Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

Cosmic Balance

The Secret of Polarity

Izvor Collection

PROSVETA

Table of Contents

- Cosmic Balance
- I - Cosmic Balance and the Number Two
- II - Oscillation of the Scales
- III - One and Zero
  - I Adam and Eve: Spirit and Matter
  - II Adam and Eve: Wisdom and Love
  - III The Mental and Astral Planes
  - IV Man and Woman
- V - God Transcends Good and Evil
- VI - The White Head and the Black Head
- VII - Alternation and Antagonism - The Law of Opposites
- VIII - 'To Work the Miracles of One Thing' - The Figure of Eight and the Cross
- IX - The Caduceus of Hermes - The Astral Serpent
- X - Iona, Principle of Life - Horev, Principle of Death
  - I Sceptre and Orb
  - II Mind and Heart
  - III A Straight Line and a Curved Line
- XII - The Law of Exchange
- XIII - The Key and the Lock
- XIV - The Work of the Spirit on Matter - The Holy Grail
- XV - Union of the Ego with the Physical Body
- XVI - The Sacrament of the Eucharist
- XVII - The Androgynes of Myth

XVIII - Union with the Universal Soul and the Cosmic Spirit

Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov

Cosmic Balance

The Secret of Polarity

Izvor Collection – No. 237

PROSVETA

Readers are informed that this eBook might contain special illustrations and fonts that may shift when greatly enlarged.

Readers are asked to note that Omraam Mikhaël Aïvanhov's teaching was exclusively oral. This volume includes passages from several different lectures all dealing with the same theme.

Translated from the French

Original title: « LA BALANCE COSMIQUE – *le nombre 2* »

Original edition:
© 1995, Éditions Prosveta S.A., ISBN 2-85566-613-9
© 1996, Éditions Prosveta S.A., ISBN 2-85566-710-0
© Copyright Prosveta S.A. 2008. All rights reserved for all countries. No part of this publication may be reproduced, translated, adapted, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted, whether privately or otherwise, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, audio-visual or otherwise, without the prior permission of author and publishers (Law of March 1957 revised).

Prosveta S.A – B.P.12 – 83601 Fréjus CEDEX (France)
ISSN 0763-2738

ISBN 978-2-85566-710-2

Published simultaneously printed

international@prosveta.com

www.prosveta.com

Chapter I: Cosmic Balance and the Number Two

I

On March 21st the Sun enters the sign of Aries. This is the spring equinox, when the days and nights are of equal length. After the repose of winter, nature is awakening. Seeds begin to germinate and leaf-buds form on trees. As the months go by and the Sun travels through the signs of Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, and Virgo, the earth is gradually clothed in leaves, flowers, and fruits. On September 23rd, the Sun enters the sign of Libra (Balance or Scales), and this is the autumn equinox. Once again the days and nights are of equal length. But now it is time to harvest the ripe grain and fruit as nature enters a new period of repose. After the ascending phase, from Aries to Virgo, comes the descending phase, from Libra to Pisces.

Libra is the seventh sign on the zodiacal belt. Why, you may wonder, are there scales in the heavens, and what do these scales teach us? Libra is the only sign of the zodiac that does not represent a living being – human or animal. And it is not just any inanimate object, it is an instrument of precision that serves to weigh things. It is as though it were there with its two pans to maintain a state of equilibrium between the powers of darkness and light, of life and death. Libra is preceded by Virgo, the maiden carrying a sheaf of wheat, and followed by Scorpio, the animal whose sting can cause death. This opposition is again underscored by the fact that Venus is the ruling planet in Libra while Saturn is exalted. Saturn and Venus – what a partnership! Venus, a young woman seen as the incarnation of grace, of harmonious relationships, of pleasure, and Saturn, the austere old man who is most at home in solitude and who reaps lives with his scythe.

Libra, the Scales of the zodiac, is a reflection of cosmic balance, of the equilibrium between the two opposite and complementary principles, thanks

to which the universe came into being and continues to exist.

The first book of the *Zohar* tells the story of how God created the universe.

> *Two thousand years before the creation of the world, the letters were hidden, and the Holy One, blessed be his name, looked on them and delighted in them. When he wished to create the world, all the letters, starting from the last, came before him. … Thus Tav, Shin, Resh, Qoph, Tzadi, Peh, Ayin, Samech, Nun, and Mem presented themselves one after the other before the Creator and spoke of the qualities which made them worthy to be the instruments of his creation. But God dismissed them all. Then Lamed, Kaph, Yod, Tet, Chet, Zayin, Vav, Heh, Dalet, and Gimel came also before the Lord, but they too were dismissed. Finally the letter Beth, the second letter of the alphabet, presented itself, and God said: 'Yes, I shall use you to create the world. You will thus be the foundation of the work of creation.'*

This is why the two first words of Genesis, *'Bereshith bara'*, begin with the letter *Beth.*

You will ask: 'What happened to the letter *Aleph*? Why is there no mention of it?' Ah, God had a special destiny in mind for Aleph. The *Zohar* continues:

> *The letter Aleph stayed in its place and did not come before God. The Holy One, blessed be He, said: 'Aleph, Aleph, why did you not come before me as did all the other letters?' Aleph replied: 'Master of the universe, when I saw that all the other letters presented themselves before you to no avail, why should I have done the same? Later, when I saw that you had conferred this precious gift on Beth, I knew that it would be unworthy of the heavenly King to take back the gift that he had given to one of his servants and give it to another.' The Holy One, blessed be He, replied: 'Oh Aleph, Aleph, although Beth be the letter with which I shall create the world, you will have compensation, for you will be first among all the letters, and in you alone will there be unity.*

You will be the basis of all calculations and all actions in the world. There will be found no unity except in Aleph.'

Thus *Aleph*, the first letter of the alphabet, represents the number One, the unity of God. And since the letters of the Hebrew alphabet also represent numbers, *Beth*, the second letter, corresponds to the number Two.

Creation, therefore, is the work of the Two. But what is the Two? It is the One polarized as positive and negative, masculine and feminine, active and passive. Manifestation necessarily implies partition, division. In order to manifest and reveal itself, the One has to divide itself. Unity is the privilege of God alone, his own exclusive domain. But in order to create, God, who never ceases to be One, had to become Two. The One cannot create, for in unity there is no reciprocity. In becoming polarized, therefore, God projected himself outside himself and from these two poles the universe was born. Positive and negative poles are mutually attractive and it is this mechanism of reciprocal action and reaction that originates and sustains the movement of life. If this movement were to cease, the result would be stagnation and death, a return to the original absence of differentiation. The first verses of *Genesis* reveal that creation was effected by successive divisions. On the first day of creation, God separated light from darkness. On the second day, he separated the waters on high from the waters below. On the third day, he separated the waters from the dry land. And if we look at the other end of the scale of creation, we see that a cell, the smallest element of a living organism, reproduces itself by division, by splitting in two.

The One is that which is enclosed within itself. In order to emerge from itself it has to become Two. In initiatic science, the Two is not the sum of One plus One, as in mathematics. It is the One, which, in order to create, is polarized as positive and negative. It is important to understand that when we are talking about principles, we attribute no psychological or moral value to the words 'positive' and 'negative'. We are not saying that 'positive' implies something good and constructive or that 'negative' denotes something bad and destructive. We have to remember that these terms belong primarily to the vocabulary of the physical sciences which deal with the two great forces

of nature, electricity and magnetism. Both these forces are polarized. Both are positive and negative, emissive and receptive. An electrical connection and a magnet both have two poles. When we borrow these terms from the plane of natural physical forces and apply them to the psychic and spiritual planes, we see their positive, emissive properties as belonging to the masculine principle, and their negative or receptive properties as belonging to the feminine principle.

On the Sephirotic Tree (Figure 1), *Chokmah*, Wisdom, is the second sephirah. In *Chokmah*, the One, *Kether*, is divided into positive and negative. In *Chokmah*, the name of God is *Yah*, which is composed of the two letters, *Yod* – the masculine principle – and *Heh* – the feminine principle – which together engendered the universe.

The second letter of the Hebrew alphabet, *Beth*, corresponds to the second Tarot key, the High Priestess or Female Pope. There are two details in this key that are particularly striking. The first is the

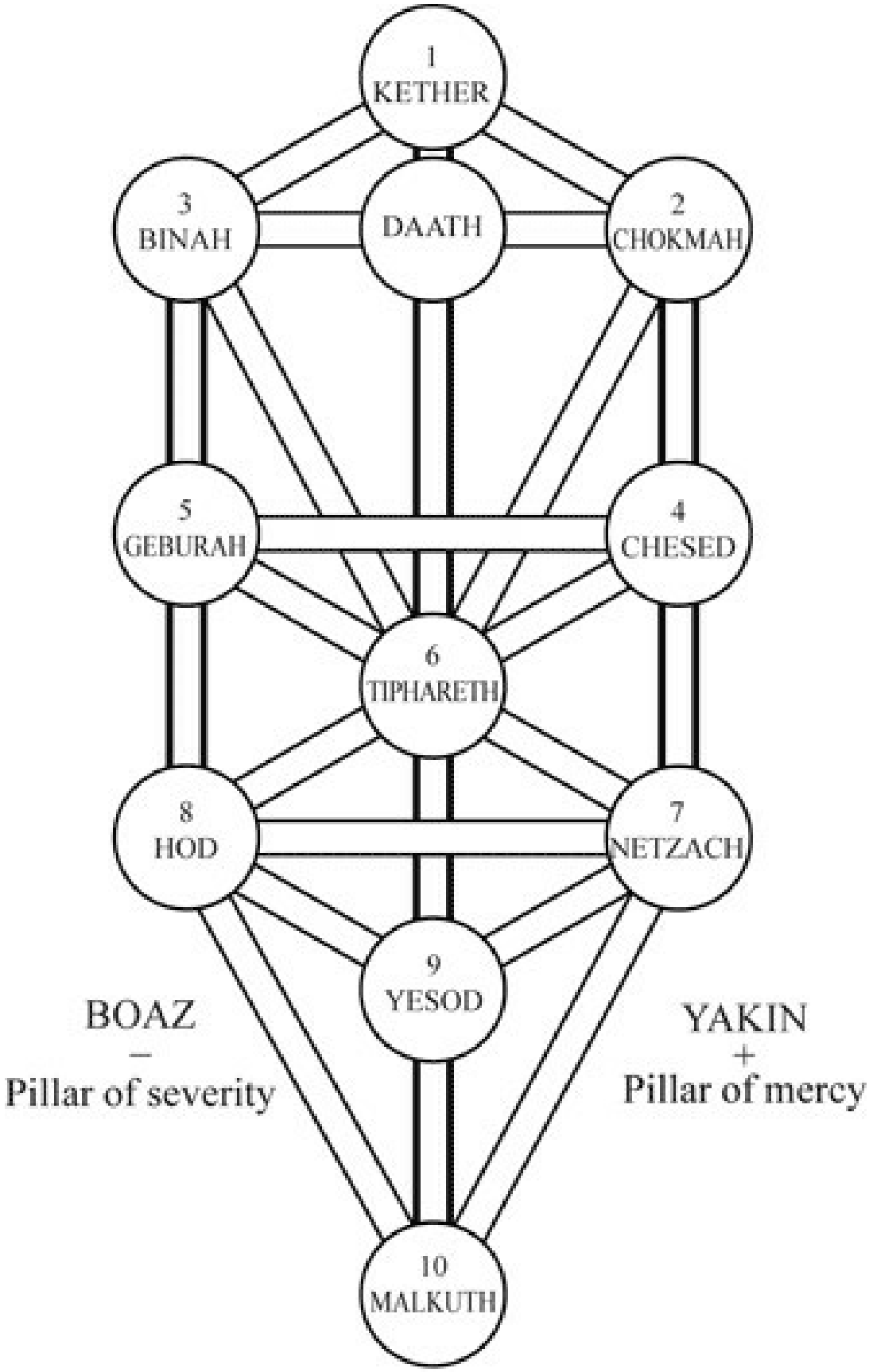
2nd Trump Card - The High Priestess

(Oswald Wirth, Tarot of the Magicians)

tiara worn by the High Priestess, which is surmounted by a crescent moon, the shape of which is reminiscent of a scales. The other is the fact that she is seated in front of two columns, between which hangs a veil. These two columns symbolize the two pillars of the Temple of Solomon, *Yakin* and *Boaz*. On her left is *Yakin* and on her right is *Boaz*. *Yakin* is blue and *Boaz* is red, and this difference in colour reveals the difference in their nature. Nowadays, many people consider Tarot cards to be a game for telling the future. But in reality they contain, in symbolic form, much of the science of the initiates of the past who created them.

Those who know how to interpret these symbols find immense perspectives of reflection and discovery opening before them.

Thus the two pillars, being of different colours, blue and red, express the opposition of the masculine and feminine principles. This idea can also be seen in the Sephirotic Tree, in which the two pillars of Mercy and Severity stand on either side of the central pillar of Equilibrium. On the pillar of Mercy, the sephiroth *Chokmah, Chesed,* and *Netzach* represent the masculine forces, and on the pillar of Severity, the sephiroth *Binah, Geburah*, and *Hod* represent the feminine forces, and these two forces can work together in harmony only if they are sustained by the higher power represented by the central pillar, consisting of the sephiroth *Malkuth, Yesod, Tiphareth, Daath,* and *Kether*.



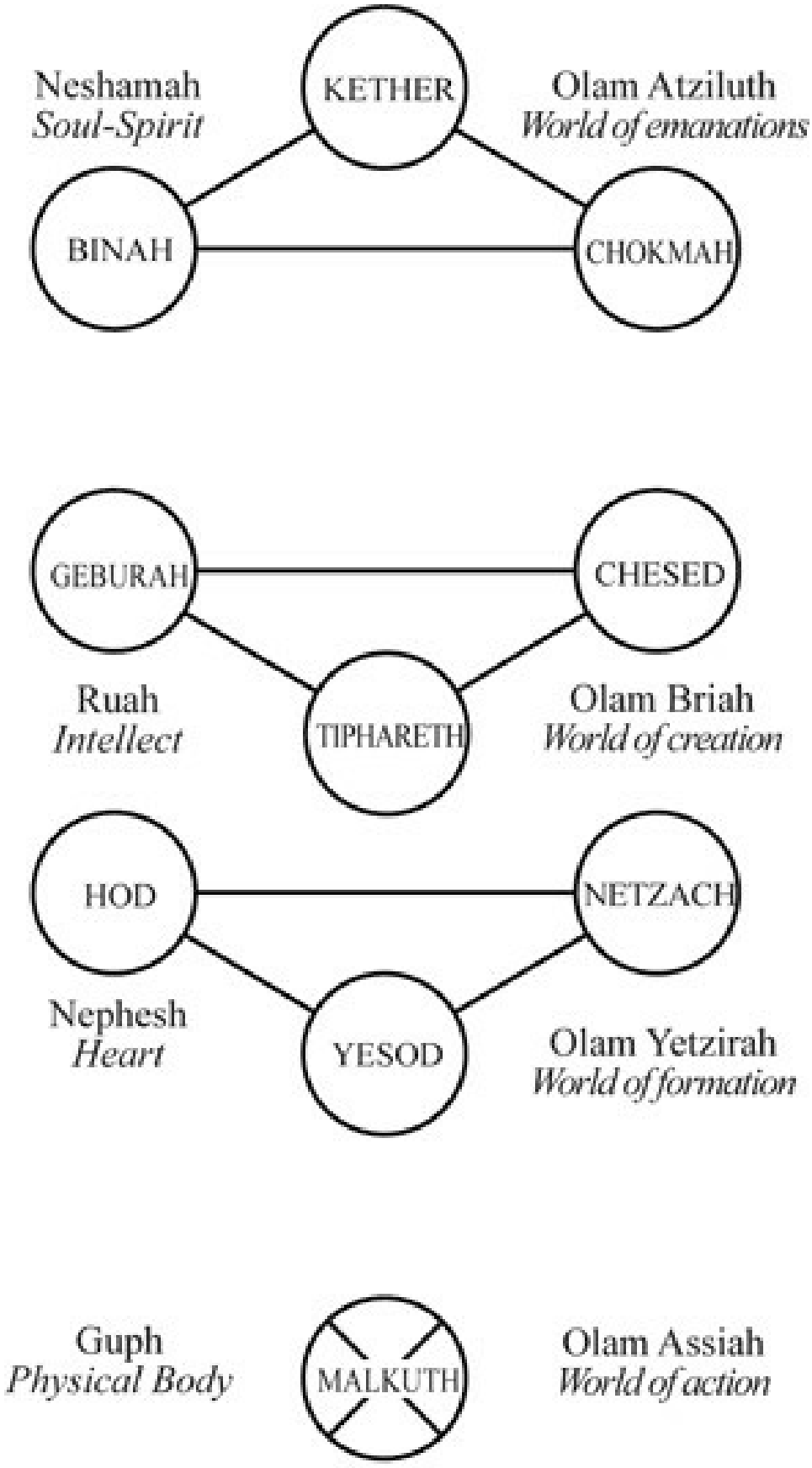
SEPHIROTIC TREE *(Figure 1)*

This is what is known to cabbalists as the cosmic balance or scales, the two antagonistic but complementary forces held in control by *Kether*, the Crown, the sephirah that dominates all the others.(Figure 1).

One of the books of the *Zohar*, the *Siphra di-Tzenioutha* (Book of Concealment), opens with these words: *'The Book of Concealment is the book of the equilibrium of balance. For before there was equilibrium, countenance beheld not countenance. And the kings of ancient times were dead, because they had no nourishment.'* These kings are, of course, symbols. We find mention of them again towards the end of the book: *'Seven kings are seen in the land of Edom... they are called shells, who have fallen down among the inferiors.'* The word shells, or husks, is a literal translation of the Hebrew word *qliphoth*. The *qliphoth* are the dark, inverted reflection of the divine sephiroth. Thus the *qliphoth* represent the forces, entities, or creatures that refuse to respect the equilibrium of balance. This is why it is said that the kings perished for lack of nourishment: they were no longer nourished by the great light radiating from *Kether*, the sublime Head on high.

