lawyer slyly wafts the perfume of her petticoats to the nostrils of the titillated twelve.

They brand with infamy a babe at birth because its parents obeyed natural instinct; yet they chain man and wife together, though one should inflict on the other every cruelty and crime, if their one pet sin is not proven. More, black as that sin is, one careless impulse to forgive debars the wronged one from redress.

All these absurdities arise from the morbid mentality created by moral failure to treat reproduction as simply as digestion.

Quack teachers of the occult can nearly always be recognized by their insistence on some unnatural practice, as necessary to The Cleansing.

But we of the A.:A.: know, as Pythagoras seems to have known, that “Every man and every woman is a star”, each containing in its definition the equation of his or her natural orbit. We can cleanse only by relieving any strain which may tend to draw the star from that orbit.

Note that if we restore one star to its true course, the others which its aberration was unduly affecting, are also freed from that special tendency to error.

ESTIMATE KIN, THOSE NEAREST WHEREOF THOU ART SPRUNG.

ΑΓΟΝΕΙΣ and **ΕΚΓΕΓΑΩΤΑΣ** both indicate parentage; both come from the root G N, which is primarily the sexual act, but also the act of knowledge. Hence, on one hand, Genus, Generate; on the other, Genius, Gnosis, Know. This etymological identity is not the result of accident or the expression of superstitious belief; it arises from an instinct of profound wisdom, from an intuitive apprehension of

the necessary relations of psychology and physiology. For the act makes “makes wise”, “as the Gods, knowing”, and is the inarticulate expression of the secret Self.

We are in a measure part of our parents, mingled in various proportions. Thus a man at the outset of life has not yet manifested himself even to himself. He may see in his father and mother what certain traits may come to in their ripeness, and encourage their growth in himself or eradicate it as he may deem fit. Unless he calculate the formulas which are united in himself, his own must remain obscure to himself. [Thus $(M+F) e_1 = S e_2$, where M = male, F = female, S = son, e_1 and e_2 the respective environments. The equation is indeterminate; but if M + F be known, even approximately, the limit of error in the value of S is restricted.]

But whoso of the others is the most manful in manhood, make him thy lover.

APE TH, APISTOS. The root AP,⁸ significant of the male, is here repeated, as was GN in the previous line. Virtue is the quality of the male human being, its adjectival norm. The “Best” is the superlative of male.

ΦΙΛΟΝ, Friend. This is the technical word descriptive of a beloved male companion. It is assumed that the reader is familiar with the “Study in Greek Ethics” and the “Study in Modern Ethics” of John Addington Symonds.

In all ages it has been recognized by the leaders of mankind that sexual intercourse is necessary to the mental and physical health of men, but that association with women is almost invariably degrading. Women are fitted to breed, to serve; to attend, in a word, to all practical matters, for they understand these admirably, their good sense not being liable to the disastrous interference of ideals of conduct.

But for this selfsame reason their influence upon the progress of men to higher levels of life is uniformly fatal: Woman is so sure of the paramount importance of her function as an animal that she resents even the hint that any aim beyond the continuance of the race in physical well-being may be proper to mankind. The perils of its situation amid the hostile accidents of time and space are constantly present to her subconsciousness, and she regards any preoccupation with spiritual affairs as being unmitigated and inexcusable treason. Men, on the other hand, take her function of Preservation for granted; they start with the assumption that the welfare of the species is assured. But the Divine Spark in their consciousness kindles the instinct that such welfare is vapid; if man be no more than the first of mammals, he is, from the point of view of the Eternal, no more than the least of the molluscs. James Thompson, in “The

⁸ $\sqrt{A\rho}$, Sanskrit हल, to plough. But the significance is, by the evident symbolism, phallic. Also $\sqrt{A\rho}$ to fit, join; whence An[ILLEGIBLE], and Greek ΟΙΚΕΙΟΣ, proper, good. [Added Sanskrit characters, first Greek example illegible – Ed]

City of Dreadful Night”, forced by the science of his day to acquiesce in the feminine estimate of the matter, emphasizes with vitriolic bitterness the worthlessness of the vital experiment of Nature, who from his point of view is a mischievous idiot somehow let loose in a laboratory.

We men must therefore, if we are to find any eternal value in life at all, consent to do our duty as women conceives it, by fertilizing and protecting her; for part of our plan is to improve our species, to accumulate knowledge of, and power over, Nature, so that our successors, inheriting our task, may succeed where we failed, being fortified by the treasures that we have stored up for them.

But we have ourselves the right and the duty of justifying our own existence in the present; we are responsible for the Talent of Self-Consciousness entrusted to us – and to us alone, so far as we know, of existing things.

We are compelled to ask who we are, and why; the partial and dubious reply of Science only touches the minor question “How?”

We are thus under the profound moral obligation to make the solution to the Riddle of Existence our principal work in life.

Now woman⁹ neither understands nor tolerates this attitude; and all intercourse with her, beyond that essential to our cooperation in her function, is idle and vicious.

Chastity is therefore the most fundamental condition of the life of any man devoted to his true work in the world. Bernard Shaw shows how many ambitious men go so far as to divert women from their proper courses that they may serve the interests of Art or Science, and how such men bewitch, befool, and bedevil them by an unscrupulous abuse of the glamour of sex.

The middle course is the most generally approved by the Masters. They bind their pupils to chastity, by which they mean no more than the refusal to let their purpose be weakened or clouded by the corruption and contamination of love. Most young men being incapable of resisting the insidious intoxication of sexual attraction, the hypnotic tyranny of the glittering mirror which a woman flashes upon their dazzled and unfocused eyes, it has been made a general rule to interpret chastity as total abstinence. Just so one must forbid a sip of wine to the average blinker and smirker with watery eyes, loose lips, slack muscles, sloping brows and narrow chin.

