

A Cycle of Necessity

[Selections from *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 212-13, 301-3, 305-6.]

“Three spirits live and actuate man,” teaches Paracelsus; “three worlds pour their beams upon him; but all three only as the image and echo of one and the same all-constructing and uniting principle of production.

- The first is the spirit of the elements [terrestrial body and vital force in its brute condition];
- the second, the spirit of the stars [sidereal or astral body — the soul];
- the third is the *Divine* spirit [*Augoeides*].”¹



Our human body, being possessed of “primeval earth-stuff,” as Paracelsus calls it, we may readily accept the tendency of modern scientific research “to regard the processes of both animal and vegetable life as simply physical and chemical.” This theory only the more corroborates the assertions of old philosophers and the *Mosaic Bible*, that from the dust of the ground our bodies were made, and to dust they will return. But we must remember that

“Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.”²

Man is a little world — a microcosm inside the great universe. Like a foetus, he is suspended, by all his *three* spirits, in the matrix of the macrocosmos; and while his terrestrial body is in constant

sympathy with its parent earth, his astral soul lives in unison with the sidereal *anima mundi*. He is in it, as it is in him, for the world-pervading element fills all space, and is space itself, only shoreless and infinite. As to his third spirit, the divine, what is it but an infinitesimal ray, one of the countless radiations proceeding directly from

¹ [*Opera omnia*, s.v. “The End of Birth and Consideration of the Stars.” — Bullets by ED. PHIL.]

² [H.W. Longfellow, *A Psalm of Life*.]



the Highest Cause — the Spiritual Light of the World? This is the trinity of organic and inorganic nature — the spiritual and the physical, which are three in one, and of which Proclus says that “the first monad is the Eternal God; the second, eternity; the third, the paradigm, or pattern of the universe”; the three constituting the Intelligible Triad. Everything in this visible universe is the outflow of this Triad, and a micro-cosmic triad itself. And thus they move in majestic procession in the fields of eternity, around the spiritual sun, as in the heliocentric system the celestial bodies move round the visible suns. The Pythagorean *Monad*, which lives “in solitude and darkness,” may remain on this earth forever invisible, impalpable, and undemonstrated by experimental science. Still the whole universe will be gravitating around it, as it did from the “beginning of time, “and with every second, man and atom approach nearer to that solemn moment in the eternity, when the Invisible Presence will become clear to their spiritual sight. When every particle of matter, even the most sublimated, has been cast off from the last shape that forms the ultimate link of that chain of double evolution which, throughout millions of ages and successive transformations, has pushed the entity onward: and when it shall find itself reclothed in that primordial essence, identical with that of its Creator, then this once impalpable organic atom will have run its race, and the sons of God will once more “shout for joy” at the return of the pilgrim.

“Man,” says Van Helmont, “is the mirror of the universe, and his triple nature stands in relationship to all things.” The will of the Creator, through which all things were made and received their first impulse, is the property of every living being. Man, endowed with an additional spirituality, has the largest share of it on this planet. It depends on the proportion of matter in him whether he will exercise its magical faculty with more or less success. Sharing this divine potency in common with every inorganic atom, he exercises it through the course of his whole life, whether consciously or otherwise. In the former case, when in the full possession of his powers, he will be the master, and the *magnale magnum* (the universal soul) will be controlled and guided by him. In the cases of animals, plants, minerals, and even of the average of humanity, this ethereal fluid which pervades all things, finding no resistance, and being left to itself, moves them as its impulse directs. Every created being in this sublunary sphere, is formed out of the *magnale magnum*, and is related to it. Man possesses a double celestial power, and is allied to heaven. This power is “not only in the outer man, but to a degree also in the animals, and perhaps in all other things, as all things in the universe stand in a relation to each other; or, at least, God is in all things, as the ancients have observed it with a worthy correctness. It is necessary that the magic strength should be awakened in the outer as well as in the inner man. . . . And if we call this a magic power, the uninstructed only can be terrified by the expression. But, if you prefer it, you can call it a spiritual power — *spirituale robur vocitaveris* . . . There is, therefore, such magic power in the inner man. But, as there exists a certain relationship between the inner and the outer man, this strength must be diffused through the whole man.”³

³ *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 212-13; [quoting Baptista Van Helmont, *Orctus medicinae*, Francof., 1652, p. 610 et seq.]