The symbol of the balance, or scales, dominates the whole of creation. As we have already seen,[1] the Cabbalah divides the Sephirotic Tree into four regions (Figure 2):

– *Olam Atziluth*, the world of emanations, comprised of the sephiroth *Kether, Chokmah*, and *Binah.*



SEPHIROTIC TREE *(Figure 2)*

– *Olam Briah*, the world of creation, comprised of the sephiroth *Chesed*, *Geburah*, and *Tiphareth.*

– *Olam Yetzirah*, the world of formation, comprised of the sephiroth *Netzach*, *Hod*, and *Yesod.*

– *Olam Assiah*, the world of action, formed by the sephirah *Malkuth*.

In each of these four worlds, a central sephirah maintains the balance between the two on either side, thus:

– In *Olam Atziluth*, *Kether* maintains the balance between *Chokmah* and *Binah*.

– In *Olam Briah*, *Tiphareth* maintains the balance between *Chesed* and *Geburah*.

– In *Olam Yetzirah, Yesod* maintains the balance between *Netzach* and *Hod*.

– In *Olam Assiah*, *Malkuth* maintains the balance of the whole edifice.

Equilibrium exists, therefore, in all four worlds, and as human beings are a reflection of the universe, equilibrium exists also in the four worlds within us.

– In *Olam Atziluth,* which represents the divine world of the soul and spirit, *Neshamah*.

– In *Olam Briah*, which corresponds to the intellect or mental plane, *Ruah.*

– In *Olam Yetzirah*, which represents the heart or astral plane, *Nephesh*.

– In *Olam Assiah*, which represents the physical body, *Guph*.

And as the science of equilibrium is also the science of human nature, we have to realize that the kings of Edom are also in each one of us. The kings of Edom are the seven capital sins, and if they are not controlled but allowed to manifest freely, the result is disorder and anarchy. But cosmic intelligence cannot tolerate anarchy, and those who refuse to abide by the order established by this intelligence are destroyed. Like the kings of Edom, they perish for lack of nourishment. On the other hand, those who seek to attain the equilibrium of balance build within themselves the temple of the Lord.

I realize, of course, that all these ideas are still difficult for you to grasp, but you must not be discouraged. If you truly want to understand and achieve within yourselves the equilibrium of balance that will allow you to harmonize the positive and negative, the masculine and feminine, severity and mercy, further revelations will be given to you. While you are meditating, or even, perhaps, while you are asleep, beings other than myself will explain things to you.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Creation of the world by successive separations *Gen. 1: 4-10*
Yakin and Boaz – *I Kings 7: 15-22*

II

The goal of initiatic science is to teach us about the origin of created things, the world of ideas. Yes, all created things have their origin in the world of ideas, principles, and numbers. Creation and the multiplicity of phenomena occurring within it can be reduced to numbers, and initiatic science shows us how these numbers move and work. A number is an idea. The figure that represents that number is its garment, its manifestation or, one might say, its face. When one succeeds in vivifying numbers and

understanding how they operate, one sees that they are active forces at work in nature and that all forms and all movement are engendered by their combinations, separations, multiplications, and divisions. When one examines a snail shell or the structure of a crystal, for instance, how can one fail to admire the work of numbers? All the principles of arithmetic can be found in plants, animals, the stars, in the physical and psychic structure of human beings, and even in their destiny.

Now let us study the number Two. How did it come to be represented by the figure 2? Originally, this figure was not exactly as we know it today. The loop at the top is a later modification. It began as two parallel lines linked thus: Z. The link between the two lines is very important. It means that the two currents represented are neither separate nor contradictory, that they are in reality one and the same current circulating on two different planes. The pattern is exactly that of the convection currents that circulate between the earth's surface and the higher atmosphere. Winds blow in one direction at ground level and in the opposite direction at altitude. One often sees that the wind at ground level is blowing one way while the clouds are going in the opposite direction.

A similarly apparent contradiction can be seen when two people push on the two ends of the same pole in order to turn a horizontal wheel. They seem to be going in opposite directions, but as the movement is circular they are actually pushing in the same direction and their efforts are combined, not opposed. It is only if you look down at them from above, however, that you can see this. If you remain on their level you will always have the impression that they are going in opposite directions. The wheel is made to rotate by these two apparently contradictory movements. This is an interesting comparison, because on closer examination one sees that if the combined efforts of these two opposing currents contribute to the achievement of a common purpose, it is because they are joined at the centre. And the centre of the universe is God. One has to keep this idea firmly in mind when studying the number Two.

Whether it be in creation as a whole or in individual creatures, all aspects

of life are governed by the number Two. But it is possible to understand the Two only if one remains constantly aware of the One. There is one unique reality, but that one reality becomes polarized, and from this polarization all the rest ensues. The essential thing is to understand the nature of these two poles and the manner in which they work together. One can truly speak of polarization only if the two currents have a harmonious relationship, if they are like two people shaking hands or saluting each other in a gesture of friendship. If this is not the case, we must speak not of polarization but of division or confrontation. Instead of working together in understanding and harmony, they oppose and eventually destroy each other.

In reality, it is true that division can give rise to something analogous to the germination of a seed. A grain of wheat, for instance, has to split in two in order to germinate. Before germination it is One, but when it is sown it becomes Two. Then comes the Three, the germ contained in the seed, and as it sprouts it draws its life force from both halves of the seed. The two principles feed the third as it grows. In a seed or grain, therefore, there is division followed by fermentation, and the seed itself disappears. The seed dies, and this death has a role to play not only in nature, but also in our inner life. It is thanks to death that a human being awakens to a new life.[2] Jesus said: *'Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.'* But that is another mystery.

Two is the number of initiation. In the Two are hidden all the most profound, dangerous, and complex questions – even the secret of the existence of the devil. Everything pertaining to the number Two is difficult. In fact, when God was creating the world, he did not say that the second day was good. Of all the other days the Bible says: *'And God saw that it was good,'* but there is no such comment for the second day. God said nothing about it. Two is the most formidable of all numbers, because it contains the seeds of all division and divergence, and it is in division and divergence that evil begins.

The ability to study the number Two and plumb the depths of its mystery is not given to everybody. When one understands it and is capable of

working with it, it is the number of order, harmony, and construction. But for the unwise it is the number of opposition and destruction. It all depends on us, therefore, on our ability to study and understand. The outcome of the meeting of the two currents will be either good or evil for the individual, depending on his or her understanding and behaviour.

The High Priestess portrayed on the second Tarot card is seated in front of the two pillars of the temple, and between the pillars hangs a veil which conceals the entrance and forbids access to the temple. The right hand of the High Priestess lies on an open book (this is the only Tarot card in which one sees a book), and in her left hand are two keys. These symbols mean that we have to study and learn in order to obtain the keys that will enable us to lift the veil and have access to the mysteries. The book is Two. The keys also. The number Two represents the entrance to the sanctuary. Those who enter by this door find a strange and mysterious path lying before them. They cannot know in advance what they will find if they follow it; they can only be sure that they will make some important discoveries. The High Priestess says: 'Study and learn, my children, and you will see how marvellously everything in the universe has been disposed by the Creator. If you do not study, you will not have a true view of reality. You will never be able to understand how the different elements of the Two fit together. You will encounter opposition and enmity, and it is only through struggle and misfortune that you will learn the reality of the Two.'

There is one thing that has to be understood, only one, and that is the number Two, the existence of the two principles, the positive and negative, the masculine and feminine. The universe was created by these two principles, and this means that it will continue to exist – and that humanity will continue to exist and to advance – thanks to the work of the two principles.[3] You will say: 'Is it as simple as that? You said that it was difficult.' Yes, it is as simple as that. Why go looking for complications? Complications arise only from the inability of human beings to understand and use the different manifestations of this polarity. The two principles are at the root of life itself. They can be seen in every phenomenon of life, whether physical, psychic, or spiritual.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

‘Unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies’ - *John 12: 24*
‘And God saw that it was good’ – *Gen. 1: 4-31*

---

[1] See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life,* Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 2: ‘Introduction to the Sephirotic Tree of Life’.

[2] See *Sons and Daughters of God,* Izvor Coll. n° 240, chap. 3: ‘Whoever would save his life would lose it’.

[3] See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water,* Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 1: ‘The Two Principles of Creation: Water and Fire’.

Chapter II: Oscillation of the Scales

When children learn to read, they begin by getting to know the letters of the alphabet. Gradually, once they are familiar with the individual letters, they learn to recognize them in words and, eventually, they become capable of reading whole sentences. In the same way, disciples have to pass through numerous phases of initiation, in the course of which they gradually learn to recognize the letters which are the elements of creation and to see how they fit together to form the great book of the cosmos. In the prologue of *St John's Gospel* we read: *'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God… All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made.'*[1] This means that in the beginning, all the principles of the divine alphabet were set in motion, and from the highest to the lowest point of creation, the structures they designed – even those on the physical plane – were exact reproductions of those on the higher planes. All that exists on the physical plane can be seen as words, phrases, and poems that have been formed from the elements of the divine Word.

To the eyes of the uninitiated, nature appears, at first sight, as an immense disarray, an utter shambles, and although scientists attempt to clarify the situation by grouping things in different categories, very few are capable of perceiving the hidden links that exist between the different elements of creation. They fail to see that these apparently discrete elements form, in fact, an integral whole. Only a view of the whole reveals the harmony not only of the principles which seem to conflict (masculine and feminine, active and passive, positive and negative, light and darkness, heat and cold, good and evil), but also of the phenomena engendered by these principles. Those whose eyes have been opened, however, see balance, equilibrium. Indeed, they themselves are in balance, they are established in equilibrium. But equilibrium does not mean immobility, the

cessation of oscillation. The absence of oscillation leads to stagnation.

When the *Zohar* speaks of balance and equilibrium, it is not talking about a situation in which the two pans of the scales are motionless. Such perfect equilibrium would signify a return to the original absence of differentiation before creation began. When God became polarized in order to create, the balance was set in motion and began to oscillate. In fact, in some traditions, creation is said to have begun not with Aries, the Ram, but with the constellation that is diametrically opposed to it on the zodiac, Libra, the Scales.

The crescent moon above the head of the High Priestess also expresses this idea of oscillation, the alternating rise and fall of the scales. Although the moon periodically takes the same circular form as the sun, symbolically it is portrayed as a crescent, that is, with two horns. It is no accident that we speak of the 'horns' of the moon and that, in certain mythologies, feminine deities were represented symbolically as horned beasts. Womankind – in this instance, the High Priestess – is the living symbol of the nature created by God. Her dominant theme is the balance, the ebb and flow, the constant alternation between opposites – from light to darkness, from activity to rest.

As long as creation has not reached completion the scales will continue to oscillate. Absolute equilibrium is synonymous with perfection, and what more can there be, once perfection is achieved? Nothing. Everything comes to a halt. The oscillation of the scales means that creation is still evolving, that it is moving towards absolute equilibrium – that is, absolute immobility – without ever attaining it. The day creation attains absolute equilibrium it will be reabsorbed into the bosom of the Eternal.

Thus evolution supposes a constant oscillation of the two sides of the scales. This is just one more lesson we can learn from the number Two. The cessation of movement means death, for perfect equilibrium means that there is no give and take, no reciprocity. But life consists of reciprocity. Reciprocal relationships are the threads that form a network between all living creatures and between living creatures and inanimate objects. The

extent of this movement must be kept within bounds, however, for if one side of the scales swings too high, the other will sink too low, and that would be the end of all oscillation, the end of life. What we call equilibrium, therefore, is in fact a certain lack of equilibrium. But it is a lack of equilibrium which must be limited and momentary, a state of imbalance which is immediately rectified. Every change of level on one side of the balance releases a flood of forces that must be controlled by an immediate movement of contrary forces. It is this oscillation that engenders life, hence we may say that life is an imbalance that is constantly being re-balanced.

The action of walking is the perfect illustration of this phenomenon. When walking we step forward on the left and right foot alternately. [2] The slight imbalance of our body occasioned by putting one foot forward is immediately rectified when we advance the other foot. But how easy it is to lose one's balance! The tiniest obstacle, even a pebble, can make one trip and fall. As for those who are in their cups – the oscillation that marks their progress can be really spectacular!

Every element, every object, every situation, every creature is a source of energy, but this energy can be actualized only by putting it in a state of imbalance, on a slope, as it were. Look at what happens to water: on a level surface it forms a still pool. It cannot flow because there is no slope. But if you tilt the surface, the power of the water will increase and, if there is enough of it, it can produce sufficient power to keep whole factories running.

The same is true of human beings. Within us there is a slope down which cascades a constant stream of forces, and these forces need to be channelled in order to work effectively. The number Two is the greatest slope God has given to man, but this slope has to be constantly re-balanced, for excess in one direction inevitably leads to excess in the opposite direction. This is something one sees, for instance, in manic-depressives. The psychic life of a human being is based on a certain imbalance, and when this imbalance is controlled, it is a source of wealth, of creativity. Geniuses, for example, are not 'well balanced' in the accepted sense of the term (the kind of balance that often produces nothing but mediocrity). Quite the contrary, in

fact. Geniuses are often people who, feeling threatened by dark forces, try to control these forces by their work, their creativity, and in so doing they produce masterpieces. Whereas those who are far more 'balanced' and who never need to make an effort in order to enjoy a sense of well-being are always insignificant, unremarkable.

Thus a certain degree of imbalance is necessary in order to advance, on condition that we observe and analyse ourselves and learn to rectify the situation when this imbalance becomes too great. The ability to achieve a balance of forces gives us a magical power over ourselves and over nature, but, as I say, we must always be careful not to eliminate all oscillation, for when the two pans of a scales are in perfect equilibrium, all progress ceases and death takes over. Death is a state of perfect equilibrium. You can even see this in certain people: they continue to walk and talk and carry on their business, but they give you the impression of being dead, of being completely stagnant. They are always the same, as though an inner spring had run down. Day after day, they wear the same wooden expression, do the same things, repeat the same words. Call that equilibrium if you like, but how boring it is for everybody else! We all do our best to avoid such people.

So there is always something to rectify, something within ourselves that needs to be adjusted. But we must also make adjustments in our judgement of others and in our attitude toward them. What we call justice is, in fact, a succession of adjustments (indeed, the words justice and adjustment have the same root), and this is why it is so difficult to be just. All parents and educators should bear this in mind when they have to judge children and help them to develop. The tendency to think that a little boy who is always quiet and obedient is 'cute' or 'adorable' is all too frequent. It is much easier, of course, to deal with a child who keeps quiet and stays still when you tell him to. But what will such a passive, docile child achieve later in life? Not much, you may be sure! As an adult he will always be insignificant. A self-willed, unruly child is a constant source of anxiety and irritation to his parents, neighbours, and teachers. They are forever complaining, 'Oh really, this is too much! Just look at what he's up to now!' Yes, but a child whose constant pranks exhaust them is far more likely to turn out to be a really worthwhile

adult. At the moment he is 'exaggerating', that is true – in other words, the two sides of his scales are not balanced – but when he has learned to channel his energies, his unusual talents and strong character may well distinguish him from others. The task of his parents and teachers is to help him to achieve this.

Moments of grave imbalance in life – illness or periods of great difficulty, for instance – are occasions which oblige human beings to advance.[3] What is a war, for instance? A very steep downgrade. And this steep slope, this imbalance, provides conditions in which those who are good often become better and those who are evil become worse. Life creates such periods of turbulence so that human beings, finding themselves in a state of imbalance, shall be obliged to advance, to evolve and transform themselves, or, at least, to show their true worth and, thus, to see themselves as they really are. If they never had to confront danger or difficulty, a great many people would never really know themselves. In times of trial, people who seemed completely insignificant sometimes turn out to be heroes, while others who seemed capable, intelligent, and honest are immediately defeated or are led to commit cowardly or criminal acts.

There are many other areas in which one can see that life is created by this oscillation between opposing forces or situations. The extraordinary abundance and variety of riches that exist on the planet are a consequence of its irregular, uneven surface, of the existence of different levels, from the highest mountain peaks to the depths of the oceans. What a magnificent diversity of climates, flora, and fauna – which determine to a large extent the diversity of human civilizations – stems from this simple fact that the surface of the earth is not even! And human beings themselves must not all be reduced to one level. Why not? Because if they were there would be no reciprocity, no to-and-fro, between them. The only thing they should have in common is a high ideal, the aspiration constantly to grow in light and love. In every other way they should be different. It is this difference that enriches and gives beauty to their lives.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

‘In the beginning was the Word’ – *John 1: 1*

---

[1] See *Verbe divin et parole humaine,* Brochure n° 320.

[2] See *‘Know Thyself’ – Jnana Yoga,* Complete Works, vol. 18, chap. 4: ‘Knowledge: Heart and Mind’, Part I.

[3] See *Aux sources inaltérables de la joie,* Izvor Coll. n° 242, chap. 3: ‘L’aiguillon de la souffrance’.