Yet man needs sexual satisfaction; there is nothing about the reproductive organs

⁹ i.e. as a sex. Rare individuals such as Emily Bronte, Madame de Kowaleski, and a very few other actually exist as such; the rest are automatic animals, thinly disguised by brightly-coloured veils of hysteria. [handwritten footnote – Ed]

which exempts them from the operation of the physiological laws which govern other structures. Intestinal obstruction, suppression of urine, bile, sweat, or any other secretion, lead directly to physical disturbances more or less serious as the inhibition of function is more or less complete. In many cases death itself is only a matter of hours. In all, even the slightest, there is discomfort, both local and general, accompanied at first by distraction of the attention of the affected part, and afterwards by total incapacity of the mind to think clearly and calmly. A chill affecting the liver may induce delirium or coma; obstruction of the thyroid gland is the cause of cretinism and other forms of chronic mental inadequacy.

The virtue of a man varies, *ceteris paribus*, with his sexual capacity; the greater he is, therefore, the more need for him to avoid deranging that part of his system, and the graver the consequences of its disorder or suppression.

Thus also, the greater the man, the more terrible his temptation. He must choose between being wrecked on the Scylla of physical, and the Charybdis of moral, disaster.

To this dilemma the eyes of the Masters have not been blind. In primitive societies, where woman is frankly and admittedly animal, the problem is not so severe; a man satisfies himself and turns away, with small temptation to wallow.

But where woman is masked by a myriad arts of seduction, where the act itself is idealized, cooked and served with such spices and sauces that it appeals less to appetite than to aesthetics, there is a danger of lounging through life at the banquet, and even thinking that to eat is an end in itself.

The romantic ravings of poets who would be furious if one called them pimps, the religious rant of priests whose power derives from their being pandars, the hideous hypocrisy of modern society, especially in Anglo-Saxon communities, whose shame is so shameful that it has desperately declared the appetite to be divine – all this is moral dirt unspeakable.

The Masters, facing the facts, forbade their pupils to touch the unclean thing. They understood and admitted that the sexual act itself was as clean as any other; to shed the tears of joy was as natural a relief as to shed those of sorrow. It was the moral contamination of woman – the association with her except for strictly physiological purposes that was perilous; that, and the acceptance of her animal purpose in the act by admitting her to its performance, so far as the emotions excited thereby tempted a man to allow an extension of intercourse to the intellectual and sexual planes.

The Masters preferred that their disciples should consider the use of the function as sacred, as an expression of passionate admiration. Its object must then be a being

superior to oneself in a virtue, strength and beauty. Since one must love, and express love by lust, one were best to love the noblest available person.

Such an one, moreover, would not attach the sumreme and exclusive importance to the bodily act that women do, and would not be wholly swayed, as women are, by the desire to excite repeated indulgence therein.

They satisfied the idea of chastity by urging their pupils to seek, grasp, and hold a sympathetic male friend, who might be a comrade and an example, fulfilling the spiritual, mental, and moral needs, yet no less apt to the aesthetic and erotic passions.

We find this "Beloved Disciple" throughout the history of all noble races of mankind. Even among the Jews, we read of David and Jonathan, Jesus and John. The Buddha found this friend in Ananda, Krishna in Arjuna. Greek and Roman legend and history are full of such stories, from Apollo and Hyacinth, Marsyas and Olympus, Hercules and Hylas, Socrates and Alcibiades, Damon and Pythias, down to Adrian and Antinous.

Even in Christian times, Paul found that spirit took no hurt from flesh when they were harmonized by the kiss of Timothy. It was only in the Dark Ages that corruption and vice, loathing purity, assailed the ideal that shamed and rebuked them. Ignorance infected innocence, and the prostitute took revenge on her rival, dragging decency down to her dirt. Only with the Renaissance of Learning and Art does Beauty rekindle the torch of this chaste Cupid; its fire lights the altars of Love, where stand such High-Priests as Leonardo, Michael Angelo, Benvenuto Cellini, and Aretino. The blaze is borne even to Britain, where Marlowe, Shakespeare, Milton, and many another hymn their lovers, one as Piers, one as Will, one as Lycidas. They are echoed by Whitman's praise of Pete, Tennyson's of Hallam, Fitzgerald's of Posh, though they living as they did in an age of save sex-suppression, take pains to veil their virgin, virtue from the miry malice of the mob.

It is presumably needless to say that in our own colossal civilization, our chaste, our Christlike century, the perfection of our progress has destroyed the dilemma which rendered this device necessary in darker periods of the world's history.

Our modern women are to their predecessors as Paquin and Poiret to the first Fig-leaf milliner, or a modern Beauty Specialist to the people that put woad on the Britons of Boadicea.

Women to-day are wise and witty, pure, prudent, and practical, saintly and spiritually-minded, virtuous and elegant. They have proved themselves morally and mentally superior to men. They are first in art and science, in learning and commerce.

The disciple of to-day is consequently by no means debarred from devoting his life to the worship of a woman, if he can find one to pity him and lift him toward her level.

If only Pythagoras could have lived to see it!

(The student is recommended to supplement this note by reference to the works of Ibsen, Neitzche & Strindberg; also to Weininger's "Sex and Character".)

MODEL THYSELF BY HIS GENTLE WORDS, BY HIS FRUITFUL DEEDS.

Λ Ο Γ Ο Ι C, Words. 'Logos' is essentially the expression of the Self in speech. A man's Logos is his secret magical formula, his "Name" in the sense which determines Tabu and Ritual.

The student will recall the story of Isis and the "Name" of Ra, the Qabalistic teachings as to the "Name" of Jehovah, and the precautions taken by many primitive tribes to prevent a man's "Name" from being discovered by his ill-wishers.