And now comes a mystery, a *Sod*,⁴ a secret which Rabbi Simeon⁵ imparted but to very few initiates. It was enacted once every seven years during the Mysteries of Samothrace, and the records of it are found self-printed on the leaves of the Thibetan sacred tree, the mysterious KUMBUM, in the Lamasery of the holy adepts.⁶



In the shoreless ocean of space radiates the central, spiritual, and *Invisible* sun. The universe is his body, spirit and soul; and after this ideal model are framed ALL THINGS. These three emanations are the three lives, the three degrees of the Gnostic *Pleroma*, the three “Kabalistic Faces,” for the ANCIENT of the ancient, the holy of the aged, the great Ain-Soph, “has a form and then he has no form.” The invisible “assumed a form when he called the universe into existence,” says the *Zohar*, the Book of splendor.⁷

⁴ *Sod* means a religious Mystery. Cicero mentions the *sod*, as constituting a portion of the *Idaeae* Mysteries. [*De senectute*, § xiii.] “The members of the *Priest-Colleges* were called *Sodales*,” says Dunlap, quoting Freund’s *Latin Lexicon*, iv, 448; [in: *Söd, Myst. of Adoni*, p. xii.]

⁵ The author of the *Zohar*, the great Kabalistic work of the first century A.D.

⁶ See Abbé Huc, *Travels in Tartary, Thibet, etc.*, II, ii.

⁷ *Zohar* III, p. 288; [Amst. ed., 1714.]



- The first light is His soul, the Infinite, Boundless, and Immortal breath; under the efflux of which the universe heaves its mighty bosom, infusing Intelligent life throughout creation.
- The second emanation condenses cometary matter and produces forms within the cosmic circle; sets the countless worlds floating in the electric space, and infuses the unintelligent, blind life-principle into every form.
- The third, produces the whole universe of physical matter; and as it keeps gradually receding from the Central Divine Light its brightness wanes and it becomes Darkness and the Bad — pure matter, the “gross purgation of the celestial fire” of the Hermetists.⁸

When the Central Invisible (the Lord *Ferho*⁹) saw the efforts of the divine *Scintilla*, unwilling to be dragged lower down into the degradation of matter, to liberate itself, he permitted it to shoot out from itself a *monad*, over which, attached to it as by the finest thread, the Divine *Scintilla* (the soul) had to watch during its ceaseless peregrinations from one form to another. Thus the monad was shot down into the first form of matter and became encased in stone; then, in course of time, through the combined efforts of *living fire* and *living water*, both of which shone their *reflection* upon the stone, the monad crept out of its prison to sunlight as a lichen. From change to change it went higher and higher; the monad, with every new transformation, borrowing more of the radiance of its parent *Scintilla*, which approached it nearer at every transmigration. For “the First Cause had willed it to proceed in this order”; and destined it to creep on higher until its physical form became once more the Adam of *dust*, shaped in the image of the Adam Kadmon. Before undergoing its last earthly transformation, the external covering of the monad, from the moment of its conception as an embryo, passes in turn, once more, through the phases of the several kingdoms.

In its fluidic prison it assumes a vague resemblance at various periods of the gestation to plant, reptile, bird, and animal, until it becomes a human embryo.¹⁰ At the birth of the future man, the monad, radiating with all the glory of its immortal parent which watches it from the seventh sphere, becomes *senseless*.¹¹ It loses all recollection of the past, and returns to consciousness but gradually, when the instinct of childhood gives way to reason and intelligence. After the separation between the life-principle (astral spirit) and the body takes place, the liberated soul — Monad, exultingly rejoins the mother- and father-spirit, the radiant Augoeides, and the two, merged into one, forever form, with a glory proportioned to the spiritual purity of the past earth-life, the Adam who has completed the circle of necessity, and is freed from the last vestige of his physical encasement. Henceforth, growing more and more radiant at each step of his upward progress, he mounts the shining path that ends at the point from which he started around the GRAND CYCLE.

⁸ [Bullets by ED. PHIL.]

⁹ [The First Cause of All. — ED. PHIL.]