Chapter III: One and Zero

I

Cabbalists have various ways of writing the name of God, *Yod Heh Vav Heh*, יהוה .(Hebrew is read from right to left.) One of them consists of a triangle in which the name is written in blazing letters:

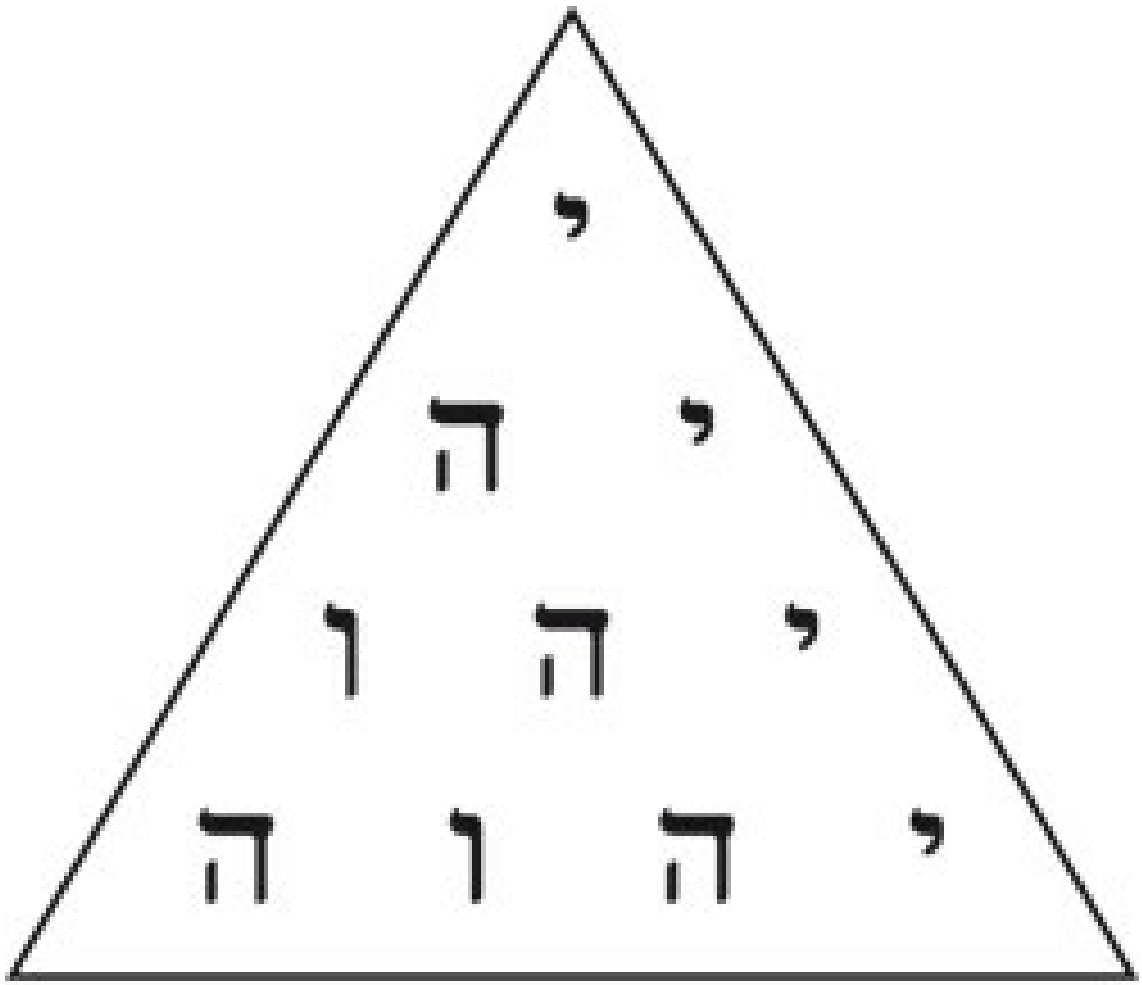


Figure 3

The four levels within the pyramid correspond to the four planes of creation:

י

Yod corresponds to *Atziluth*, the world of emanations, the divine plane.

יה

Yod, Heh corresponds to *Briah*, the world of creation, the spiritual plane.

יהו

Yod, Heh, Vav corresponds to *Yetzirah*, the world of formation, the psychic plane.

יהוה

Yod, Heh, Vav, Heh corresponds to *Assiah*, the world of action, the physical plane.

Each new letter represents a step down on the path of the spirit as it descends into matter. The numerical value of *Yod* is ten, that of *Heh* five, and that of *Vav* six. The sum of letters inscribed in the triangle, therefore, is seventy-two, and seventy-two is the number of the *Shem hamephorash* (literally translated as 'the explicit name'), the seventy-two angels that govern the universe.

Yod, which is the smallest letter of the alphabet, barely more than a dot, symbolizes the cosmic spirit, the One. And when the One unfolds on the physical plane it becomes Ten, the universe. For just as, from the viewpoint of initiatic science, Two is not the sum of One plus One, neither is Ten the sum of ten units. In order to understand the wealth of meaning contained in the number Ten, we have to study both the One and the Zero of which it is composed. This study reveals that each has its own particular nature, its own particular function, and that they have specific work to do together. And in order to understand this work, we have to realize that they are not simply placed side by side, but that the One penetrates the Zero in order to animate it and set it in motion. This notion is also expressed by the symbol of the dot in the centre of a circle, ⊙.

Genesis begins with these words: *'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void, and darkness covered the face of the deep, and a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.'* The wind or spirit of God is the masculine principle which hovers over matter – symbolized by the waters – in order to fertilize it. Water is the circle, the , and the spirit of God is the dot, the One. Unless it is animated by the spirit, matter remains *tohu va-bohu*, formless and void. But when it is overshadowed and fashioned by the spirit, all the possibilities it contains begin to be manifested, and it becomes a universe, with suns, constellations and nebulae. Our universe, therefore, represents the Zero, matter which has been fashioned, animated, and organized by the spirit.

Everything we see in the universe is produced by the One and the Zero, by the One which penetrates and animates the Zero. It is a principle of mechanics that a piston must move within the cylinder in order to activate a motor. Without this movement nothing would work. And what is a wheel? A Zero, the circle, which rotates around a central axis, the One. A wheel demonstrates the work of the One within the Zero, the spirit that activates matter. And we find this mirrored in the fact that the earth itself has an axis, and in ceaseless rotation around this axis spins its mass, the Zero.

Those who know how to study numbers see them becoming significant, alive, and active. In order to form the number Ten, the One and the Zero must be both linked and mobile. But the only areas in which human beings know this reality is in mechanics and in sexuality – and even then, their ignorance is very great. A man 'knows' a woman (in the Biblical sense of the term) by penetrating her, and the result of that knowledge is a child. But in what conditions is the child conceived? The One penetrates the Zero in order to study it, but it does so in darkness, having extinguished the light of thought, and this is why the results are so mediocre. Human beings work with the number Ten in such a way that they are like anglers who never catch anything but old boots filled with mud. They should be able to bring up a rich haul of gold and precious stones, but they find nothing but old boots.

Every action that contributes to sustaining life corresponds to the number Ten. When you eat, you open your mouth – Zero – and put in some food – One, and the combination of the two produces energy. When you see, it is because light – One – enters the Zero of your eye. In the same way, you hear because a sound strikes your ear. As for your head, its very shape reflects the Zero, and this Zero has to be penetrated by the One. Left to itself, our head, the Zero, can produce nothing worthwhile. But once it is penetrated by a ray of celestial light it gives birth to a divine child, and we become the Ten. Until then we are an empty Zero. You will say, 'What strange interpretations.' Yes, they are interpretations.

The number Ten means that one who bears light penetrates the obscurity of matter and illuminates it in order to study it. It is the speleologist who penetrates with a lantern into the darkness of a cave. It is the hunter who penetrates the unlit depths of a forest – for hunting symbolizes something other than the pursuit of a deer or a boar. In the spiritual life there are other kinds of game to pursue, other treasures to be discovered.

The number Ten is also within each one of us. The One is the mind, the Zero is the heart. By means of our mind we have to penetrate the heart – our own and that of others – in order to illuminate it and work in collaboration with it. The intellect or mind, like the piston which goes in and out of the cylinder, must go in and out of the heart. Those who fail to use their intellect in this way will be incapable of understanding. Above all they will be incapable of knowing themselves. One might say that the number Ten represents the axiom 'Know thyself'. By penetrating the deep caverns of the heart, wisdom discovers the treasures it contains, the hidden veins of precious stones, metals, and liquids. The intellect descends into the dark well of the heart in order to find and draw out its precious waters. The Ten, therefore, represents the work of the intellect on the heart, but it also represents the work of the spirit on the soul. In its most sublime significance, the Ten represents a human being whose spirit plunges into the depths of the cosmic soul in order to pierce its mysteries, and returns illuminated.

We have to become familiar with the Ten on the highest levels. In every human being there is the feminine aspect, which represents darkness, and the masculine aspect, which bears light. These two aspects are particularly well developed in those who are very creative. A Ten without light is a Ten in a two-dimensional world. In the three-dimensional world the Ten is in action in the midst of light. This is one of the things we learn from the four letters of the divine name: *Yod* י, the father; *Heh* ה, the mother; *Vav* ו, the son, and *Heh* ה, the daughter. These four letters correspond to the four principles in a human being: One, the spirit; Two, the soul; Three, the intellect, and Four, the heart.[1] Add One, Two, Three, and Four and you have Ten – Wealth! To live in the Ten is to have a pure heart, a luminous intellect, a soul as vast as the universe, and a potent spirit capable of overcoming all obstacles.

From the number Ten, as from all the other numbers, we can learn certain methods that we can use in our work. Our feet and hands are tools, for we use our feet to move about and our hands to do things. Have you never wondered why you have ten fingers and ten toes? When people come together in a joint effort, they form the Ten. When you shake hands with someone you are also forming the Ten. The custom of shaking hands has not come about by chance. Indeed, many of the gestures we make automatically have deep significance. When you meet somebody for a discussion or a meal or to work together, you begin by shaking hands, thus creating a bond between you. One of the hands represents the One and the other the Zero. If you are both conscious of what this gesture means, each hand will play its role and the result will be an effective harmony.

When two people shake hands they are showing the will to understand and get along with each other in order to advance together on the same path. Yes, but this cannot happen unless one hand is invested with positive energy and the other with negative energy. If both hands are One, or both Zero, they will never collaborate harmoniously. Two positive, active hands lead to conflict. Two passive, negative hands will remain inert and ineffectual. A handshake always supposes that the result will be the Ten, that

is, an orderly collaboration in which each one represents Five. To shake hands with someone is to say, 'I want to try to exchange something with you, to see if we can collaborate.' But how many people ever attempt to understand the language of hands? They associate with others without paying attention to the lessons of their hands, and the result is conflict and disappointment.

Let me give you an example of how this principle applies in the realm of education. Say you have a son whom you want to educate. You cannot do this unless you find out what will motivate him to work, that is, unless you discover his Zero, the Zero of his One. You can do nothing for people if you do not know their Zero – which can be a science, an art, a friend, an ambition, or a virtue. Parents who know their children's Zero can give them the conditions they need in order to activate their One and thus obtain the Ten. This is why people need to be able to choose from a wide range of occupations, occupations that represent possible Zeros which they can penetrate, in which they can be active, and which, in turn, will act on them.

The number Ten teaches us to work with the masculine and feminine principles simultaneously, to be both man and woman, to be, also, both a child and an elder. The elder is the intellect. The child is the heart. To bring these two states together is to achieve the Ten. A child resembles a Zero. It is flexible, it turns somersaults and rolls about like a ball. An elder is a One, stiff and inflexible. Nowadays, human beings refuse to be like children because they are only interested in preserving their authority, their prestige. But in order to attract love, you have to be a child. And in order to have a balanced relationship with others, you have to be both child and elder – a Ten in action.

It is important to study numbers and to discover the practical methods they teach. Yes, numbers can be helpful, but, of course, it is up to us to learn how to use them. Those who work successfully with the Ten feel rich and fulfilled, for Ten is the number of marriage. But the marriage that is the goal of human aspirations, this union with a being who is the perfect complement to oneself, must first be achieved within oneself. How can one

be inwardly married in order to form a Ten? To whom or what must one be wedded? This is the essential question. Every human being must be married. There must be not a single bachelor, not a single spinster left on earth. And the marriage to which we must all aspire is that of matter and of God within us, the marriage of our body and our spirit.[2]

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' - *Gen. 1: 1*

II

How did the masculine principle, the One, create the feminine principle, the Zero? By bending itself into a circle and joining the two ends. It is this circle that represents matter, the whole universe.

There is still a great deal to be said about the One and the Zero. For instance, you can either put the One before the Zero, or the Zero before the One. If you put the One before the Zero, you multiply its power by ten: the 1 becomes 10. But if you do the opposite, you get 01, a tenth of its power, a tenth of its value.

Now, let us transpose this on to the spiritual plane: if you put the Zero – that is, yourself – in first place, and the One – the divine principle – in second place, after yourself, you will be diminishing your qualities and your possibilities of progress. But if you say, 'Lord, you alone are truly great, powerful, and wise. I will always follow you. I will always put you first, before myself,' you will be increasing your potential, you will become the Ten. This is the attitude of truly spiritual people: to give first place to the Lord so as to be ruled and guided by him. This is the true humility taught by initiatic

science.

Contrary to the opinion of many, true humility does not consist in abasing oneself to the point of extinction, or in repeating, 'I am no good, utterly worthless!'[3] True humility consists in giving first place to the Deity so as to benefit from the divine qualities. When you do this all the Zeros within you line up after the One, thus becoming virtues, riches. How many people are capable of understanding this truth? The ideas that prevail today urge people to do just the opposite, to put themselves before the Lord – even to take the place of the Lord. And when they do this they shrivel and shrink and are reduced almost to nothing. They put too many Zeros in front of the One.

Perhaps some of you will say, 'I understand. Since the Zero is no good, I'll get rid of it and keep only the One.' No, this too is an error. The Zero is necessary, you must not do away with it. If you had no Zero, you would have no matter with which to work, and you would achieve nothing. The only thing you need is to be sure to put the One before the Zero; in other words, never to give first place to personal gain, to your own selfish interests. Put all that in second place and you will sense that you understand things better, that you receive better guidance and protection.

The true greatness of human beings lies in understanding that, in spite of all their flaws and imperfections, they can accomplish marvels as long as they give the Lord pride of place in their head and their heart. Without the Lord human beings cannot accomplish very much. Whatever they do will always be human, always mediocre.[4] Each one of us must understand this and, having understood it, do everything possible to induce the Lord to enter us, to manifest through us, and to take us into his service. The whole of this inner endeavour is summed up in the numbers One and Zero. Those who understand this become the Ten. There are people who say, 'God? Who needs a God? We are intelligent beings; the universe belongs to us.' Such people have put the One far, far behind a whole series of Zeros, and this is the worst possible philosophy. The Zero is important, indispensable, in fact, because it is the support of the One, but it must always come after the One.

The subject of the One and the Zero is inexhaustible. Let me give you yet another interpretation. Let us say that you are someone who puts feeling first and reflection second, with the result that your actions are guided by impulses and impressions rather than by reason. Such an attitude not only diminishes the value of your behaviour, your actions, but also makes it more likely that they will end in disaster. I am not saying that you should eliminate feeling. Not at all, because to do so would be to deprive yourself of the riches contained in the material that is there to be fashioned by thought. But you must put reflection in the first place, so as to find the best solutions, the best way to behave. This, then, is what the Ten teaches: we must give reflection priority over feeling.

We must not do away with the Zero. It is extremely useful, for it augments the value of the One. But the Zero is the rearguard, and as such it must be content to come second.

---

[1] See *The Fruits of the Tree of Life – The Cabbalistic Tradition,* Complete Works, vol. 32, chap. 4: 'The Tetragrammaton and the Seventy-Two Planetary Spirits', and *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life,* Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 10 ; 'The Cosmic Family and the Mystery of the Trinity'.

[2] See *The Philosopher's Stone – in the Gospels and in Alchemy,* Izvor Coll. n° 241, chap. 9: 'The Work of the Alchemist: 3 over 4', and chap. 10: 'The Philosopher's Stone, Fruit of a Mystic Union'.

[3] See *True Alchemy or the Quest for Perfection,* Izvor Coll. n° 221, chap. 11: 'Pride and Humility'

[4] See *Les deux arbres du Paradis,* Complete Works, vol. 3, chap. 2: 'Les deux premiers commandements'.

Chapter IV: The role of the masculine and the feminine

I
Adam and Eve: Spirit and Matter

The two principles, masculine and feminine, are at the origin of creation. No creation of any kind is possible with only one principle. The two have to be united in a common endeavour. The two principles exist first of all on the higher plane. They are what we call the heavenly Father and the divine Mother, and they are constantly engendering worlds inhabited by countless creatures. On the physical plane the masculine is distinct and apart from the feminine, but on the higher plane masculine and feminine are one.

Genesis says: *'God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them... male and female he created them.'* According to the *Zohar*, this means that God created Adam, the primordial man, as male and female. Perhaps you will ask: 'But what about Eve? *Genesis* also says that God created Eve.' Yes, God drew the feminine principle from the masculine principle, thus actualizing it externally. This is the meaning of that allegory in which God fashions Eve from a rib taken from the side of Adam, an allegory which has puzzled a great many theologians.

Adam is not an individual man and Eve is not an individual woman: they are both symbols. Adam is the masculine principle which engendered Eve, the feminine principle. What does that mean? It means that the primordial principle emerged from its state of extreme subtlety in order to be condensed, and in condensing created another principle, Eve. If *Genesis* says that Adam was created before Eve, it is because Moses, who was an initiate, knew that the masculine principle always comes first. It comes first

because it is the creative principle, it is at the origin of all creation and, consequently, of matter. Matter is a product of the spirit. This is the message contained in the allegory of Eve being fashioned from Adam's rib. Matter is a condensation of the forces of the spirit. This is why, symbolically, the feminine principle always comes after the masculine principle. And this is what is expressed by the first two letters of the name of God, *Yod Heh*, יה.

The letter *Yod* י, symbol of the masculine principle, is followed by the letter *Heh* ה, which symbolizes the feminine principle. See how expressive the shape of these two letters is. The *Heh* is like a receptacle, an inverted cup, while *Yod*, the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is hardly more than a dot, or, more exactly, a sperm, the primary element of a living being. At the moment of conception, the mother's ovum, which resembles a cup, receives the sperm, and a new life begins.

In the beginning is the *Yod*, just as in the beginning is a point. A point has no dimension, and it is almost impossible to define it. But the movement of a point produces a line, the movement of a line produces a surface, and the movement of a surface produces a volume – that is, three-dimensional space. Line, surface, and volume are all born of the movement of a point. Now, if you cause a line to move round the point from which it originated you obtain a circle. A circle and its radius show the union of a straight line with a curved line. The point, therefore, is the source of all figures, and the point in the centre of a circle symbolizes the cosmic spirit which animates the matter of the universe. This is the notion that cabbalists express by inscribing the *Yod* within the *Heh*, thus: יה.