The disciple's love for his Friend will inspire the latter to trust him with his "Name", to reveal his true Nature; and this Friend being the Beloved Ideal, this Name should become a Law to the other; he should assimilate himself to his Beloved, for it is the nature of Love to unite the twain who love, until they are in truth One-in-Two, and Two-in-One. The "child" of such a love is a third person, an Holy Spirit, so to speak, partaking of both natures, yet boundless and impersonal because it is a bodiless creation of a wholly divine nature.¹⁰

Π Ρ Α Ε C I, Gentle, mild, soft-spoken. The "Name" is communicated in a hushed whisper, breathing pure passion like the Breath that brooded upon The Primaeval Waters.¹¹

E Ρ Γ Ο Ι C. Works. Like Logos, this word means something deeper and more

¹⁰ Corrected with this, there is a Formula of Practical Magick by which consciousness conceives (rather than receives merely) and therein creates accordingly. This secrete may indeed by communicated, but is valueless until assimilated by virtue of practice. [Handwritten note at bottom of page – Ed]

¹¹ The double consonant PR is globalistically of royal and sacerdotal import: note the words Prince, Priest, Prime, Preach, Prophet, Pro, Prae, Prater, Prove, PeR, &c. The fundamental ideal – as shown by the sound itself, an explosion of the breath followed by a rhythmical vibration – is that of our outburst of irresistible energy making way for a masterful and continued exercise of power. Any consonant other than R implies the isolation of the original impulse. [L&S have special functions which do not however constitute the exception to this rule; it allows the character of the initial P altogether, and W is really a sub[stitute]-vowel. [Handwritten sidenote, "W is really a sub....-vowel" is best guess given context and Crowley's smudge. – Ed.]

essential than the ordinary acts of life. Ergon¹² is the Work intimately characteristic of the true Self; it is the Way of the Man, his Will expressed in action.

ΕΠΩΘΕΔΙΜΟΙΣΙ. Fruitful, effective. Note that the Works of the Beloved are thus defined. One must make a canon of conduct congruous with the true or efficient deeds of the Beloved, those really worthy of him; it is ridiculous to copy his mannerisms, the petty accidental gestures that mean little and effect nothing.

HATE HIM NOT FOR A SMALL WAYWARDNESS, THAT THOU MAYEST HAVE POWER.

ΑΜΑΡΤΑΔΟC. “Fault”. The original signification of the word is to miss the mark. The “sin” is to fail to execute one's True Will. It is to blaspheme oneself by allowing a conflict to arise between two subordinates of the Captains of the Soul. If one is travelling East, every step North or South is a mistake.

Observe that there is nothing in the idea of the word to imply sin as defined by self-styled religious teachers, a deviation from the course more or less arbitrarily imposed by an alien will.

As a matter of historical fact, however, most codes of law are more or less justifiable on our own grounds of self-determination. For it is evident in many cases that a law is only a statement of the course of action best calculated by experience to allow every member of a community to obtain the maximum profit from his efforts.

Lawgivers assume – reasonably enough- that the will to live and to possess one's goods in peace is common to mankind; laws against murder and theft are clearly expressions of these. The assassin and the robber sin not only against society, but against themselves, for they object as much as any one to be knifed or despoiled. They are thus properly punished for their suicidal conduct: they may justly be regarded as having voluntarily deprived themselves of their own life or liberty.

Laws enforcing vaccination and regulating commerce are no more than logical extensions of such fundamental propositions as the above; though of course in any particular case there is room for divergences of opinion as to whether the motive is fitted by the measure.

But, in practice, the complications inevitable in the administration of Law have created a class of meddlers, who have confused the issues with many artificialities

¹² R followed by a guttural expresses essentially the 'charging' of a receiver with a continuous (solar) vibration: as in aRK, aRGue, iRK, aRCAnum, oRCHestra, woRK, jeRK, luRK, miRK, diRK, kiRK etc. [Handwritten top-note on page – Ed.]

profitable to their craft; and, moreover, intolerant busybodies have imposed their personal prejudices and predilections on the tolerant, whose very tendency to “live and let live” prevents them from resenting and resisting these invasions of their rights.

But this is to digress; yet the counsel of Pythagoras in this verse is cognate.

Do not insist on rigid perfection, he says. Even the Beloved has the right to be himself. You love him, if he be no more than a mere mirror and echo of yourself, it is yourself, not him, that you love; in such a case, the Work of Love, which is to make One of two, cannot be carried on.

Herein, by the way, lies one of the worst drawbacks to loving a woman; for it is the nature of woman to transform her appearance – and she is no more than a phantom, without soul or substance – into a seductive image of her lover. She flatters his vanity; he adores himself, like Narcissus; and, like Narcissus, he drowns as his image shatters for ever, and leaves not a trace of his folly.

Indeed, one should learn to love one who is as different as possible from oneself; for thereby the gain of new elements is the greater.

ΑΥΝΗΙ. Pythagoras urges this course of action as a means of acquiring power, for (as hinted above), one can only gain by dealing with alien forces. One cannot learn wrestling by posturing before a mirror.

The “faults” of one's Friend are the tests of one's love for him, and each quality that repels one may be, and should be, transmuted into a new fascination. There is no thrill so exquisite as that which accompanies the act of giving one's soul to that which one loathes. “God” includes all things; thus every new thing that one loves makes one nearer to that all-comprehending ideal.

In secret schools of Magick, there exists a precise ritual for progressive initiation on these lines. The aspirant is trained to make hate, fear, shame, pain, disgust, and all such emotions the exciting cause of passionate enthusiasm on all possible planes of consciousness.

FOR POWER LIETH HARD BY NECESSITY.