¹⁰ Évérard, *Mystères Psychologiques*, p. 132

¹¹ See Plato's *Timæus*, 44b



The whole Darwinian theory of natural selection is included in the first six chapters of the Book of *Genesis*. The “Man” of chapter i is radically different from the “Adam” of chapter ii, for the former was created “male and female” — that is, bi-sexed — and in the image of God; while the latter, according to verse seven, was formed of the dust of the ground, and became “a living soul,” after the Lord God “breathed into his nostrils the breath of life.” Moreover, *this Adam* was a male being, and in verse twenty we are told that “there was not found a helpmeet for him.” The *Adonai*, being pure spiritual entities, had no sex, or rather had both sexes united in themselves, like their Creator; and the ancients understood this so well that they represented many of their deities as of dual sex. The Biblical student must either accept this interpretation, or make the passages in the two chapters alluded to absurdly contradict each other. It was such literal acceptance of passages that warranted the atheists in covering the Mosaic account with ridicule, and it is the dead letter of the old text that begets the materialism of our age. Not only are these two races of beings thus clearly indicated in *Genesis*, but even a third and a fourth one are ushered before the reader in chapter iv, where the “sons of God” and the race of “giants” are spoken of.¹²

One thing, at least, has been shown in the Hebrew text [of *Genesis*], *viz.*: that there was one race of purely physical creatures, another purely spiritual. The evolution and “transformation of species” required to fill the gap between the two has been left to abler anthropologists. We can only repeat the philosophy of men of old, which says that the union of these two races produced a third — the Adamite race. Sharing the natures of both its parents, it is equally adapted to an existence in the material and spiritual worlds. Allied to the physical half of man’s nature is reason, which enables him to maintain his supremacy over the lower animals, and to subjugate nature to his uses. Allied to his spiritual part is his *conscience*, which will serve as his unerring guide through the besetments of the senses; for conscience is that instantaneous perception between right and wrong, which can only be exercised by the spirit, which, being a portion of the Divine Wisdom and Purity, is absolutely pure and wise. Its promptings are independent of reason, and it can only manifest itself clearly when unhampered by the baser attractions of our dual nature.

Reason being a faculty of our physical brain, one which is justly defined as that of deducing inferences from premises, and being wholly dependent on the evidence of other senses, cannot be a quality pertaining directly to our divine spirit. The latter *knows* — hence, all reasoning which implies discussion and argument would be useless. So an entity, which, if it must be considered as a direct emanation from the eternal Spirit of wisdom, has to be viewed as possessed of the same attributes as the essence or the whole of which it is a part. Therefore, it is with a certain degree of logic that the ancient theurgists maintained that the *rational* part of man’s soul (spirit) never entered wholly into the man’s body, but only overshadowed him more or less through the *irrational* or astral soul, which serves as an intermediary agent, or a medium between spirit and body. The man who has conquered matter sufficiently to receive the direct light from his shining *Augoeides*, feels truth intuitively; he could

¹² *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 301-3



not err in his judgment, notwithstanding all the sophisms suggested by cold reason, for he is ILLUMINATED. Hence, prophecy, vaticination, and the so-called Divine inspiration are simply the effects of this illumination from above by our own immortal spirit.

Swedenborg, following the mystical doctrines of the Hermetic philosophers, devoted a number of volumes to the elucidation of the “internal sense” of *Genesis*. Swedenborg was undoubtedly a “natural-born magician,” a seer; he was *not* an *adept*. Thus, however closely he may have followed the apparent method of interpretation used by the alchemists and mystic writers, he partially failed; the more so, that the model chosen by him in this method was one who, albeit a great alchemist, was no more of an adept than the Swedish seer himself, in the fullest sense of the word. Eugenius Philalethes had never attained “the highest pyrotechny,” to use the diction of the mystic philosophers. But, although both have missed the whole truth in its details, Swedenborg has virtually given the same interpretation of the first chapter of *Genesis* as the Hermetic philosophers. The seer, as well as the initiates, notwithstanding their veiled phraseology, clearly show that the first chapters of *Genesis* relate to the *regeneration*, or a new birth of man, not to the creation of our universe and its crown work — MAN. The fact that the terms of the alchemists, such as *salt*, *sulphur*, and *mercury* are transformed by Swedenborg into *ens*, *cause*, and *effect*,¹³ does not affect the underlying idea of solving the problems of the Mosaic books by the only possible method — that used by the Hermetists — that of correspondences.¹⁴



Illustrations

Page 1. Light Dancer by Gilbert Williams

Page 3. The Great Wave off Kanagawa (1829-32) Katsushika Hokusai

¹³ See *Arcana coelestia*.

¹⁴ *Isis Unveiled*, I pp. 305-6





The Wheel of Life