You will better understand now what it means to say that Eve was made from one of Adam's ribs. It is the spirit, Adam, that engenders matter, Eve. Adam and Eve then work together to create children, and their children are all the beings and objects which exist in nature and which are simply the reflection of the two great principles in the world above. A tree is reflected in

a pool of water, and the fact that we can see its reflection below means that it exists above. This very simple image enables us to understand the question of evolution.

That which science terms 'the evolution of species' was necessarily preceded by a process of involution, for there can be no upward movement unless something has already descended. In order to rise towards heaven, beings must first have descended from heaven, the source and origin of all being. This is true of physical matter. It is also true of all that exists, including human beings. The theory of evolution advanced by Lamarck and Darwin accounts for only fifty per cent of the reality. Before there can be evolution of matter there is involution of the spirit. Evolutionists see things only from the outside, from the point of view of the organization of matter, and fail to take into account the invisible forces that fashioned that matter in the first place. Evolution is only one half of the process of manifestation. When one studies this half in isolation, one cuts it off from the truth of life and removes it from its rightful place in nature. You will never prove to me that a process of evolution can exist without being set in motion and sustained by an initial impulse. And, as I say, this impulse comes from above. The initial movement is that of the spirit which descends, and if we see that matter evolves it is because it is being carried upward, back to its source, by the ascending movement of the spirit.[1]

The masculine principle is and must always remain first, therefore. But this does not give men a reason to flatter themselves or women a reason to feel belittled. I am talking about the masculine principle, not about men. And the myth of original sin is also about principles, not about man and woman as such.

God created man, Adam, in his image. God, therefore, represented Adam's ideal. Similarly, when God created Eve with a rib from the side of Adam, man represented the woman's ideal. Man, being in more direct contact with God, closer to his essence and his light, had the power to transmit to woman forces which she could only receive through an intermediary. But Eve was so intent on attracting Adam to herself that she forgot that other

centre, God, and when Adam and Eve together turned away from God they fell from paradise. As long as Adam kept God at the centre of his existence, he was happy and free and continually learning, and what he learned he transmitted to Eve. Just as Adam transmitted to Eve what he learned from God, so Eve transmitted what she learned from Adam to the other creatures – animals, plants, and the spirits that belonged to the lower echelons of evolution. It was when Adam turned away from God and turned to Eve that disaster followed, for not only did they both fall, but all those for whom Eve had been the channel of learning were dragged down with them.[2]

All the misfortunes of human beings come from their refusal to accept the hierarchy of the universe. This is only another way of saying that they have reversed the order of the letters of God's name. They put *Heh* before *Yod*. In other words, they put the feminine principle, matter, before the masculine principle, the spirit. And, contrary to what many people think, it is not by giving the primacy to matter that human beings will be in a better position to solve their material problems.

So now you see how the story of original sin must be understood. It is not about a woman called Eve who seduced and brought about the downfall of a poor wretch called Adam – no apologies to those who prefer that interpretation because it justifies their disdain and rejection of women! No, it is about reversing the proper order of the two principles.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'God created humankind in his image' – *Gen. 1: 27*

God fashions Eve from a rib taken from the side of Adam - *Gen. 2: 22*

Adam and Eve: the Fall – *Gen. 2: 15-17 and 3: 1-6*

Adam and Eve: Wisdom and Love

Genesis tells us that Adam and Eve disobeyed the order they had received from God and ate the forbidden fruit. By their disobedience they distanced themselves from their Creator, and now they are obliged to try to find their way home again. Now, since this is an allegory, it can be given different interpretations, and as long as one abides by the rules of symbolic language, all interpretations are valid.[3] But there is one thing that you must bear in mind, and that is that I am speaking of principles, not of two individuals named Adam and Eve.

As I have already said, the entity that we call God is both masculine and feminine, the heavenly Father and the divine Mother. Similarly, every human being created in the image of God is polarized as both masculine (symbolized by Adam) and feminine (symbolized by Eve). When a human being incarnates he necessarily leaves his heavenly Mother and Father, but even though he is obliged to leave them, he must not sever the ties that bind him to them. His parents have not cast him off, alone and unprovided-for. They have given him the means he needs to remain linked to them, and those means are the soul – which is feminine – and the spirit – which is masculine. Yes, but the soul and spirit are living entities. They are not inert objects like a link of rope or metal, and in order to remain in touch with the heavenly Father and the divine Mother, a human being has to work with wisdom, the masculine principle, and love, the feminine principle, the two attributes of God from which flow all others. And as attraction exists only between opposite poles, the soul must attach itself to the heavenly Father by working with wisdom, and the spirit must attach itself to the divine Mother by working with love.

Our spirit must keep in touch with its Mother through love, and our soul must keep in touch with its Father through wisdom. It is this contact that

enables them to communicate their light to our minds and our hearts. Without this light our minds and hearts would repeat the fault of Adam and Eve. Just as Eve listened to the false promises of the serpent – a terrestrial animal – and convinced her weaker partner, Adam, to follow her example, so a heart that is seduced by promises of material gratification can lead the weaker intellect astray. The human heart is always stronger than the mind.

Adam and Eve can work effectively and well within us only if they are faithful to their Father and Mother, wisdom and love. What is the result if they are unfaithful? Cabbalistic tradition tells us that the serpent in the Garden of Eden was a demon called *Samaël*. When Eve listened to the serpent and chose to abandon her Father, wisdom, and follow Samaël, Adam imitated her and, abandoning his Mother, love, followed the female demon, *Lilith*. Of course, this story, too, is an allegory. It means that when the heart and mind no longer receive true wisdom and love through the soul and spirit, they fall into the clutches of the powers of darkness.

The lesson to be drawn from this allegory is this: we must not abandon our inner heaven, the home of our divine parents. We must remain faithful to our heavenly Father and Mother and not descend to earth, that is, not allow ourselves to be buried in the limitations, cold, and darkness that engulf everything. Heaven symbolizes all that never ceases to germinate, blossom, and ripen. When human beings abandon their heavenly Father and Mother in the hope of finding happiness elsewhere, the fountain runs dry and their betrayal pitches them into a land of aridity, disharmony, and contention. They abandon their divine Father and Mother – wisdom and pure love – and in their stead they espouse something completely prosaic – material temptations, pleasure, social ambition – and, for the sake of comfort, are ready to accept every kind of compromise.

Time and again, in our own lives, we reproduce the sin of Adam and Eve. Human beings constantly allow themselves to be led into disastrous situations, because instead of following the inspiration of the soul and spirit, their hearts and minds egg each other on to enterprises that are inspired neither by wisdom nor by love. How often one sees people who are lost and

confused! Many people are like small children crying for help because they have lost their father and mother in a crowd.

This, then, is the story of Adam and Eve. Adam is not a man and Eve is not a woman, and you must no longer identify all men with Adam or all women with Eve. The story of Adam and Eve is a description of a psychic process that takes place within each human being, whether man or woman. When our mind and heart are no longer linked to our soul and spirit – which are reflections of the cosmic spirit and the universal soul – we are inevitably drawn down into the lower regions. This is the 'Fall'. It is up to us, therefore, to make the effort not to abandon heaven, the Garden of Eden. If we are not very firmly attached to the higher world, the lower world will engulf us.

Perhaps some of you will think that all this is very complicated. On the contrary, it is all very simple, very clear. If it seems complicated to you, it is because you are not accustomed to thinking and reasoning in the light of the great universal symbols. Of course, if you prefer to take this story of a man and woman in a garden with a serpent and an apple at face value, if you think that it is clearer and more helpful to your evolution, I have no objection. You are free to do so.

III
The Mental and Astral Planes

You now understand that the masculine principle always comes before the feminine principle. This is why, in the human body, the region of the mind, the mental plane – which is masculine – is above the region of the heart, the astral plane – which is feminine. In order for the vital currents that nourish the universe to flow harmoniously within us, therefore, the mental plane, our

mind, must be turned toward the divine world, and the astral plane, the heart, must be turned toward the mental plane. When the mental faculties turn away from the divine world and become attached to the manifestations of the astral plane, they are no longer in harmony with the universal order and the currents of life cannot circulate as they should.

In every circumstance, intelligence – that is, the powers of thought – must be given priority over feelings and sentiments. Let me show you one more example of how this rule applies. Why do so many people suffer from a lack of psychic equilibrium? It is because they are too impressionable. They are open to every influence, both good and bad, and in the long run they become totally confused. They need to reflect, to study the disparate influences that solicit them and to analyse the effect these have on their inner life, so as to open themselves only to those that are beneficial and to reject all others. This is just one case in which the masculine principle must come first, and those who are eager to develop mediumistic faculties should be very clear about this, for mediumship is a typically feminine activity, in that it requires receptivity.[4] The crystal ball used by mediums as the physical support for their psychic insight is the equivalent of the feminine principle in nature, water. To be a medium implies that one is receptive to the spirits and currents of the invisible world. But these spirits and currents are not all luminous, pure, and benign, and those who have not studied and prepared themselves to perceive their true nature, who have not developed the will-power needed to repulse the darker entities, will fall a victim to their wiles.

One must be extremely prudent in one's approach to invisible realities – not only prudent, but also mentally and psychologically robust.[5] Nowadays, with the growing popularity of the occult sciences, more and more people hear talk of black magic, and because it is so much talked about, they begin to see signs of it everywhere. As soon as something difficult or painful happens, they attribute it to black magic – they say that somebody has put a spell on them. But what do they take themselves for? Do they think they are such important, powerful figures that the whole world has to band together to get rid of them? No, their problem is simply that they are

ignorant and vulnerable. They have developed the receptive side of their nature to such a degree, and are so accustomed to dabbling in the sensations and emotions of the astral plane, that they accuse others of being responsible for their problems instead of realizing that they have brought them on themselves. On the other hand, there are those who never think about black magic and who laugh off any mention of it because they do not really believe that it exists. Well, they are mistaken in thinking that it does not exist, but at least, instead of trembling with fear when they are faced with a difficulty, they react energetically.

Unfortunately, it is true: black magic does exist. But you must not allow the fear of it to influence you unduly, for that will only weaken and paralyse you. If you dwell on the idea that people could be working black magic on you, you will attract negative vibrations. Yes, for weakness attracts bad vibrations and all the dark, negative influences floating in the atmosphere. It is like what happens in an epidemic: if you are vulnerable and receptive, you will catch the infection from others, but if you are strong, healthy, and emissive, you will come through it unharmed.

So instead of worrying your heads about black magic, concentrate on becoming stronger. Think of light, work with light, and the light within you will repulse negative influences. A rapidly spinning wheel throws off mud, but if it begins to turn more slowly, mud sticks to it. If a spring produces a vigorous stream of water, it will wash away all the leaves and twigs that threaten to block the flow. You must become like a spring. Do not let yourselves be psychically lazy. Why do so many human beings take refuge in weakness and sentimentality? Instead of reacting by thinking things out, reasoning, and looking for solutions, they become completely passive. They mope and moan in the hope that others will pity them, and when somebody says, 'Oh, you poor thing, I do sympathize,' their tears flow even faster. They are like children. When a child falls it begins to cry, and if you say, 'Poor little one, what a big bump! It hurts so much,' it will cry all the more bitterly. But if you say, 'Look, it's not much, just a tiny bump. Go back to your game,' the tears will stop and the mishap will immediately be forgotten.

One has to use one's intelligence when trying to help human beings, otherwise one simply drives them deeper into their weaknesses. Too many adults are like children, forever weeping over their misfortunes. And too many of their ignorant friends, in the belief that they are being helpful, are forever trying to console them. Henceforth, you must react differently by calling on the masculine principle, the faculties of thought, the mental plane.

My advice to you all is not to worry about black magic. Above all, do not believe that you can so easily be attacked by it. If you work mentally to link yourselves to celestial entities, to light, you will be quite safe. In fact, if somebody tried to injure you with magic, they would injure only themselves, for they would receive the backlash.[6] Evil cannot penetrate a being who is occupied by angels. It is repelled and falls back on the one who sent it. Hold on to this thought, for it will protect you. But if you allow yourselves always to feel weak, vulnerable, and unprotected, you will, indeed, be in danger.

There, this is one of the practical applications of the law of the two principles: why and when you should be receptive, why and when you should be emissive.

IV
Man and Woman

When one studies the name of God, *Yod Heh Vav Heh*, one sees that the masculine and feminine principles are equally represented. This means that the two principles are equal. The fact that human beings continually distort the divine reality is quite another question. You will perhaps object that the two principles are not equal, since one necessarily

comes before the other. No, what you have to understand is that worth or value is one thing and position another. Position is a notion that belongs to the physical, material plane, while worth is a spiritual notion. On the physical plane, even if people are of equal worth, they cannot all be given first place. There is only one first place.

Let me give you some examples. Suppose several people have to mount a ladder. Each rung of the ladder can hold only one person, so even if they are all of equal importance, they have to go up one after the other. If they begin to quarrel, each one claiming the right to go first, they will all stay below. Or suppose you are writing to a married couple. When you address the envelope, you will have to write the two names one after the other – Mr. and Mrs. X, or Mrs. and Mr. X – and if they quarrel about it, each of them claiming that they should come first, they will never receive their letter.

If men and women are always battling for first place, it is because they put the question backwards. Women complain that men have usurped first place and that this is unfair. This is true, it is unfair, insofar as position is confused with worth. But if the only remedy were for women to do the same and usurp first place for themselves, it would be equally unfair. The question of place or position is secondary; it is worth that has to be considered and respected. Two people or two objects can be equal in worth without occupying the same position. You must accept that other people are placed before or above you, even if their worth is no greater than yours.

If initiates teach that the place of the masculine principle is before that of the feminine principle, it is not because they think that the masculine principle is more important than the feminine principle, but because they bow to cosmic symbolism. Symbolically, the masculine principle represents the spirit and the feminine principle matter. The spirit is subtle and volatile and tends to rise to the higher levels, whereas matter, being heavier, tends to sink to lower levels. But each needs the other: the spirit needs matter in order to incarnate, and matter needs the spirit in order to be animated. Creation is simply the result of the encounter between spirit and matter. It would not be true to say that the role and the responsibility of the father of a

family is more or less valuable than that of the mother. The two are equally valuable, equally important, since both are necessary for the creation of a child.[7] And spiritualists who neglect the material dimension are as seriously handicapped as materialists who ignore the spirit.

The masculine principle is defined as active and the feminine principle as passive, but the role of passivity is just as important as that of activity. The masculine principle provides the content, but the feminine principle provides the container, the form, and the power of attraction of form is very strong. If the feminine principle is said to be passive, it is because this distinguishes it from the active masculine principle. In reality, however, the feminine principle is not inactive; although it appears to be passive, it is extremely effective. Instead of thrusting itself forward in the manner of the masculine principle, the feminine principle draws things to itself. This is its mode of activity, and anything that is incapable of resisting this attraction is absorbed. The masculine mode of activity is more visible but it is not more powerful. To be active is, as it were, to move from the centre towards the periphery; to be passive is to attract the peripheral elements towards the centre. And even if this attraction is not very visible, it is very real and very effective.

What is the rightful place of each element, the masculine and the feminine? One day men and women are going to have to settle this problem, which is a constant source of conflict. For hundreds and thousands of years, the domination of men has laid a burden on women, and now we are beginning to see a reversal of the situation. Women have become bolder: they are no longer willing to be subject to men, but want the same rights as men. They are even ready to take the place of men and assume their role. This is only normal; it is the law of compensation. Men have gone too far. Instead of being models of integrity, kindness, and justice, thereby earning the esteem and admiration of women, they have abused their authority and their greater physical strength. They have taken all rights and privileges for themselves and given women nothing but duties. How could they expect the situation to last for ever?

In point of fact, a woman has a natural need to admire a man, to acknowledge his authority and his strength. But if he is dishonourable, how can she consider him to be superior? For centuries the revolt of women has been going on inwardly, and today conditions are different. Men are weaker and have lost some important strategic positions, and women have armed themselves well and captured these positions. More and more, women are demonstrating that they are highly capable, that they have qualities of determination, intelligence, and courage. Why should they always be second in command? If men are not careful, if they refuse to make an effort and improve their ways, women will give them a thrashing that they will not forget for thousands of years to come.[8]

But if women also go to extremes and make the same kind of mistakes as men, they may begin by gaining some ground for a time – they may impose their opinions, have a say in every decision, and organize things in their own way – but in the end they, too, will lose all their hard-earned advantages. The situation will be reversed once more. In the long run, men will react in their turn and take back the power they have lost. The same palaver will begin all over again... until when? Until both parties acquire wisdom and recognize that they are truly equal; not equal in the same spheres, but equal in the importance of their respective functions.

Women, being closer to matter, are more realistic and practical; they have more common sense. Men are more at home on the level of thought and abstract ideas, and have a tendency to lose themselves in theoretical considerations that often have little to do with the realities of everyday life. They are fond of discoursing, of elaborating plans of action, but their discourses are often empty words, and when put to the test, their plans of action prove ineffectual. This is why, very often, when a woman hears a man holding forth, she will either be bored or will laugh at him.

The attitude and general behaviour of women is in keeping with their role as mothers. Even a woman who has no children manifests maternal qualities such as devotion, compassion, concern for those who are weaker than herself, and for all living creatures. Just think of how long it takes a man to

play his role in the creation of a child. It is done in a few moments, and after that he can forget all about it, forget – or perhaps never know – that he is a father. But a woman cannot do that. How could she forget, or not know, that she is bearing or has borne a child? And when the child is born, how could she fail to care for the fragile little being? In the meantime, the father of her child may be far away. Whether you like it or not, the temperament of men and women and the way they envisage things are influenced by their respective roles in this act that is fundamental to the perpetuation of life.