ΑΝΑΓΚΗC. The idea of Necessity appears, on the surface, as the antithesis

of Power; how can they co-exist? Yet Pythagoras proclaims them parallel; they are only diverse ways of regarding a single truth.

Etymologically, Power is derived from To Do, Necessity from To Repress.

The puzzle is threadbare; 'to do' implies Causality, which we cannot conceive as limited in its scope. Thus our will must itself be caused. Every phenomenon soever is the resultant of the whole universe at the moment immediately preceding it.¹³ This is thus Necessity, not Power at all. More, the entire presentation of the Universe to our consciousness involves not only this conception of Causality, but those of Time, Space, and Duality, ideas which on analysis are found to implicate us in a network of complexities and contradictions which defy us to unravel them.

We are forced to the conclusion that this presentation aforesaid is itself a delusion. There must be flaws in sense or reason, so that our premises are invalid.

In fact, there is no reason for supposing that our senses, which supply us with our data, are reliable. The mere matter of the difference between a mathematical and a physical continuum¹⁴ is plain proof of that. We know that all our knowledge is and must be relative. When we assert that the sun shines, we cannot possibly mean that there is a certain impression upon our own individual consciousness. The law of gravity merely states relations between certain masses, and its equations vary in every individual case.

Mathematics is no more than a jugglery with arbitrary definitions, and science consists of rough generalizations of observed identities and differences.

But Duality, Time, Space, and Causality are themselves but the forms or conditions of consciousness, and we have no ground for alleging that they exist in Nature any more than the optical devices of our eyes and our instruments are part of the stars or the bacilli which they enable us to see – as we call it!

There is, moreover, a simple solution of all the antimony between Power and Necessity which enables us to assent to the proposition of Pythagoras.

Let us admit that the Universe is so constituted that, although its elements counterbalance perfectly (as they must, else a Something came from Nothing) there is an

13 "I noted gladly, some moments after writing this sentence, that that the proposition has been exalted in almost identical words by no less an authority than Professor A.N. Whitebeard, possibly the greatest of living mathematical teachers."
[Handwritten footnote – Ed]

14 "i.e. our minds are bound by one sort of necessity, our bodies by another. Yet is not the mind determined by the sensory perceptions which it interprets? In any case, Power is the positive aspect of the same phenomeon of which Necessity is the negative." [Handwritten sidenote – Ed]

in them an inherent energy, in some positive and negative in others, which produces a perpetually changing cycle of phenomena, and that each combination of elements causes of necessity a rearrangement in accordance with natural laws expressive of other inherent qualities in its component parts.

This being so, there is no difficulty in understanding that the true Will of each element, self-conscious or no, is its Power, the expression in motion of the Tendencies of its Nature. But this nature is inherent in it, and is thus equally its Necessity.

We can now perceive well enough the purport of the previous passage, where our toleration of our Friend's "fault" marks an advance in our own Power. For we only stultify ourselves by setting up a standard of our, and insisting that the Universe should conform therewith.

We are ourselves the exact opposite of the rest of the Universe considered as a whole, for else there would exist a positive without a compensating negative. We each exist by virtue of the diversity of things, for our consciousness depends on our perception of the difference between ourselves and others. To annihilate any part of the Universe is to annihilate an equal and opposite element in ourselves.

But our "Power" is increased by each extension of it to include alien concepts and to accept them; by so doing we awake in ourselves the ideas corresponding to and equilibrating them. Each new thing that we know and love becomes part of ourselves; we grow by absorption of external substances into our own being. Power is thus only another aspect of Necessity; one depends on the other, just as Sight does on the laws of Optics.

All Power depends on its own limitations, its part in Necessity. We act only by setting one set of forces against another. We could not throw a weightless stone with a weightless body, although weight limits the range of our throw.

The acquisition of a new sense reveals indeed an illimitable realm to overwhelm us with its immensity, but it forges also a new link between us and the totality of existence. It is then pitiful policy to refuse to accept the existence of anything, however frightful or detestable it may seem to us; more, we must love it, and assimilate it, for it is actually a constituent part of ourselves, being ordained that Necessity which is our own generating law.

The Oath of a Master of the Temple in our Holy Order of A.'.A.'. binds the candidate thus: "I will interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with my Soul."

The initiate finds “sermons in stones, and good in everything.” It is this, more than any other attribute, which contrasts him with the Puritan, the Bourgeois, and the cuttle-fish.

THESE THINGS ACCUSTOM THOU THYSELF TO RULE, THE DESIRES OF THE BELLY, OF SLEEP, OF LECHERY, AND OF WRATH.

K P A T E I N,¹⁵ to rule. The word is connected with the root meaning Head. Pythagoras does not bid us annihilate our passions, as shallow moralists would have us do; we are told to master them, to put them under headship. They are not “bad”, and to be destroyed – uprooted, and the seeds burnt with fire, as Hindu teachers insist – but to be treated morally as we treat our limbs physically. A horse is “to be held in with bit and bridle”, not to be shot because he might throw an unskillful rider.

Γ Τ Α Κ Τ Ρ Ο C – Υ Π Ν Ο Υ -
A N E I H C – Θ Υ Μ Ο Υ

Four passions are here mentioned, corresponding to the four fundamental necessities of human existence; nourishment, rest, procreation, and self-preservation against hostile interference.

It is ridiculous to pretend to think that any of these passions are “evil”, as too many mystics have done. They are conditions of his present existence, and in fact, those who have condemned their character have been compelled to extend the criticism to Existence as such. The Buddhists are more conspicuously candid in this than any other group; some Hindus and some Christians have travelled half-heartedly down the same dreary road. But these have tried to effect a moral compromise, while the followers of Gautama have stubbornly stuck to their strict view, merely consenting to live because suicide would only increase the severity of the sentence.

The cool common sense of Pythagoras, here as elsewhere, challenges the most careless clubman. None will deny that “we dig our graves with our teeth”, that we lose half the fun of life if we are slothful, that excess in venery is bad for the nerves, and that wrath predisposes to dyspepsia and apoplexy. He implies no more than this. A man ought to put these passions under the control of the head, to prevent their unconscious automatism from interfering with the execution of his Will. These passions speak for the principal functions of our organism, and they must do their duty thoroughly and

¹⁵ Note the double consonant KR signifies the issuing forth of a continuous (solar) vibration from a womb. Consider the words CReate, GRow, GReat, GRace, CRave, CRack, GRammar, GRow, inCrease, inGRess, GRope, exCRete, etc [Handwritten footnote – Ed.].

faithfully, without slackness or officiousness. We must preserve them as perfectly as possible; they are the servants of the state. Defect or excess injures them, and us through them. The glutton loses enjoyment of food, the sluggard finds sleep unrefreshing, the debauchee becomes bored with vice, and the ill-tempered man damps down the radiant ardours of wrath to the fizzle and splutter of irritability.

For their sake, therefore, as well as your own, do all that you can for the health and vigour of your passions!

DO NO BASE ACT, WHETHER IN PUBLIC OR IN PRIVATE.

A I C X P O N. Base, shameful, awkward, ugly.

Once more Pythagoras makes emphatic, by his choice of a word, the essence of his doctrine of the independence and supremacy of each man, his responsibility to himself alone.

In the Golden Verses there bleats no “Golden Rule”. “To thine own self be true” is the spirit of this verse. Aischros contains no allusion to altruism. One is not to allow one's company to influence one's conduct. Whether alone or with others, do nothing base, ugly, awkward, or shameful. Nothing is said about being polite or kind; it is forbidden to act in such a way as to earn one's own scorn, to wound one's aesthetic sense, or one's pride in one's self.

Every action should be an expression of the self, worthy, beautiful, graceful, and pleasurable. To do otherwise is to deny and blaspheme one's master, the God within one. “Thou hast no right but to do thy will”; and any derogation from that right is moral suicide.

OF ALL THINGS FIRST RESPECT THOU THINE OWN SELF.

A I C X Y N E O The idea of the previous phrase is hammered home with one clean stroke. The strident should not fail to observe the masterly introduction of the letters A I C X in Aischmelo as an echo to their occurrence in Aischron. One is impelled to investigate the the deepest nature of this collocation of letters. The Lexicon reminds us that both words are from the same root, which is A I Δ originally. The sense is principally “Shame”, that is the feeling of dissatisfaction with oneself, or with one's expression thereof.

A I Δ We have IΔ in IΔI H (“in private”) in this line itself. It is evident that A I Δ means A – I Δ, the privative Δ prefixed to the root signifying Self, as in IΔI O C, idiot, (one who keeps himself to himself, minds his own business, is not a politician), Idem, Identity, and so on, which may be further connected with the root in O I Δ A, “I know”. Shame is therefore, by actual etymology as well as by psychological analysis, to be defined as the denial of the self.

To Pythagoras then the critical canon, the universal touchstone of truth is this : Harmony with the Self as it is written in the Book of the Law : “It is a lie, this folly against self.”

THEN, PRACTICE JUSTICE BOTH IN DEED AND WORD

Δ I K A I O C Y N H N Justice.

The root of this word of that of Δ I K H. Right, which does not mean an abstract or theoretical judgment derived from a priori speculations as to the nature of things as they ought to be, but merely usage, custom.

Once again the Master applies applies his magical measuring-rod, the Self. For by custom we mean repetition of acts, and this implies the building-up of a tendency in the individual. As our English proverb has it : “Habit is second Nature.” It is our “custom” to breathe air rather than water; a man who refuses to comply does “wrong”, and is drowned. All faculties are in fact, as the evolutionists reminded us, the results of generations of persistence in various sets of customs. Right and justice are thus no more than the laws of our own natures; where either of two courses is equally beneficial to ourselves, we have no canon or code.

In the previous verses, the pupil has been warned to abstain from violating the principles of his nature; the precepts are of a negative character. He is not to overthrow the “right” of his stomach to adequate but not immoderate meals, or to depart from the 'custom' of maintaining his reproductive organs in tone by exhausting their powers by excess.

He now turns with a “then, afterwards” to the positive injunction to practice justice in deed and word. He is to confirm himself in doing his Will not only by abstinence from what may be injurious to its execution, but by continuance in his “customary” course.

A C K E I N Practice, train. The use of this word is of immense importance. It is a technical word : “to work (on raw material), to shape, to make a tool

out of, to scrape, to fashion.” Hence also it means “to train” as a man for a race or a fight. An “ascetic” was therefore one who worked himself into fit condition for any given task.

The idea is entirely positive; it is the active fitting of a thing for a purpose.

Such training naturally involves a proportion of negative precautions. In forging a sword, one must not burn the steel; in training a runner, one must not let him take a chill or spend his nights smoking, drinking, and drabbing.

But so so vile and vicious are men that their minds are obsessed by the few prohibitions- mere adjuvants as they are, for no amount of restrictions in diet will make a tortoise show his heels to Achilles. They wailed over the “hardships” of training, and forgot the work which is its essence : so that an ascetic came to mean one who denied himself pleasures.