Neither men nor women should dominate the other. Rather, each sex should make the effort to dominate their own domain. It is normal for women to want to reclaim the freedom and the rights denied to them by men, but they must try to achieve their goal by intensifying their own innate qualities, not by trying to imitate the behaviour or way of life of men. To do this would be to demonstrate a lack of understanding of the eternal truths, and the penalty would be great.

The equilibrium of life is based on polarization, that is, on the existence of two poles between which, because they are different in nature, there can be reciprocity. If the two poles were uniform, there could be no exchange, none of that magnificent mutuality that is the source of so much joy and inspiration. When men and women lose all sense of the life that exists in this reciprocity between the two poles, they turn to a pharmacist or a psychiatrist for a remedy, but there is no remedy for those who do not understand. The only remedy lies in understanding. When polarity disappears, it is the death of a generation. There can be no spark, no life, if the two poles, the two electrodes, are not clearly distinct.

In every area of creation equilibrium exists because the two complementary forces exist. The solution does not consist in levelling out the differences between men and women – for women to go to war and men to rock the cradle. It is absolutely normal for women to want to enjoy the same freedoms as men, it is normal that they should want to show their capacity for initiative, but they can do so without imitating men, taking their place, or trying to do without them. Freedom, audacity, and a spirit of

initiative are qualities that women need to cultivate. True, but at the same time they must deepen and strengthen the quintessential qualities of the feminine principle.

---

1 See *A New Dawn – Society and Politics in the Light of Initiatic Science,* Complete Works, vol. 26, chap. 2: 'The religion of Christ', Part V, 1 and 2.

2 See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature,* Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 9: 'Pourquoi l'homme a entraîné les animaux dans la chute'.

3 See *Les deux arbres du Paradis,* Complete Works, vol. 3, chap. 9: 'Les deux arbres du Paradis: 2. Le serpent de la Genèse – 3. Le retour de l'enfant prodigue'.

4 See *Looking into the Invisible – Intuition, Clairvoyance, Dreams,* Izvor Coll. n° 228, chap. 4: 'Clairvoyance: Activity and Receptivity'.

5 See *The Book of Divine Magic,* Izvor Coll. n° 226, chap. 1: 'The Danger of the Current Revival of Magic'.

6 Op. cit., chap. 11: 'The Three Great Laws of Magic: 3. The Law of the Backlash.

7 See *Hope for the World: Spiritual Galvanoplasty,* Izvor Coll. n° 214, chap. 2: 'Reflections of the Two Principles'.

8 Op. cit., chap. 12: 'Woman's place'.

Chapter V: God Transcends Good and Evil

From the point of view of initiatic science, the number Two is the result of the polarization of the One, and this means that the two poles, which are so often considered to be antagonists, are, in fact, contained in the One. We call them masculine and feminine or positive and negative, but we can also call them good and evil, as long as we bear in mind that they are expressions of the One, of God, for they both come from God.

A traditional account of the Fall speaks of Lucifer, the archangel that rebelled against God, as Christ's brother, and says that when he was cast down from heaven a great emerald from his diadem fell to earth. The tradition goes on to say that the cup in which Joseph of Arimathea received the blood of the crucified Jesus was carved from this emerald. It is this cup that has become known as the Holy Grail, a symbol that has played a very important role in the history of Christianity. In establishing this link between Christ and Lucifer, the intention of the initiates was to teach us that good and evil are the two poles of one and the same reality.

Every aspect of our life on earth is conditioned by the alternation of day and night. You will say that this alternation is simply the result of the earth's rotation on its own axis. True, but whatever the reason, the fact is that this alternation of day and night, which regulates the whole of nature, also regulates both our physical and our psychic life. We could not know what light is if darkness did not exist. Neither could we know what wisdom, justice, beauty, and joy are if we were not constantly obliged to contend with foolishness, injustice, ugliness, and sorrow. It is by setting things against each other and comparing them that we reach understanding. If opposites did not exist we would live in a state of non-differentiation.

Beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice, weakness and strength exist, but it

is not the fact that they exist that should concern us. Our concern should be to learn the proper attitude to the two poles. Instead of this, human beings spend their time wondering why God allows evil to exist. Stop asking such questions. Good and evil are intimately bound to each other; as the two complementary poles of a single entity they have things to do together, and you would be well advised not to get between them and try to separate them. To do so would be like interfering in the intimacy of a married couple. Even if you do not approve of their relationship, you must never try to separate a man and woman who are attached to each other – neither, indeed, must you interfere in a quarrel between them. Keep your distance!

The cars on a highway drive in opposite directions: some one way and some the other. This causes no problem if the road is wide enough and the cars keep to their side. Should we say that the cars going one way represent evil and those travelling in the opposite direction represent good? No, evil arises only if the road is too narrow and there is a collision.

In an absolute sense things are not intrinsically either good or bad; it all depends on the way you look at them. Take the example of fire and water: if you do not know how to deal with them, you can cause a flood or burn your house down, but if you know how to handle them, what a blessing they can be! What is bad is the ignorance that prevents us from putting each one to good use in its own way or from using both together – and in the case of fire and water, you also have to be able to keep the correct distance between the two, otherwise the fire will be extinguished and the water will evaporate. Sometimes this 'distance' takes the form of a kettle which enables you to boil water and make a cup of coffee.

Let us take another example. The fact that our body produces wastes can be seen as a manifestation of evil, but since the body has this ability to eliminate its wastes, are they really an evil? There would be evil only if the excretory system failed to function. To be in good health does not mean that the body produces no wastes but that it has the means of getting rid of those wastes. Good, true good, is the harmonious coexistence of two opposite processes. True good is this higher intelligence which conceived the

way in which the two processes participate in the conservation of life. As you see, the answers to all the most difficult questions are to be found in the book of nature.

Good is sustained by evil, and without realizing it, good, in turn, often sustains evil. Good and evil are both yoked to the wheel of life, and both help to keep it turning. Evil does not exist in itself. Evil is a good that is not understood. Even the best of things become bad if they are misunderstood. On the other hand, those who understand hell and the devil can make them serve the purposes of good. It is important to learn to use the wicked, for they are hardy and tireless. Nothing would work well on earth if only good people existed. Everything can be useful, therefore, but one has to know how to combine things correctly. Those who fail to understand this spend their time struggling against what they call evil. They do not realize that for every manifestation of evil there is a corresponding reinforcement of good, and that if they succeeded in eliminating evil, they would, at the same time, eliminate the good.

Evil lies only in the lack of light, intelligence, and strength which causes us to become its prey. Evil is a servant of God. It has its role to play in this world, and it is important that we understand it. Have you never read the *Book of Job?* It says that, one day, the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan was among them. Consider: Satan was among them! He could have been behind or beside them; but no, he was in their midst, as though he had the same standing as the spirits of light. He is present, therefore, as a son of God, and, in fact, God speaks to him alone – and what a conversation it is!

> *The Lord said to Satan, 'Where have you come from?' Satan answered the Lord, 'From going to and fro on the earth, and from walking up and down on it.' The Lord said to Satan, 'Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil.' Then Satan answered the Lord, 'Does Job fear God for nothing? Have you not put a fence around him and his house and all that he has, on every side? You have blessed*

the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But stretch out your hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse you to your face.' The Lord said to Satan, 'Very well, all that he has is in your power; only do not stretch out your hand against him!' So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

The rest of the story shows how God uses Satan to further the evolution and elevation of Job. Satan obeys God, for he does only what God allows him to do. The author of this text understood that good and evil are subject to the same higher authority, that they are two currents attached to the throne of God.

In the Sephirotic Tree the throne of God is symbolized by the sephirah *Kether*. The power that reigns in *Kether* rules the universe with the help of the two opposing currents that we call good and evil. Thus good and evil are like the two hands of this sephirah – and sometimes one hand slaps the other. It is impossible to resolve the problem of good and evil on the physical plane, for that which unites these two contradictory forces belongs to a higher plane. We shall never be able to understand them if we look at them from our own level: all we can see from below is that they oppose each other. Our task is to raise ourselves to the level of this higher authority, which is capable of using both in pursuit of a purpose that neither one knows or understands. Good does not know everything. Neither, of course, does evil. The one who knows everything is above both good and evil: the Lord. If you want to understand, you must ask the Lord: 'Lord God, you have created so many great and profound things that I am lost in their midst. My intelligence is so limited that I cannot understand. Please send angels to explain things to me and show me how to behave.'

By having recourse to the Lord you are linking yourself to this higher authority. Why does religion never talk about this third authority? It always talks about good as though it were one and the same as God. No, both good and evil are no more than servants of God. The fact that we have some slight knowledge of good leads us to think that we know God, but God is more than good. I repeat, God is far above both good and evil. Just as

mental energy and sexual energy are the polarization of the same energy, so good and evil are the polarization of one force. You will perhaps be taken aback by this idea. Is it really possible that mental and sexual energy are two facets of the same energy? Is it possible that the force that causes a brute to attack and rape a woman is identical to that which inspires the most sublime creations of the mind?[1] Yes, this is so. And if you tell me that this idea bothers you, I can only reply that God did not arrange matters in this way for our convenience. He did so in order to incite us to work.

I sense that it is extremely difficult to make myself understood when I explain these things, for my explanations turn the generally accepted notions of good and evil upside down. It is as though these old notions were built into the human body. It is impossible to uproot them. But as long as people do not change their point of view they will never be able to enter the temple of the Lord. And how do we usually picture the front of a temple? As two columns surmounted by a pediment which is the link between the column on the right and that on the left. Symbolically, the pediment is the third force that works with the other two forces. In the same way, our existence is placed between two pillars, and although each exists in its own right, these two pillars must not be separated; they must be ruled by a third principle which is their common link. The pediment of the temple is, as it were, the equivalent of *Kether* and the central pillar of the Sephirotic Tree. And we find the same symbolism in the wand of the Caduceus of Hermes. The appearance is different, but the central wand plays the same role.

Evil consists in attempting to separate the two poles. But one can equally say that it consists in trying to join them. It is just as bad to bring them too close together as it is to try and separate them. There must always be a certain distance between them. The temple would collapse if the two pillars were joined and welded into one. And it would collapse just as certainly if they were placed too far apart, or if only one were allowed to remain standing. When spiritualists, in a desire to be absolutely pure in order to approach God, try to expunge everything of a lower order from their lives, they bring down upon themselves every kind of inner and outer catastrophe.

The greatest tragedies of mankind are not caused by something intrinsically evil that appears out of nowhere, but by the misconceptions of human beings who have decided to label certain things 'good', because they please them, and other things 'evil', because they displease them. And because the things that please some people often displease others – and vice versa – the problem is never solved. You will never get everybody to agree about what good and evil really are.

Just as good is not identical with God, so, too, qualities and virtues do not have a value that is absolute. It is true that many people possess great virtues, but what do they do with them? Nothing! And then there are others who have all kinds of faults but who are determined to improve, and because they work day after day to perfect themselves, they become capable of great achievements. Perhaps if they did not have so many faults they would never do anything. Yes, it is true. Many people have accomplished great deeds by working to overcome their defects, while those with great gifts are often so self-satisfied that they accomplish nothing. Well, there is one thing that you must understand, and that is that heaven cares not one jot for what you are; it is only interested in what you do with what you are. And this means that this third authority that knows how to use both our strengths and our weaknesses must be present within each one of us. This third authority is our higher self.

The only thing that is really important is the work we do on ourselves so that our weaknesses as well as our strengths may be at the service of a high ideal. A great many people lament the baseness of human nature which bears within itself the seeds of evil. But it is no good lamenting; the important thing is to work. All your faults – vanity, pride, anger, jealousy, sensuality – must be put to work. This is the only way to look at it, the only solution.[2]

So it is the work that counts. You must not worry about anything else; your qualities, like your defects, are secondary. Once you know what the ideal work is and make up your mind to devote yourself to it whole-heartedly, both your defects and your qualities will become excellent servants. Take

one very simple example. If you want to lift something heavy, all the potential energy in your body is mobilized, and muscles, heart, lungs, and brain will all contribute to the act. But if you have no wish to make the effort, all your organs will be demobilized. It is through work that our potential is mobilized. A criminal who works well can become more generous, patient, and kind than the most virtuous of men, while those who are the most highly thought of may end by being defeated because they forget to work.

In conclusion, let me urge you to stop asking why heaven allows evil to exist. Heaven allows everything to exist because it uses everything. And you, too, must learn how to use these two aspects, good and evil, in your work. You must be like chemists, who discard nothing but have learned to use all the substances in their laboratories, even poisons. A laboratory must contain a little of everything. A chemist can be a model for you. Your inner laboratory contains purity and impurity, light and darkness, elements that drag you down and others that raise you up, and you have to learn to use all this to realize God's plans. So never try to destroy what is in you; be grateful to God for having created you just as you are, and set to work.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Satan in the assembly of the sons of God – *Job 1: 6-12*

---

[1] See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life,* Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 17: 'Yesod, Tiphareth, Kether, the Sublimation of Sexual Energy'.

[2] See *True Alchemy or the Quest for Perfection,* Izvor Coll. n° 221.

Chapter VI: The White Head and the Black Head

I

A passage in the *Zohar* describes God as a very beautiful, very noble head with long white hair and beard. Below this image, like a reflection in a pool

Figure 4
(From Eliphas Levi, *Dogme et Rituel de Haute Magie)*

of water, is a dark head wearing an ugly scowl (Figure 4). What can we learn from this image? That what we call evil, the devil, is simply the reflection, the shadow of God on the material plane. This means that when certain religions teach that the devil is God's adversary, an adversary that God is constantly obliged to combat, they are teaching an error. God does not combat the devil. To say that he does would be to say that he combats

himself.

How is it that many of the theories and practices of religions that claim to be monotheistic contradict their most basic tenets? They teach that God has an enemy, the devil, who is as powerful as he, as though God were not the only Lord. What can one say of religions whose God has an enemy that he is powerless to defeat? Not only that, but they also say that human beings, weak and wretched though they be, have a duty to help God in his struggle. Is this how they understand the magnificence and omnipotence of God? These religions debase God by portraying him as incapable of defeating his enemy. Have you ever thought about this?

Unfortunately, this is not their only mistaken notion. They also say that God's adversary assumes every imaginable form in order to infiltrate human beings. And what does this theory lead to? It leads to the notion that human beings are the henchmen of Satan and that in fighting them one is fighting him; that it is quite legitimate to massacre human beings and say that they are damned for all eternity, for they are children of the devil. No, it is time such ignorant people learned that there is no such thing as eternal damnation – at least not as they imagine it.

When human beings take pleasure in evil and work consistently and deliberately against the designs of God, against light, they assume such a burden and sink into such darkness that, in the long run, a great rift develops between their human and their divine souls. Their divine soul, in the form of a spark, leaves them and reintegrates with the primal ocean of light. Once deprived of this spark, the human soul disintegrates and disappears. In every other case, whatever the sins and transgressions a person commits, it is always possible for the human soul to be purified, thanks to the divine soul to which it is linked and which is continually working to lead it to the light (what we usually refer to as the soul consists, in fact, of several souls).[1]

As for those who persecute others in the belief that in doing so they are working for the Lord, it is they who are, in fact, servants of the devil, and by their actions they are reinforcing his power. Why wage war against the devil?

As I have already said, the devil is a servant of God; he has a role to play. God uses him to spur human beings on to greater progress. God does not need human beings to help him combat the devil. He is perfectly capable of handling the situation, and he does so by using the devil. Just as the cowherd's dog drives straying cows back into their meadow, so the devil's role is to drive us back into the Lord's pastures. It is important to understand this and, even, when the occasion arises, to thank him for what he does. It is high time that all those 'soldiers of God' understood things differently.

The first truly monotheistic religion was Judaism. Moses set out to fashion a people who would know that there was only one God. Actually, even in certain polytheistic religions, candidates for initiation were taught the existence of a single God. The other gods were portrayed as personifications of the forces of nature. If God were not one there would be no rhyme or reason to anything; everything would simply disintegrate. If it were not for the unicity of God, nothing would make sense.

Perhaps you are wondering whether, in fact, the devil exists. That depends on what you mean by the word. Certainly, the devil does not exist as an individual entity who opposes God as an equal. Those who claim that he has appeared to them are victims of their own vivid imagination. But just as there are spirits of light, so there are spirits of darkness, and the devil represents the collectivity of the spirits of darkness. The White Head of God and its sombre reflection actually symbolize two worlds, both of which are inhabited by many entities. Thus the devil does not exist as an entity separate from and antagonistic to God; he is, rather, a collective force that is nourished and reinforced by the negative thoughts, feelings, and actions of human beings. He is the invention of human beings who do not understand the question of good and evil.

It would be true, also, to say that the devil is part of every human being, that he is our lower self.[2] How did this come about? It is human beings themselves who, in the course of their many reincarnations, have constantly nurtured him and built him up with their weaknesses and vices, thus creating barriers on the path to heaven. But within each human being there is also

another entity, a luminous, higher self formed by all the thoughts, feelings, and actions that have been inspired by kindness, love, and self-sacrifice. If human beings would only make the effort to bring order into their inner life, the devil would disappear, and the only remaining antagonism would be that of the two forces, positive and negative, masculine and feminine, the two sides of the cosmic scales with which every human being must learn to work.

Evil – the only thing that is truly evil – is the ignorance of human beings, their lack of love and kindness, and the fact that they refuse to see that every force at work in the universe is useful. The devil was created by ignorant human beings, and the greater their ignorance the more terrifying their creation becomes. But good and evil are forces created by God, and if, to the minds of some, evil represents the devil, it is because they have not learned to work with it.

You will say: 'Give us at least one method that will enable us to work with evil.' Very well, I will tell you a story. One day a sage was in his garden picking cherries. (Is there any reason why a sage should not pick cherries? The Master Peter Deunov once said that a cherry tree was the only tree in the Garden of Eden.) Suddenly this sage heard a noise and saw a man running towards him. 'Where are you running to in such a hurry?' he asked. 'My neighbour is after me with a gun. He thinks I set fire to his barn,' replied the man. 'Well, disappear as fast as you can,' said the sage, 'I'll take care of him.' A few moments later the neighbour arrived, and the sage stopped him, saying, 'Why are you in such a hurry? You're all out of breath. Come and sit down for a minute. Look at these cherries. Here, have some, they are delicious.' So the man sat down and started to enjoy the cherries, while the sage encouraged him to admire the beautiful flowers, the blue sky, and so on. And those few minutes in the garden changed his mood completely. He gave up the idea of chasing his neighbour and even offered to help the sage pick cherries.