But Pythagoras uses **A C K E I N** in its true sense; he bids his disciples to work systematically and strenuously, to fashion their raw material into the perfected instrument of their ambition. They must practice assiduously and intelligently, allowing no interference of any kind. The practice is “justice” or “righteousness”; that is to say, those things which are “customary” or proper to their natures. Natural aptitude for any task is evidence of previous custom, of atavistic predisposition. No amount of ambition will make a poet who is not born one; there must be in his blood and his brain the readiness to think rhythmically which comes from familiarity with the work inherited from some ancestral plodder on Parnassus. The training of either mind or body is essentially “continuance in well-doing”; the tireless repetition of an act and its analysed details until the consciousness is able to devote itself wholly to the finest and most delicate adjustments of a machine whose main movements have become automatic.

This determines the difference the professional and the amateur in most forms of sport; the former has been forced to play under all conditions, at all hours, in all weathers, sick or well, keen or bored, until the principal movements are as unconscious as walking or breathing.

There is no sport in which this difference is more obvious than that is in Magick or Mysticism. The average student behaves like the average young lady in the suburbs who “learns the piano” - and he gets about as far as she does.

The path of Initiation is the straightest and steepest and most slippery that man may tread; yet most people who “feel attracted” to it treat it as if it were a level highroad. They do not try to stroll up the Schreckhorn in pyjamas and bath slippers. They do not expect to qualify as surgeons by trimming their nails when the mood takes

them. They do not even – except in America – think that they can become detectives or astronomers on a six weeks' correspondence course. But as soon as it is a matter of Magick, every rudiment of common sense seems to be extirpated; they hate me for translating ACK E I N as I have done here instead of as “To potter.”

ΕΡΓΩΙ - ΛΟΓΩΙ

Pythagoras here puts Work before Word, though above, speaking of the Friend, he did the converse.

There is a reason for this. The Friend's words are more easily understood than his works. One ought to know a man's mind thoroughly before one presumes to interpret his actions. Nothing is more deceptive than the conduct of the Adept. Let us suppose, to take an instance, that one sees him lying drunk in the arms of a common prostitute. For all you know, he may be doing it to overcome some complex in himself, or to bring a little pleasure into the life of a Sister Star, or to shock the stupid section of his followers into leaving him free of their importunities, or to assert the rectitude of any form of amusement, or to protest against the prejudices of the prudish by lending his authority to protect the persecuted, or – most probably, to indulge himself as he likes because he happens to like it. His acts are usually obscure, if only because he has the power to keep Silence; but when he speaks, he speaks truth, and it is the fault of the hearer if he hath no ears to hear, or hath them long and hairy.

But the disciple's own positive practice is another matter. He knows more or less what he means by his acts and his words, and the former are more to the purpose. For his acts demand more energy and affect him more deeply. His body takes more permanent impressions than his mind. One never forgets how to write or how to skate, because the familiarity of the motions become part of his automatic apparatus. But his words remain in the plastic matter of the conscious mind, and tend to become overlaid and confused. Sincerity in speech is of course a most necessary practice. Words assist him to gain control of his mind and to fix his thoughts with precision. But works insensibly direct the tendencies of the mind itself into the desired channels. A course of physical practices definitely develops the character, while words are rarely more than witnesses to the existing state of the mind.

Throughout these verses, Pythagoras insists constantly upon conduct as the lever of initiation. There is no reference to creeds, and little to mental discipline of any kind. The modern attention to habits of mind is somewhat excessive. It is no doubt possible to progress in this way, but there is always the danger that any relaxation may undo most of what has been done. Forged steel is more enduring than phonograph cylinders.

A year's march across the desert stamps a man's life with its ineradicable seal – its apparent effects may be less than those of a year's reading, but they search deeper strata.

**ACQUIRE THE HABIT OF HOLDING THYSELF FREE FROM
THOUGHTLESSNESS IN ALL MATTERS SOEVER.**

ΑΛΟΓΙΣΤΩΣ Thoughtlessly.

Logos, as above noted, is the Word or Thought of a man; it is his “Name”, the expression of his inmost Nature.

The pupil is instructed to possess himself, to permit no expression which is not that of his inmost self even in the smallest matter. The immense bulk of our output is foreign to our Truth, and is not only waste, but clogs us. There is no reason to be narrow and restricted in our scope, to be constantly concentrated on some one pet idea, like a bigot or a monomaniac. Our Nature is conterminous only with the Universe. Nihil humani a me alienum puto. I even draw my pen through “humani” with pleasure. But the Universe is consistent with itself, and we must avoid even casual self-contradiction through on trivial points, for therein is the seed of interior conflict. Apart from that peril, there is this certain loss, that any such thought, word, or act, wherein lies hidden an implicit self-betrayal, cancels its counterpart, and one is so much poorer thereby.

Nor is anything truly trivial. A straw shows which way the wind blows, and the last one breaks the camel's back. Freud has shown how a dream or a gesture may serve to stigmatize the soul.

Our holy Order of the A.:A.: has an instruction “Liber III” which exactly covers the point raised by Pythagoras. It gives a practical method by which a man may learn to “possess himself” before formulating any act, word, or thought. It is not that any particular expression is absolutely or even relatively “wrong” but it is certainly “right” to make sure of the purpose¹⁶ of what one proposes. One makes sure that a loaded gun is pointed at the object we wish to hit before pulling the trigger. Every student, whether his main line be Mysticism or Magick, should therefore take infinite pains to perfect himself in this threefold practice. It develops a function of his brain which guards him automatically against indiscretion, and is of inestimable service later not only in the ordinary affairs of life, but in the task of repelling invasions of the attention when he wishes to concentrate either his mind or his will in his occult work.

¹⁶ [“purpose” is “purpost” in typescript. It is almost certainly a typo that was uncorrected, which is rare in this document, but it must be noted. – Ed]

BUT KNOW THOU HOW TO ALL IT HATH BEEN APPOINTED TO DIE.

Γ Ν Ω Ο Ι “Know”

I have remarked above that Γ Ν is the root both of Begetting and of Knowledge. It is here made the antistrophe to **Ο Α Ν Ε Ε Ι Ν**, to die, as if to affirm that the one was identical with the other. Indeed, birth and death are involved in a single formula; one is meaningless apart from the other. To know is the third term in this equation; for Knowledge implies Duality, and Duality implies that every state is alternate with its equal and opposite. Death in the Jewish fable is the price Adam paid for his Knowledge; that and Birth also; for Adam was not born.

Our original state is thus one of formless monistic consciousness or unconsciousness, without the antithesis of the Ego and the non-Ego. We have willed to become aware of the universe, and to do this we must represent it in form. We therefore conceive Zero as the opposition of two equal elements, and Rest as that of two equal forces. We make these “male and female” and develop from the combinations of these two ideas the complex diversity of the Cosmos. But we ourselves can only perceive our creation by partaking of its nature, and we consequently mask our eternal Godhead in minds and bodies, which are subject to the flux of things, living and dying as they do. For one cannot conceive of a thing unless one share its nature. We cannot even believe in a world where intelligence is bodiless because we have no part in it.

Pythagoras exhorts his pupils to know this necessary condition of consciousness, because a proper conception of the meaning of the Magical Formula which has created our planetesimal universe is essential to even a preliminary understanding of the nature of these things. People resent the fact of death because they separate it from birth, instead of taking the two together, and treating life as an episode.

But who would go to a theatre and complain that as the curtain has risen it ought never to fall? On the contrary, death makes life a complete work of art – otherwise utterly tedious and fatuous. Who would play cards for money if he could never quit the game and cash in his chips?

Ω C “How”.

The key to this passage is in this word. Not only must the pupil realize the propriety of death, but he must grasp the method and purpose of the device. This has been sketched in the previous note on Γ Ν Ω Ο Ι; but I will add a few words more. This passage follows the instructions on “possessing himself” before expression; why the

juxtaposition?

By the practice of Liber III one first acquires the faculty of inspecting every thought that presents itself at the threshold. "Halt! Who goes there?" cries the new sentinel. "Friend" : and on proof, the stranger passes into our consciousness.

But presently the sentry begins to wonder what the business of all these people may be. They may be loyal, no doubt; but before they have been a few seconds within the gate, and even the bravest and the cleverest, the veterans who come and go year after year and win great victories for the King, all end at last and the memory of their deeds is dead.

Why then should the King raise this army at all? Why should he be at the pains of reigning, when even the pleasure of the moment would vanish if he could always see The Writing on the Wall?

Death seems an absolute repartee to Life; at every point it exposes the sorry imposture. From the still-born babe to Plato, Caesar, Buddha, or Aeschylus, the achievement is equal in nullity. Even the earth itself must die at last.

Not the agony or the pity of it all, but the senselessness of it, has driven men to force themselves to believe in some form or other of finality involving immortality. It is not common sense to suppose that the infinite subtlety of the stratagems of Nature, her sense of Beauty and of Intelligence, should be due to pointless pranks or the freaks of accident. The very laws of Nature deny such theories as these. Yet with all that we are denied one scrap of positive evidence. There is but one conclusion possible; it has been indicated in a previous note.

The Cosmos baffles reason, and yet reason interprets every detail; reason itself concludes either that the rational basis of the fragments does not extend to the whole, or that the presentation being partial, we lack the data which would render it intelligible.

I see a chess problem which I cannot solve. It may be simply too hard for me. It may be that some pieces are on the board invisible to my myopia. It may be that the arrangement is the chance work of an idiot or a child. (But I cannot assent to this last supposition if I should see far enough into the position as it stands to recognize several variations of amazing ingenuity and beauty.)

Finally, it might well be the case that the supposed chess problem was in reality a cryptogram cunningly constructed by so marvellous a mind that the variations noticed by me were designed to deceive observers as to the nature of the device. Or better still, the problem might indeed be a masterpiece of chess, yet chess no more than a means of

manifesting an altogether nobler order of mind, just as a poet employs the same grammar as his grocer to convey the word of the Lord to mankind.

Know, says Pythagoras, know how it hath been devised and decreed for all men to die!

To know itself is to die, since the matter of knowledge must be complex, and the complex must change, and to change it is to die. Also, as previously observed, “to know” is “to beget”. Life and death are complimentary parts of a single curve.

The etymology of the word for “to die” makes the original root imply “to strike.” To strike is to place one thing on another. To destroy – destruere – is to separate the component parts of a thing. In all cases the thought is of a change of state wrought either by adding to, or subtracting from, it. Birth is identical in form, the father being added to the mother, and changing her; next, the child subtracted from her, another change. More, every birth is a death, and every death a birth : pass oxygen over heated copper, they marry and die as the metallic oxide is born. Increase the heat, the copper oxide dies, while resurrection dawns upon the parents. All complex things change constantly; all simple things subsist unchanged, although they pass from one disguise to another as the laws of their nature require. At every breath we draw, we kill countless cells, which are accounted part of us, and create new cells, which were not till we made them. So every thought consumes our brains, and dies, and breeds more thoughts.

But why should not the soul of man be simple, an element like carbon or gold, unrecognizable in its Protean disguises unless by testing its true nature. Silver, however hidden in white or black or crimson robes by other elements, always asserts itself when the blowpipe or the hydrochloric acid challenge it. So also in death or madness there is an individuality in every man which cries adsum when the right voice calls the roll. But Hydrogen, the principle of acids, is not acid when uncombined; it cannot recognize the presence of litmus. So too the simple essence of the Soul cannot perceive the universe, or exert many of its own inherent qualities. It must discover its own nature to itself by hiding itself in combinations of various kinds, by making a series of experiments with new environments in new conditions. This, I take it, is exactly what the Soul of man has done.