Now, of course, you will say that this is a very unlikely story. Perhaps, but take it seriously and think about it, all the same. The sage knew that if

he tried to stop such an angry man by stepping in front of him, the other would simply push him out of the way without listening, and then the sage would have been obliged to use force. And that would have been evil. So what did he do? He distracted him by offering him some cherries. And this was good. The cherries, of course, are symbolic; they could just as well have been nuts, or a good bottle of wine, or anything else you can think of. This story simply means that if you want to prevent human beings from doing evil, it is better to turn their attention and their energy towards something else, rather than trying to oppose them head-on. This is a method that every good educator knows how to use with children. It is also a method that you must learn to use with yourself: when you sense that you are going in the direction of danger, try to turn your attention and your energies towards something better. As long as you live you will be subject to the visit of undesirable impulses, but you can learn how to steer them in a different direction.

Believe me, it is perfectly possible to make the devil disappear if you understand things correctly and if you live according to that understanding. And once the devil has disappeared what will become of good and evil? They will continue to exist, both inside and outside human beings, as two complementary forces that work together, because they are the polarization of God.

Keep in your mind's eye the image of the White Head – the Cabbalah says that each hair of this head and of the beard represents a virtue – and its dark reflection, and remember that this reflection cannot really be considered an enemy, for it is not a reality, only an illusion. It is a shadow which exists only because light exists; it proves the existence of light. But how can we escape from the realm of reflections and illusions? By lifting our minds to the White Head of God. As soon as one leaves this White Head and descends to the level of its shadowy reflection, one's state of consciousness changes, and one is obliged to experience evil and suffering – and the devil.

It was because Jesus understood this that he could say: *'Blessed are*

those who mourn, for they will be comforted.' He also said: *'If anybody strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also;*[3] *and from anybody who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt.'* Many people find such advice absurd. Indeed, to those who are deprived of the light of initiation, even the most sublime words seem ridiculous. But if Jesus uttered these words, it was because his teaching was based on unity, on the White Head of the Cabbalah, the Head of God. Once one understands this unique principle, there are no more contradictions, and I, too, am leading you toward this unity.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'Blessed are those who mourn' – *Matt. 5: 4*

'If anybody strikes you on the cheek' – *Matt. 5: 39*

'From anybody who takes away your coat' - *Matt. 5: 40*

II

Those who understand how important it is to make unity their ideal in life sense that they begin to be visited by luminous friends from the invisible world, who whisper: 'You are doing well, continue, we will help you.' This does not mean that entities of darkness will not also try to approach them in order to tempt them, but they will learn how to respond to the tempters.

Remember in what terms Jesus responded to the devil.

The tempter came and said to him, 'If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread.' But he answered, 'It is written, One does not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.'

Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, saying to him, 'If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will command his angels concerning you, and, On their hands they will bear you up, so that you will not dash your foot against a stone.' Jesus said to him, 'Again it is written, Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'

Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendour; and he said to him, 'All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me.' Jesus said to him, 'Away with you, Satan! For it is written, Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him.'

Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

A great deal could be said about this passage.[4] Why, for instance, did Jesus not abuse the devil as he sent him away? Because he knew the law. He knew that to respond to evil with violence only reinforces it. Even evil spirits are careful and polite when they meet each other, and how much more so is a spirit of light when it meets a spirit of darkness.

There is a story about how some of St Anthony's followers passed a very powerful black magician in the street, and not only did they refuse to greet him, but they shouted insults at him. The furious magician responded in his own way and, of course, some damage was done. What do you think St Anthony did when he heard about it? He rebuked his disciples. And when the magician came to complain about their insulting behaviour, he commended him, saying: 'You did the right thing. They needed to be taught a lesson.'

But to go back to Jesus: what did he do? To each suggestion put forward

by the tempter he answered in detail, and his words caused the devil to withdraw. Faced with Jesus' response he could not insist. The Gospel says, *'Then the devil left him.'* You are probably thinking that the problems you encounter in everyday life are not so easily resolved. A brief conversation with the devil is not enough to get rid of a temptation. Of course, we have to see the conversation between Jesus and the devil as an allegory. It is as though the devil put certain benefits on one side of the scales and, in response, Jesus put others on the other side. On the cosmic scales of light and darkness the devil put material benefits, and Jesus countered these with spiritual benefits, which answered exactly the arguments put forward by the devil. It was because Jesus tipped the scales to the side of the spirit that angels came to serve him.

You, too, must learn how to answer the spirits that attempt to turn you from the truth. Tell them that you are delighted with their visit, but when you talk to them be sure to arm yourself with plenty of light. If you switch on all your inner lights, your visitors will flee, because they are ugly and badly dressed and they do not want to be seen. Then, like Jesus, you will remain in the company of angels who will continue to teach you the philosophy of unity.[5] Angels are present every time a human being is inwardly victorious. Every time you defeat a temptation, you receive an increase of strength and light. If, today, you overcome a temptation inspired by your lower nature, you will be given new strength in the days to come.

The difficulty, of course, is to remain in this state of grace. We are sometimes able to scale the highest peaks, but as long as we are on this earth we cannot live there permanently. We have to struggle every day to conquer them anew. Once we have left the physical world and dwell in the spiritual world we shall not need to struggle, because we shall no longer be subject to temptation, but while we are still on earth the combat will continue until the very last minute. The pattern is the same as for eating and breathing. We have eaten today, but we are still going to have to eat tomorrow. We took a breath a few moments ago, but we are going to have to breathe again. One experience helps us to understand the meaning of life, but in order to retain that understanding, we must go through other and yet

other experiences. We may have overcome one temptation, but we are going to be tempted again, and again we are going to have to struggle to achieve victory. In the world of polarization nothing is ever final.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Jesus tempted by the devil – *Matt. 4: 1-11*

---

[1] See *Man's Psychic Life: Elements and Structures,* Izvor Coll. n° 222, chap. 3: 'Several Souls and Several Bodies'.

[2] See *Man's Two Natures, Human and Divine,* Izvor Coll. n° 213, chap. 2: 'The Lower Self is a Reflection'.

[3] See *The True Meaning of Christ's Teaching,* Izvor Coll. n° 215, chap. 8: 'Unto Him that Smiteth Thee on the One Cheek…'.

[4] See *The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil,* Izvor Coll. n° 210, chap. 6: 'Into the Wilderness to Be Tempted'.

[5] Op. cit., chap. 5: 'The Philosophy of Unity'.

Chapter VII: Alternation and Antagonism
The Law of Opposites

The masculine attracts the feminine and the feminine attracts the masculine. The positive attracts the negative and the negative attracts the positive. It is for this reason that the whole of life is subject to the law of alternation, the law of opposites. In the morning, light dispels the darkness of night, and in the evening, shadows gather and darkness gains ground again. Does this mean that night is opposed to day, and day to night? Yes and no. Yes, because light is the opposite of darkness; no, because day and night work together to create and sustain life.[1] Think about these facts: before seeing the light of day a child spends nine months hidden in its mother's womb; before they can germinate, seeds have to spend some time in the ground; bees line their hives with wax because they need darkness in which to make honey. A great many things have to begin in darkness before they can come out into the light. Light and darkness represent entities, currents, and energies that nature uses in her work.

Opposite poles attract each other. This is why there is a mutual attraction between vices and virtues. You must not be scandalized by this. Why do you suppose angels come down to earth? Because human beings are so wretched and so much in need of their help. The saints are not known to be overfond of each other, but they get on very well with sinners. Neither are scientists particularly fond of their fellow-scientists; they prefer ignorant laymen who are lost in admiration for their knowledge. This is just the way things are, and there is no need to rack your brains to find the reason. The important thing is to learn how to react in the different circumstances of life.

In every area and on every level of existence there is a constant alternation between opposites. Even within ourselves there is a constant

succession of opposites: waking and sleep, work and rest, health and sickness, weakness and strength, joy and sorrow – all these different states and conflicting energies are necessary. We call some of them 'good' and others 'evil', but the good and evil are friends. We must simply be watchful and aware of what is going on within us, knowing that after joy comes sorrow, after hope comes discouragement, and vice versa.

Have you experienced a moment of great joy? Then you must expect to be faced with something unpleasant, caused either by an external event, by those you associate with, or even – if you do not know how to sustain that state of joy – by yourself. Yes, you must be prepared for this, for if you are inattentive, you will be caught off your guard. You must not be lulled into inattention by your moments of great happiness. You must be on your guard, for the other side is always there, waiting to reveal itself, and if you are taken by surprise, you could lose all the benefit you have already gained. This is a law: everything is linked, and a movement in one region triggers a reaction in the opposite region.

One excellent aspect of this law is that when you are unhappy and discouraged you can be sure that something good is already on its way. You will say: 'Well, that's all right then. We only have to wait.' Yes, but there several different ways of waiting. You can wait passively or you can wait actively, for it is possible to use those negative states as a source of energy. Why not do as I do? Oh yes, you are perhaps astonished to know that I, too, can feel dejected and discouraged. What do you expect? I am sometimes tired, sad, and disappointed just like everybody else. The great difference is that I know how to use my fatigue or dejection. Just by way of an example: the last few days of a waning moon are often a difficult period for me. Both psychically and physically I feel less well, but because I know this, I am not caught unawares. In fact, when I begin to feel that way, instead of trying to shrug it off immediately, I pander to it a little and greet it like an old friend. In this way I am able to use it, for this state is like the potting soil or manure that one digs in among the roots of flowers or bushes to make them hardier and more beautiful.

Tell yourselves that disappointment and distress can serve as a rich potting soil that will enhance the colour and scent of your inner flowers. Yes, as you see, in this, too, there is an analogy with the physical plane. I can tell you this because I have experienced it for myself. All my life I have experimented in this way, because I realized how important it was to know how to respond on the psychic level to the different things that solicit us. Only if we understand this can we find the methods that will best help us to progress. So this is something that I have known for a long time: it is possible to draw energy from all one's inner states, even the most negative.

However, you must not misunderstand what I am saying. To make use of a negative state does not mean to sink yourself in it deliberately or take pleasure in it. I talked about this question at the Bonfin one summer, and a few days after that talk I noticed a young man who was going about with a long, mournful face. As he was someone who usually looked very cheerful and open, I spoke to him and asked him what the matter was.
'I'm so disappointed,' he replied. 'My fiancée was supposed to arrive this week, but she telephoned to say that her work was holding her up.'
'And when will she be here?' I asked.
'In three weeks.'
'Do you mean to say that that is why you have been going about with such a long face for the last few days?'
'But, Master,' he replied, 'The other day, you said that when we feel sad we should not try to get rid of the sadness at once.'

Dear Lord, look at how people understand what I say! Really, there are moments when I am at a loss… But the brother was young, so I explained it to him again:
'I did not say that when you were unhappy you should wallow in your unhappiness or try to prolong it, but that you should use it to do some spiritual work. In your case, you are disappointed because your fiancée cannot join you here as soon as you had hoped. Now, you can overcome your disappointment in various ways. For instance, you could try telling yourself that it does not matter, that it is all the same to you, and then look for some way of amusing yourself so as to forget about it. But that is not

the best way. You could also use your disappointment by telling yourself: 'Well, circumstances are delaying her, but if I think of her and send her even more light and love than usual, then I shall not miss her so much. In the mornings, I can imagine that she is sitting beside me and that we are being drawn up to the sun together.' You see, it is up to you to find images and thoughts that will help you. In this way you will be creating something beautiful and lasting, and when you meet again, both of you will feel that you have never really been apart. But if you cling to this dark, negative mood, you will be hurting yourself, and when your fiancée arrives and sees that sinister expression she will feel like running away again as fast as possible.' After this, of course, that young brother was all smiles again.

The one thing that human beings most need is to understand the subtleties of their inner life. As I have already said, we all have our own inner laboratory and it is up to each one of us to find the elements that will help us to adopt the right attitude. It is impossible to describe all these elements theoretically; we have to identify them for ourselves by reflecting on the events of our everyday lives.

But to revert to the law of opposites: it is a law that applies to both the external and the internal aspects of our lives. If, for instance, you show yourself to be capable, intelligent, and successful, you will be attacked. If you do not want people to criticize or ridicule you, you must be completely insignificant. Do nothing and you will be left in peace. As soon as individuals are seen to have exceptional wealth, beauty, or intelligence, hordes of beings try to attack and plunder them. If your one desire is to work for the triumph of light, you must expect to be attacked by darkness. But the reverse is equally true: a manifestation of the world of darkness provokes the manifestation of light. Think of certain periods of history when the forces of evil ravaged the world and remember how many individuals raised their voices in defence of justice and integrity. If those horrifying events had never occurred, those people would never have had the opportunity to behave in such an exceptional way. The obvious conclusion is that if we have no enemies, we shall never get very far.

It is when we meet opposition that we are obliged to struggle, to exert ourselves and, in so doing, to discover our true worth. You will say that this is difficult. Yes, of course, it is difficult, but it is the only way to resolve our problems. Instead of always complaining and rebelling, therefore, be grateful to the Lord for your difficulties, for it is thanks to them that you will become truly strong. Evil is something which obliges human beings to work. In order to reform, to orientate ourselves, to become inwardly harmonious, we have to combat our enemies.

There are two kinds of combat, however: one in which, after defeating your enemies, you destroy them, the other in which you spare them. If you destroy your adversaries, you will no longer need to struggle – and that will be catastrophic for you, for you will make no more progress. But if you spare them, they will always be there for you to struggle against, and you will become really strong. So many people try to get rid of their enemies, but what is the result when they succeed? They are not happy; they sense that something is missing, for they need to measure themselves against an adversary. So you must not destroy your enemies, you must simply learn how to use them in order to improve and become stronger – and in doing so you will be improving them too. But you will succeed in this only if you stop thinking of them as evil.[2]

In any case, we can never make an absolute judgement about good and evil, for nothing is ever wholly good or wholly evil. There are aspects to even the best things in life that are not entirely good. Take the example of the beginning of spring. In one way it is marvellous, with the increase of light and warmth and the budding of new life in plants, but this new life also stimulates insects, and flies, caterpillars, wasps, aphids, and mosquitoes abound. Even in the best possible conditions, therefore, one should always take certain precautions. The ignorant are defeated whatever the conditions, whereas the wise, who know how to work, make progress even when conditions are at their worst.[3]

Also, you must not forget that good and evil are so intimately bound together that the one often leads to the other. Take the case of technical

progress, for instance: is it a good or an evil? A great many discoveries which began by being good have ended by doing great harm. I need not give you any examples; if you think about it, you will find them for yourselves. Then again, when you make plans to travel, to initiate a new relationship, or to move house, your plans may appear in a very positive light, but in fact there will always be one aspect that you cannot foresee, and that is the final outcome. Or suppose you have tried to injure someone whom you see as a competitor, a rival, or an adversary: you may think that you have successfully eliminated him, but in reality you cannot know whether you have actually harmed him or not. Entities from the invisible world are always on the watch, and they can prevent human beings from carrying out their plans. If you were not prevented from doing what you had in mind, it may well be because they knew that they could deflect your action.

How can we tell whether something is good or evil? We have to wait before making a judgement. Only time will tell. We shall never understand this question unless we study examples in our own lives and in the history of humanity.[4] It is obvious that many of those who have been greatly maligned and attacked have ended, thanks to a chain of circumstances, by finding success and happiness. Take, for example, the Old Testament story of Joseph and his brothers. Joseph's brothers envied him so much that they decided to get rid of him, and one day, as they were guarding their flocks, they sold him to some merchants who were on their way to Egypt. In Egypt, the merchants sold Joseph to one of Pharaoh's officers, Potiphar, who was so impressed by Joseph's abilities that he made him overseer of his household. After a whole series of events, Joseph ended by becoming the minister of Pharaoh himself. This was his position when, years later, his brothers found him again. What a shock it must have been, and what remorse they must have felt when they remembered that they had wanted to kill him. And how did Joseph himself behave? Let us see what the Bible tells us:

> *Then Joseph said, 'I am your brother Joseph whom you sold into Egypt. And now do not be distressed, or angry with yourselves, because you sold me here; for God sent me before you to preserve life. For the*

famine has been in the land these two years; and there are five more years in which there will be neither ploughing nor harvest. God sent me before you to preserve for you a remnant on earth, and to keep alive for you many survivors. So it was not you who sent me here, but God; he has made me a father to Pharaoh, and lord of all his house and ruler over all the land of Egypt.'

Joseph states it quite clearly: it is God who uses the forces of evil to bring about good. For an evil is not Evil itself; and a good is not Good itself.

What about your own experience? Have you never witnessed events which seemed, at first sight, to be catastrophic and which turned out to be beneficial? Or perhaps, sadly, you have seen the reverse: happy events which turned out to be disasters because the people involved were not prepared to handle the situation.

Also, you must not forget that in everything you do there is always one force that drives you on and another that watches and bides its time. When you do something good, it is because you are urged on by the forces of good, but the forces of evil are watching you and waiting for the moment to make themselves felt. Above all, if you exaggerate and do more than is necessary, the forces of evil will devour the surplus – sometimes, in fact, they will devour all the good you have done. This is why one must not overstep the mark even in good, otherwise one inevitably triggers a contrary reaction. Why do people sometimes say that it is better to let well alone? Because when you try to improve on what is already good, you can trigger evil. Ah yes, the equilibrium of the balance!

What is essential is to be wide awake and vigilant. You must not only be aware that there are two forces, but you must also have recourse to a third, higher force. In this way you will be able to deal correctly with both. Once you really grasp this, you will understand the necessity of rising to the higher zone within you, the zone that remains unaffected by changes, and from within this zone you will learn how to work with the two opposing forces.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Joseph: his story – *Gen. 37 and 39-49*

---

[1] See *The Splendour of Tiphareth,* Complete Works, vol. 10, chap. 17: 'Day and Night – Consciousness and the Subconscious'.