If Sulphur wishes to discover its power to glow vermilion in Partnership with Mercury, it must die to its own colour and consistency so that this hidden property of its nature may appear; and if it then would know its virtue of tarnishing silver, it must die to its incarnation in the body of Mercury and be reborn in the body of silver.

Thus I, the Soul of me, unique, simple, eternal, indestructible as I am, possess a vastly varied nature peculiar to me, but in my simple state I cannot be conscious of my

own qualities, because they have no form. They cannot act on each other, because they are but parts of a simplicity – just as the heaviness of gold cannot become aware of its malleability. I must explore myself by putting myself in contact with some dissimilar soul, and change my partner, as soon as I have accomplished my purpose, for another. Thus I might become a lion to experience the predatory sensations possible to my nature, and dying, enter the body of a bee to appreciate my relations with the idea of social order. Just so might Nitrogen find its possibilities of alkalaicity by union with hydrogen, then of acidity by aid of hydrogen and oxygen together, then, daring more complex destinies, combine with others yet to exult in its share of the terror of high explosives.

Not one life, but many, not all worth while, it may be, not all pleasant, some even humiliating – but many and diverse must be my will to live if I would know myself and all my powers and possibilities. As I go I gather experience, no doubt; I make experiments less at random; I acquire power to choose my body; I come to coordinate my observations; I learn the laws of the relations between these complex beings; it may be that I weary of the way at times, and resume my own simplicity for a while that I may rest and rise refreshed. (This holiday is the “union with God” of the mystic, and that is why he usually finds the world an illusion, a sorrow; it is this weariness of his soul that sets him seeking himself.)

I go, and every gain costs me a death. This is exactly the teaching of Pythagoras in respect of incarnation; and it explains why the serene sublimity of the Soul should so incredibly endure to inhabit an ape or a cat.

As to the precise answer to the question “How” this doom was decreed, which is the point here emphasized, it is proper first to determine the scope of our enquiry.

We cannot suppose (as a Christian might do) that a Ukase was issued to meet some insolent emergency that had escaped the eye of Omniscience, and found a loophole in Predestination. We need simply consider by what means the Law came into being.

Now the Universe itself is the result of the will of its Souls (or conscious elements) to add the pleasure of experience to those of perfection and peace by undertaking incarnations as above described. The first realization of the non-Ego created Knowledge, and the first union with it could only be achieved by the (apparent) death of the Ego and the non-Ego with the subsequent birth of their combination. But each experiment led to greater complexities, and the Godhead of each component of such became ever more lost to itself. In the absorption of interest some of the Gods forgot their true nature altogether, and supposed themselves to be merely parts of the compound to which they belonged. They behaved as blind purposeless puppets, not

understanding themselves or the universe, and abdicating their wills to the inertia of the masses of matter in which they were lost. In this condition of disorder, the forces of Nature were no longer directed by intelligence. Compounds began to collide and to destroy each other or to conglomerate in a heterogeneous mass of confusion. These elements that retained consciousness at all found themselves helpless. They suffered a Restriction other than that devised by themselves as the rules of their Game, for it was now blind and brutal constraint imposed from without. They exclaimed : The word of Sin is Restriction. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law! Armed with this weapon, they began the work of emancipating themselves from the chaos that was crushing them. They worked themselves free by withdrawing as best as they could from their environment, and they broke up, both with crowbars and explosives, the complex excretions that were too heavy to push out of their way. These masses were swayed by their inherent properties, blind and undirected as they were; but their inert bulk was where it was by the operation of these laws, and they resisted the intelligent efforts of their conscious elements to extricate them from their disorder with the whole force of those laws, so that some of the struggling souls were deceived into thinking that the opposition to their efforts was the result of malice, and were appalled to imagine that "evil" had somehow been introduced into the universe. Such souls as were free and could observe the situation in perspective were of course able to detect the error. Evil is an unthinkable absurdity. But they saw well enough how the relation of two opposing forces would delude each into thinking that the other was evil. These freed souls, choosing active and powerful combinations, and forming an organized alliance among themselves, now determined to restore order. Some aided those souls who were straining for freedom; others attacked the masses of rubble. In order to work more continuously, a few of them kept to one combination for longer than their own work demanded, for the plight of their fellow-explorers was such that they preferred to relieve them rather than attend to their own affairs. Practically all refrained from the customary period of repose and reflection between successive incarnations. Such is the explanation of the existing condition of the universe as it appears in the forms required by Knowledge of it. It is to be remembered that this appearance is no more than an illusion, real as it seems to those Souls that have lost consciousness of their natures. When they are restored to themselves by the breaking up of the complexes that constrain them, they will be able to recognize their experience as part of the adventure undertaken by them. It will not have escaped the student that each step in the process of releasing them is a death, and those are are unconscious of their true Nature imagine death to be the end of them, so that they dread it. Those, too, who believe themselves a part of their complex and cling to it despite its discomforts, use such power as they possess to resist what they think the murderous attacks of their rescuers.

There are even a few small but extremely stable compounds composed of very violent elements who have worked themselves free from the worst of the pressure of the wreckage by sheer selfish strength and cunning, without resorting to simplicity; these

have thus no recollection of themselves, and take their complex to be be, if not an element, at least as proper to share the privileges of one.

These Black Brothers they are called – hate development and fear change with indescribable intensity.

They therefore hinder the work of the freed souls with all their power, and at the same time avoid their neighborhood as best they may.

Their tragedy is that their refusal to grow, so that the accidents of time wear them down unceasingly, to their terror and agony, while a cheerful acceptance of the Law of their being would enable them to live and die with constantly refreshed enjoyment and profit.

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