[2] See *The Seeds of Happiness,* Izvor Coll. n° 231, chap. 18: 'Our Enemies are Good for Us'.

[3] See *Youth: Creators of the Future,* Izvor Coll. n° 233, chap. 8: 'Learning to Handle Success and Failure'.

[4] See *Le rire du sage,* Izvor Coll. n° 243, chap. 12: 'Remercier, source de lumière et de joie'.

Chapter VIII: 'To Work the Miracles of One Thing'
The Figure of Eight and the Cross

If you want to understand how psychic energies flow and work within human beings, you must begin by seeing how they do so in nature. Take a tree: the higher its trunk and branches, the deeper its roots. We are looking here at a compensatory system which is found on all levels of being, physical, psychic, and spiritual. This means that when human beings strive to attain ever greater heights of consciousness, they also penetrate deeper into their unconscious.[1] Each level of consciousness represents certain currents, forces, and entities, and we must take care to maintain a state of equilibrium between the two worlds.

The great mistake of those who decide to embrace the spiritual life is to ignore the reality of the darker world within them. They imagine that if they desire to work for the light, if they aspire to wisdom, righteousness, and unselfishness, that is enough; their wish will automatically be fulfilled. No, unfortunately, to wish for something is not enough. Indeed, one often sees people who talk about spiritual love and noble, selfless sentiments, while continuing to live a life of sensuality and indulging their unruly passions. They may firmly believe that they have consecrated themselves to an ideal, while, in fact, they are giving free rein to their vanity or their need to dominate others. You will wonder how such a thing can be. Are they simply insincere and hypocritical? No, not necessarily; they may have some genuine spiritual aspirations, but, as I say, it is not enough to aspire to something for it to come about. Those who make no effort to look into themselves in order to understand the structure and mechanisms of the human psyche will be faced with very grave contradictions. Just as in the macrocosm, the universe, the dark head is the White Head reflected in a

pool of water, so in the human microcosm, our lower nature is the reflection of our higher nature. The pool of water is represented in a human being by the diaphragm, the symbolic boundary between our higher and our lower nature. And just as the dark head cannot exist without the White Head, so our higher and lower natures cannot exist without each other.

We exist thanks to this alliance between opposing forces, between the higher and the lower, and if we tried to make do with only one of them we would cease to exist. Our physical body, in which the brain and the intestines coexist, is the best illustration of this. This reality is part of our make-up; wherever we go, it goes with us. Whether we like it or not, we carry with us both light and darkness, the Holy of Holies and the sewer, life and death. One day our spirit will leave our body behind and return to the heavenly regions, but as long as it still dwells in that body, we shall continue to be exposed to every kind of contradiction.

In the Emerald Tablet Hermes Trismegistus says, 'That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below.' Yes, all that exists below is like that which is above, but reversed, as is shown by the figure of the dark head reflecting the image of the White Head of God. And Hermes Trismegistus adds, 'to work the miracles of one thing.' Between the heights and the depths, heaven and hell, our higher and our lower natures, there is a continual flow of energies, a continual give and take, and we have to learn to work with both currents.

Only the philosophy of unity allows us to see things as they really are. In God all is One, and although the number Two also exists, we have to understand it from the viewpoint of the One. The number One is everything and contains everything; it is through the One that the universe exists, and a human being is the representative of the One. There is one creator, one universe; nothing exists that is not included in this unity. And this means that nothing must be rejected – in any case, even if we wanted to, we could not reject part of ourselves. To reject or refuse to acknowledge our own lower nature is an extremely dangerous attitude. The right attitude is to understand how the different elements fit together within that unity.

So meditate on this phrase from the Emerald Tablet: 'That which is below is like that which is above, and that which is above is like that which is below, to work the miracles of one thing.' You have not really thought enough about these significant – extremely significant – words. How is it possible for these two things, the higher and the lower, to produce 'the miracles of one thing'? It is possible because they are united. As long as they are divided they will never produce a miracle. The meaning of life, the whole comprehension of life, is in this bond between the higher and the lower. As long as we have not grasped this union, our understanding is incomplete – indeed, our very existence is mutilated.

The figure 8 gives symbolic expression to this truth. Graphically, an 8 consists of two circles joined at one point on their circumference. Each circle represents a world: the top circle represents the world above, and the lower circle the world below, and the two worlds touch and form a single unity, the figure 8. The figure 8, like the Emerald Tablet, teaches us that the lower world is like the higher, and the higher like the lower. In this figure we find the idea that underlies the words in the Lord's Prayer: *'on earth as it is in heaven'*.[2] Heaven has to descend into us, for we human beings are also 'the earth'. The mission of human beings is to join heaven and earth within themselves, to reflect heaven through their 'earth', through their own physical bodies, and thus to manifest divinely. This is also what is conveyed by that very ancient symbol of the snake with its tail in its mouth.

Here is an exercise you can do. Draw a figure 8, concentrating closely on the line you are drawing. Starting at the top, as your pencil moves down, it follows a curve which crosses an imaginary axis like a central pillar, on each side of which flows a current. As you draw the lower loop, the line passes back to the other side of the axis, moves up until it crosses the down curve, which it meets once again at the starting point. So you start at the top and you end at the top. All that comes from heaven must go back to heaven. Jesus said that he came from the Father and that he was going back to the Father. There is a tradition that after leaving the earth and before going back to heaven he descended into hell. Why? Did he have some sins to atone

for? You were probably taught that he went down into hell to set free some of the souls that were there – what extraordinary explanations the Church gives!

Consider what depths of meaning is contained in the figure 8: the perfect equilibrium between the higher and the lower. Consider also the same figure lying on its side, . In the horizontal position it symbolizes cosmic balance. And if you superimpose a vertical 8 on the horizontal figure, you obtain a cross ( ).

I have often spoken to you about the cross, which is one of the most widely known symbols and also one of the richest in meaning.[3] For Christians, this figure has such strong associations with their religion, particularly with the death of Jesus, that they have forgotten how widespread it is and how universal in meaning. When I was in Quebec, I was told that the symbol of the cross was in common use among the Indians long before the introduction of Christianity. When the missionaries arrived, they refused to accept that people whom they considered to be pagans, even savages, should venerate a cross which, of course, did not mean the same to them as to Christians. They even persecuted those wretched Indians and forced them to give up their cross. How ignorant and narrow-minded!

Graphically, a cross is no more than the intersection of two lines, one horizontal the other vertical, but from this very simple figure can be drawn a great many applications. What interests us particularly at the moment is that when they come together, these two lines – which represent two forces, two opposite directions – produce the union of the two principles – masculine (the vertical line) and feminine (the horizontal line). The cross is one expression of the union of the two principles. To understand the cross is to know how to activate the masculine and feminine, the positive and negative. You will ask: 'How does one activate them? And is it really so important to know how to do so?' Yes, as important as to know how to use fire and water. Imagine your situation if you did not know this. Think of how many possibilities would be

lost to you. Think of all the things one can do when one knows how to use fire and water. It is the union of the two principles that creates motion. What is a wheel? A cross in motion.

Now let us see what a cross represents in space. The combined verticality and horizontality of a cross represent the universe. But these two directions can be subdivided, the vertical being divided into above and below, and the horizontal into right and left, thus giving us the four cardinal points. But the four points of the compass have many more uses than that of finding one's way about the earth. All beings and all created objects can be defined as belonging to one or other of these four currents. The application of this notion to one's inner life is particularly interesting, for it illustrates the relationship that exists between the higher and lower worlds. Let us say that qualities and virtues belong to the higher section of the vertical line and faults and vices to the lower section. Each quality, therefore, is matched by a corresponding defect, and vice versa. This is why, when one sets out to develop a particular virtue, one must be on one's guard to keep the corresponding vice under control.

Now, looking at the horizontal line, we see that, instead of being higher or lower as on the vertical line, every point along its length is on the same level. Thus we can say that each virtue corresponds symmetrically to another virtue, or each vice to another vice. Thus, on the horizontal line a virtue is not balanced by a vice, but by another virtue – and similarly for the vices. In order to develop harmoniously, therefore, it is very important that you learn to work on both planes, the horizontal and the vertical. If you want to cultivate a particular virtue and work exclusively on the vertical plane, you will awaken within yourself the corresponding vice. After working to develop the virtue for a certain time, you will be discouraged and disappointed when you sense that this unwanted vice is beginning to stir. There are people who are always talking about 'love', for instance, but when you hear what they think about others and see how they treat them, you may be appalled to see their intolerance and lack of charity. Where is all that love they talk about? Others talk of nothing but purity – but what goes on in their hearts and their heads? So you have to be very prudent. If you

seriously want to perfect yourself, try to take precautions that will save you from a fall, and learn to work according to the symbol of the cross. It is up to you to see which quality – patience, selflessness, generosity, humility, cheerfulness, and so on – can best help you to cultivate the particular virtue you want to possess. If you do not learn to work with the cross, it will become a heavy burden that will weigh on you.

What is destiny? A cross. Why do we say that people have to bear their cross? You will probably say that it refers to Jesus' passion, and means that we have to accept the trials of life. That is true, but it means far more than that. The destiny of each individual is inscribed in a cross.[4] If you look at the zodiac (Figure 5), you will see that the twelve signs are grouped to form three crosses. The first includes Aries-Libra and Cancer-Capricorn; the second,

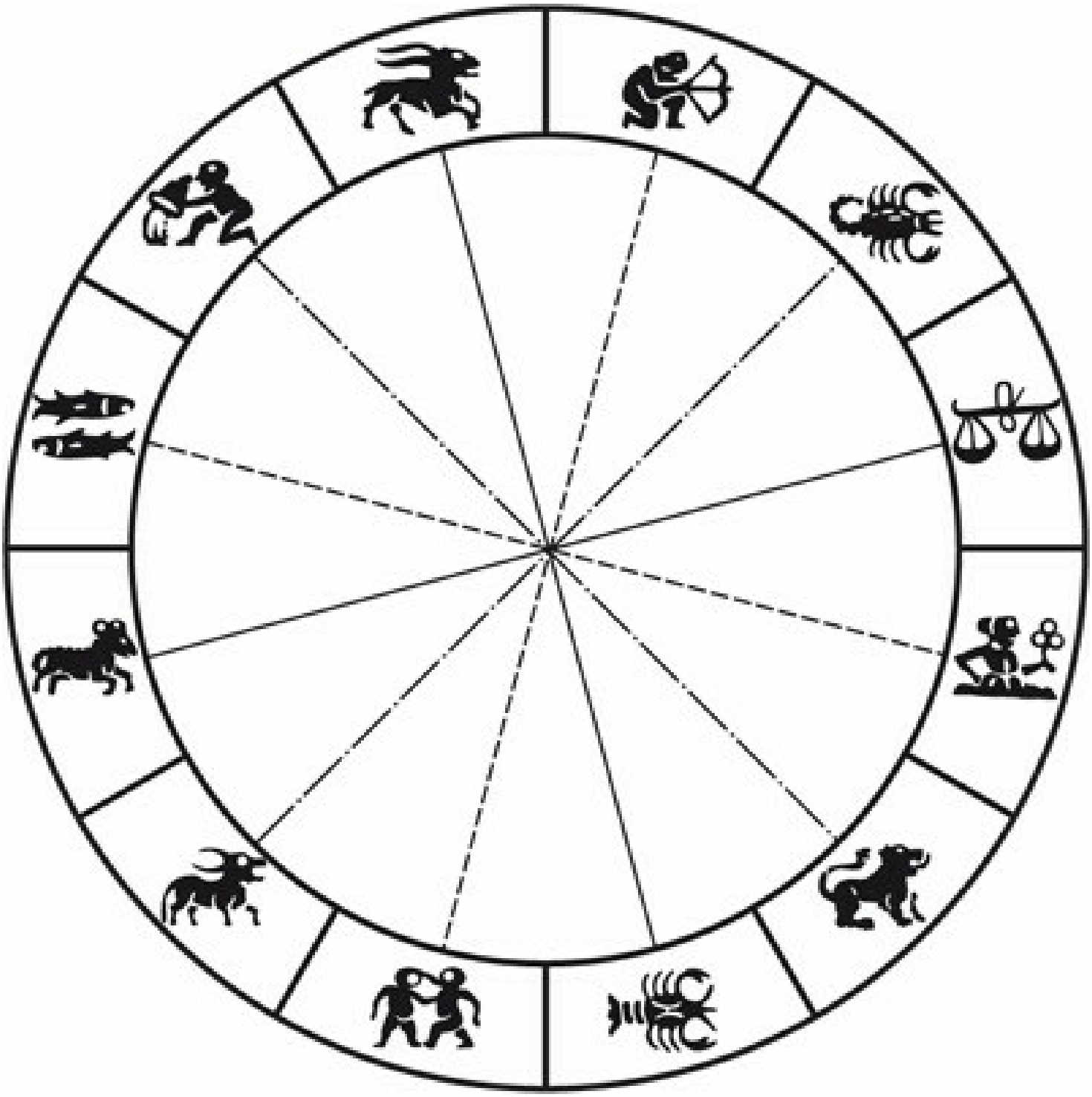


Figure 5

Taurus–Scorpio and Aquarius–Leo; the third, Gemini–Sagittarius and Virgo–Pisces. Each cross consists of four signs grouped in pairs: the fire and air signs (masculine) and the water and earth signs (feminine). Aries, for example, is a fire sign, Libra an air sign, Cancer a water sign, and Capricorn

an earth sign. And so on for all the others.

In the horoscope of each one of us, therefore, is a cross that indicates the four cardinal points that determine our destiny: the Ascendant, the Descendant, Midheaven, and I.C. (imum coeli). The masculine and feminine principles reign in our destiny, as they reign in the heavens, and symbolically they form a cross (Figure 6).

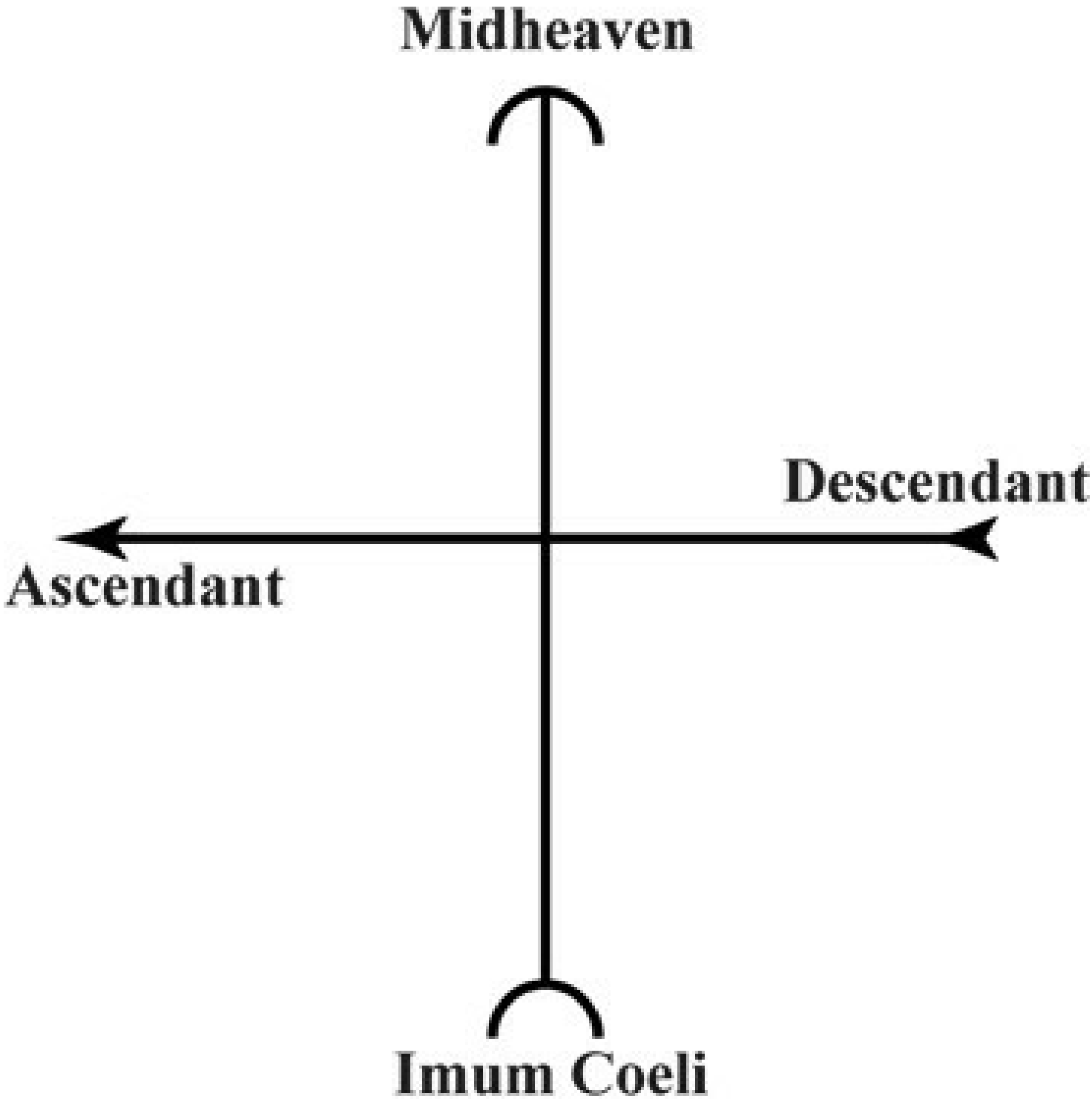


Figure 6

Those who do not know how to work with the two principles must bear the consequences of their ignorance – that is, they must bear their cross as a burden. Those, on the other hand, who know how to work with the two principles experience destiny as an immense field of exploration and

discovery. It is no use Christians thinking that they will be protected if they wear a cross round their necks. No, it is not enough to wear the cross: only if you truly understand it will it protect you.

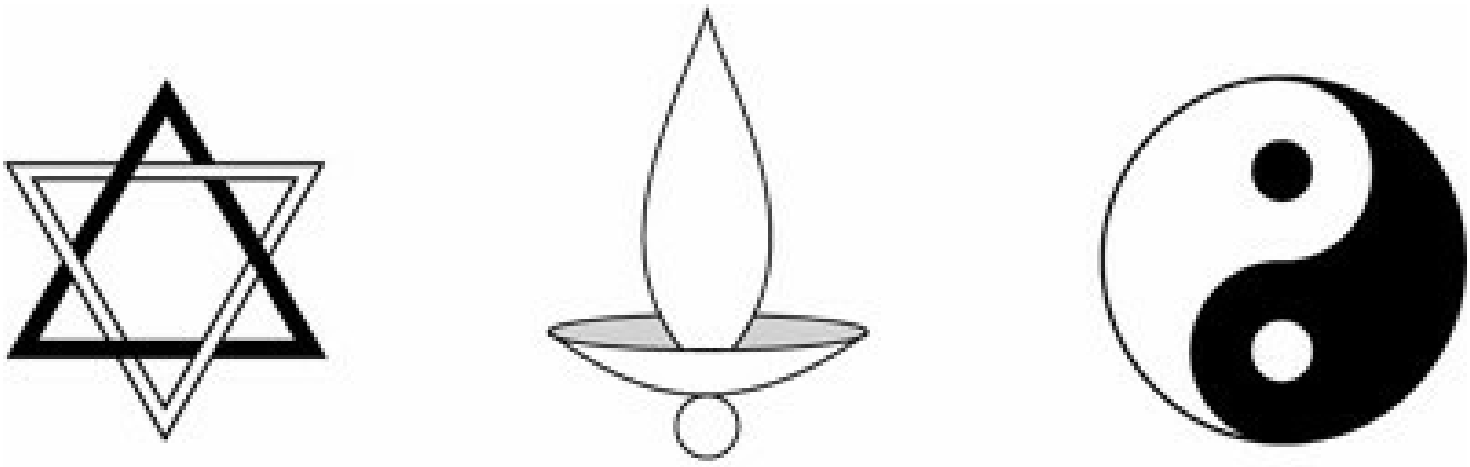


Figure 7

The essential symbols of all the great religions express the union of the two principles. To mention only a few: the ancient Egyptian religion has the sphinx; Judaism has the two interlaced triangles known as the Seal of Solomon; in India we find the lingam, a horizontal support (the feminine principle) surmounted by a vertical form (the masculine principle); Taoism has the Yang-Yin, in which the symbols of the Yin (feminine, black) and the Yang (masculine, white) fold into each other (Figure 7).

The cross is a synthesis of all life's phenomena. A true cross is a human being who has developed both principles, who has so refined his or her physical matter that it is fit to receive the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Holy Spirit into a human being represents the fusion of matter and spirit. The Gospel tells us that at his baptism Jesus received the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove and that he died on the cross. What a subject for meditation in these two symbols, symbols which the Cathars combined in the figure of a dove with a cross in its beak.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'On earth as it is in heaven' – *Matt. 6: 10*

Jesus receives the Holy Spirit – *Luke 3: 21-22*

---

[1] See *True Alchemy or the Quest for Perfection,* Izvor Coll. n° 221, chap. 2: 'The Human Tree'.

[2] See *The True Meaning of Christ's Teaching,* Izvor Coll. n° 215, chap. 5: 'On Earth as it is in Heaven'.

[3] See *The Symbolic Langage of Geometrical Figures,* Izvor Coll. n° 218, chap. 6: 'The Cross'.

[4] See *The Zodiac, Key to Man and to the Universe,* Izvor Coll. n° 220, chap. 4: 'The Cross of Destiny'.

Chapter IX : The Caduceus of Hermes - The Astral Serpent

Our physical body is built symmetrically on either side of the central axis of the spine. In this sense we can say that it is governed by the number Two. We have two eyes and two ears, and although the nose and the brain are one, they are also divided into the two nostrils and two hemispheres. Then we have two lungs, two kidneys and, lower down, a man has two testicles and a woman two ovaries. Finally, we have two legs and two arms.

Even if this symmetry on the physical plane is not absolute – the left and right sides of our body are never exactly symmetrical – it nevertheless exists. On the psychic plane, however, the situation is quite different. A study of the human brain shows that the function of the right and left hemispheres is not identical. The left hemisphere is the seat of our powers of analysis (logic and reasoning), which we may class as masculine; the right hemisphere is the seat of our powers of synthesis (intuition and sensitivity) which we may class as feminine. The functions of the two sides of the brain, therefore, complement each other. In other words, our physical body is based on a pattern of symmetry, whereas our psyche is based on the polarity of masculine and feminine, positive and negative.

According to initiatic science, each hemisphere of the brain emits a current which flows through the body, passing alternately from one side of the spine to the other (Figure 8). The current from the right hemisphere flows through the left lung and the heart, crosses over to the liver, back again to the left kidney and thence to the right genital gland and the right

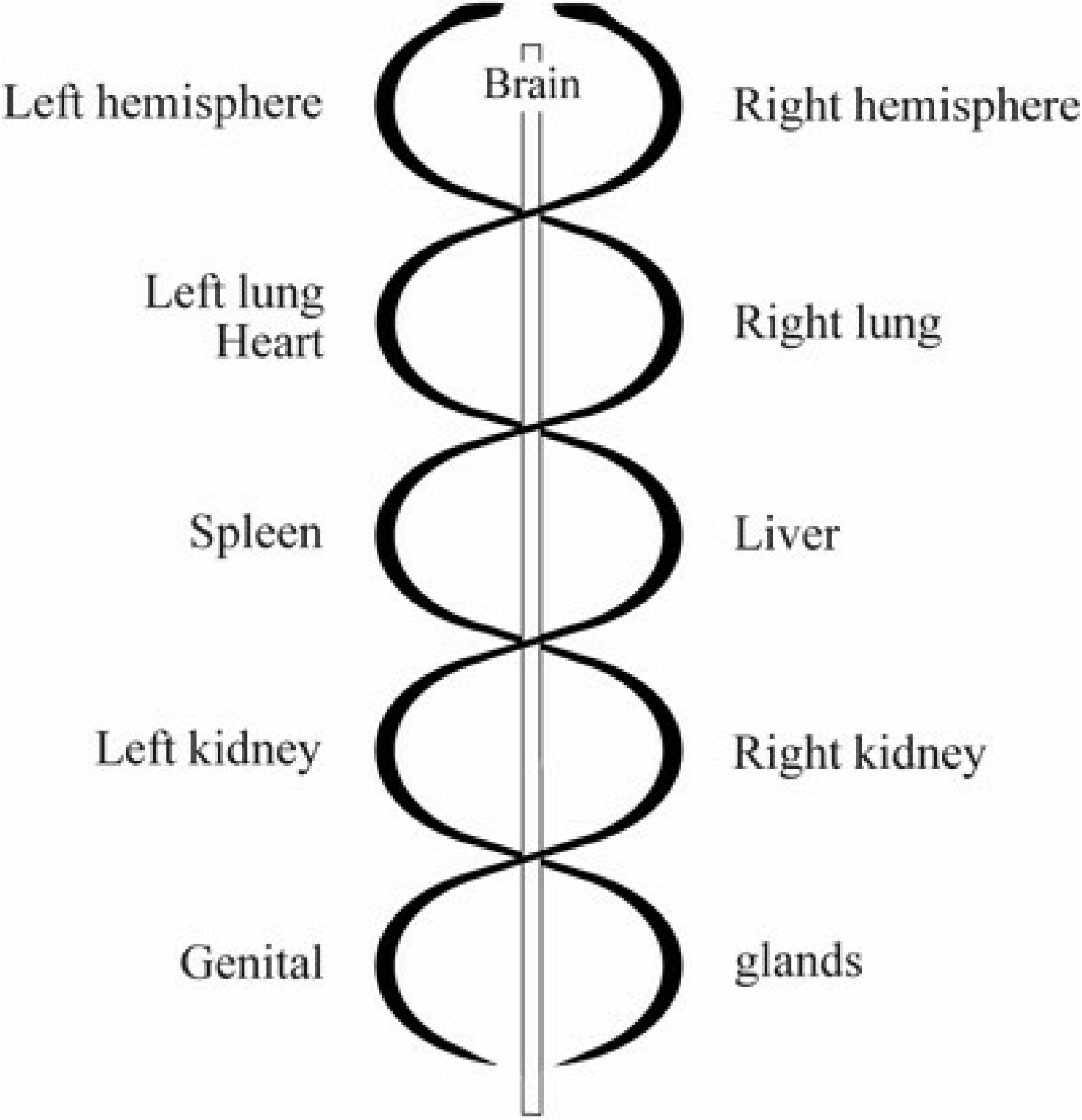


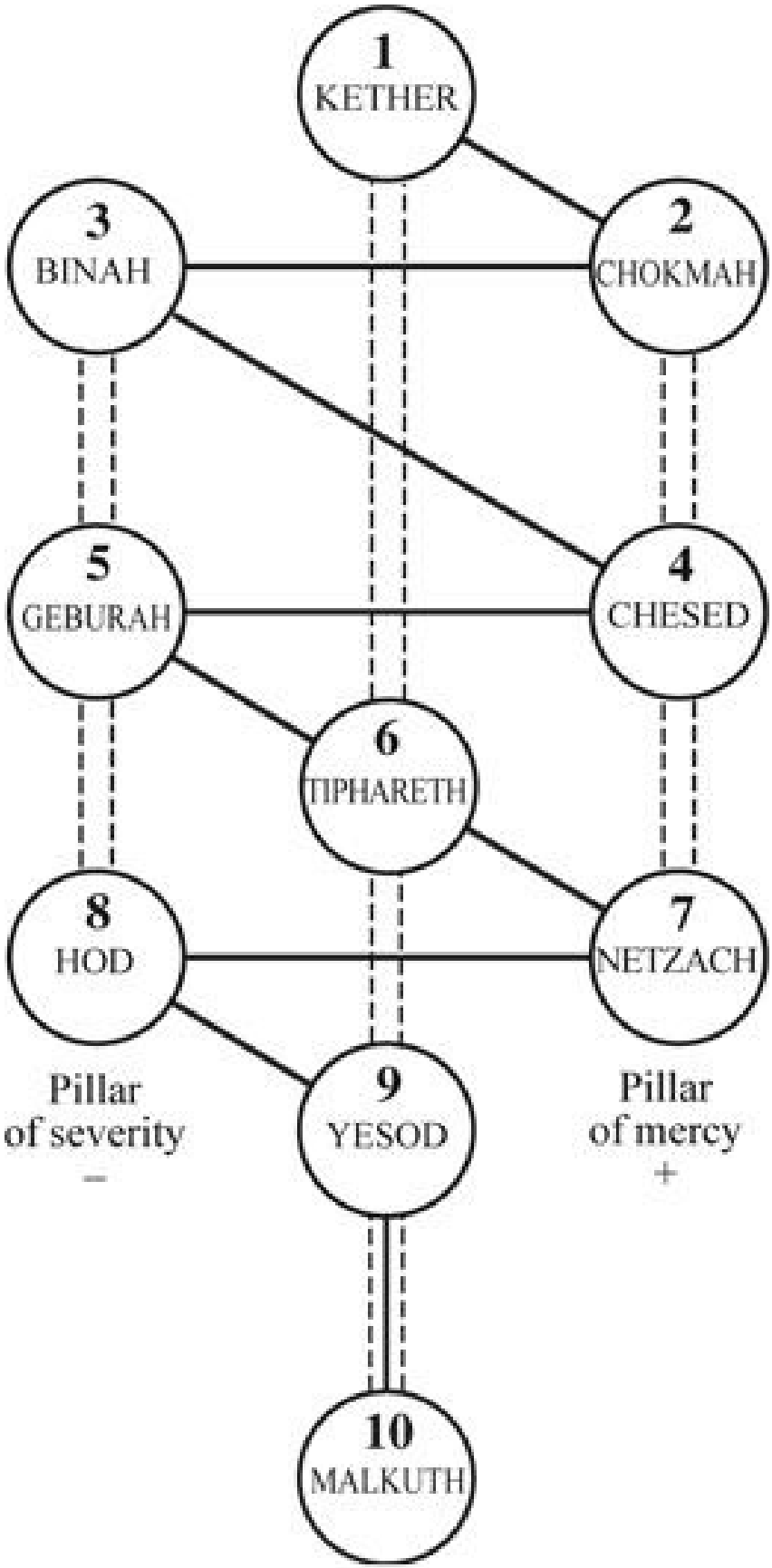
Figure 8

leg. The current from the left hemisphere goes to the right lung, the spleen, the right kidney, the left genital gland, and the left leg. Thus the two currents intersect each other repeatedly, and each point of intersection marks the passage from positive to negative, from masculine to feminine,

or vice versa.

This alternation between positive and negative is found in the Sephirotic Tree (Figure 9), which also represents a human being. The Sephirotic Tree is built on three pillars. In the centre is the Pillar of Equilibrium and on either side of this central axis are the Pillar of Mercy (positive, masculine power) and the Pillar of Severity (negative, feminine power). I have already explained to you that as the current emanating from Kether flows down to Malkuth, it alternates between the masculine and feminine polarity.

The Caduceus (Figure 10) is another way of representing a human being. The two intertwining snakes that cross over from one side to the other of the central wand represent the two currents flowing from one side to the other of the spine. Hindus call the two currents Ida and Pingala, and the central channel in the spine is known as Sushumna. The breathing exercises we do every day[1] are linked to this polarity of the two currents. Closing the left nostril, we breathe in through the right nostril, then, closing the right nostril, we breathe out through the left nostril. Then we repeat the exercise, but in



SEPHIROTIC TREE *(*Figure 9)

reverse, breathing in through the left nostril, with the right nostril closed, and breathing out through the right nostril, with the left nostril closed. These breathing exercises facilitate the flow of the two currents within us.(* For a fuller explanation of these exercises, see The Fruits of the Tree of Life, Complete works, vol. 32, chap. 16: ‘Human and Cosmic respiration’)

Figure 10

Nowadays, everyone is familiar with the Caduceus – it is often used to indicate medical institutions or pharmacies – but how many of those who recognize the symbol ever imagine the wealth concealed in it? What do the two serpents represent? Biblical tradition attributes two quite different symbolic meanings to a serpent. In some instances it is seen as a malignant force and in others as a beneficial force. In *Genesis*, for instance, Moses sees the serpent as the symbol of a malignant force, saying that it was, *'more crafty than any other wild animal'*.[2] It was the serpent that appeared to Adam and Eve as God's adversary and persuaded them to disobey his injunctions. On the other hand, *Exodus* tells us that God instructed Moses to make a bronze serpent and that all those who looked at this serpent were healed.

Also, when Jesus sent his disciples out to proclaim the good news, he told them to be *'wise as serpents and innocent as doves'*, thus depicting the serpent as a symbol of wisdom. In India, sages are called 'nagas', snakes or serpents. How should we understand the fact that the same symbol is sometimes seen to represent a malign force and at other times a benign one?

If you look at the way a snake moves, you see that it advances in a succession of sinuous movements. The movement of light also follows a sinuous course. This is why initiates use the image of a snake to explain astral light, the magic agent, the universal medium, thanks to which waves travel through space. In itself this agent is neutral. It is simply a transmitter and it transmits both good and evil. The astral serpent, therefore, has a dual nature, both good and evil, and the initiates showed the two serpents twined around the central wand of the Caduceus in order to express this dual nature. The two snakes represent the two currents, positive and negative, of astral light known traditionally as *Od* and *Ob*. The one is luminous and hot, the other is dark and cold; one is white, the other black. These are the currents of life and death, love and hatred, attraction and repulsion. A third current links them, and this is *Aur*, light. Those who know how to use this third current can command the other two.

Now, since it was the serpent that urged Adam and Eve to taste the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, it has also been seen as a symbol of knowledge. And knowledge, like the astral serpent, is neutral. It is good or bad depending on the use that is made of it. Those who are highly erudite can be great benefactors or great villains. Knowledge brings power, and those who use their knowledge for good are linked to the serpent of light; they are white magicians. Those who use their knowledge for evil, on the other hand, are linked to the serpent of darkness; they are black magicians. But whether white or black, they both use the same agent, the same energy.

Thus the serpent is a single entity with two aspects. Our task is to conquer its evil aspects, and once they are conquered, the serpent will become our servant and all its energies will be at our disposal. But before this can happen, we have to learn to control it, for if it is we who are controlled by it, nothing can save us.

The legend of Teiresias, the blind prophet of Thebes mentioned in Greek mythology, reveals several interesting points about the symbolism of the serpent.

According to this legend, Teiresias was a Greek youth, son of Chariclo, one of the handmaids of the goddess Athena. One day Teiresias saw Athena and her maidens as they were bathing naked in a fountain, and as it was forbidden for a mortal to take an immortal unawares, Athena punished him by making him blind. When Chariclo saw this she was in such distress that Athena took pity on her and gave the young man a marvellous gift to make up for his loss of sight. Taking the serpent from beneath her shield, she commanded it to purify Teiresias' ears with its tongue, so that he could understand the speech of the birds of prophecy.

According to another, better-known version, Teiresias was walking one day in the mountains when he came across two snakes coupling. He struck them with his stick in order to separate them, and in doing so he killed the female. Immediately, he was turned into a woman. Returning to the spot seven years later, he again saw a pair of snakes coupling. Again he struck at them,

wanting to separate them, and this time he killed the male, and was turned back into a man. Then, one day, when the goddess Hera was reproaching her husband Zeus for his many infidelities, Zeus replied that she had no cause for complaint since women had more pleasure in love-making than men. Hera disagreed violently and the quarrel raged between them. Finally, they decided to consult Teiresias, for he had experienced both conditions, male and female. When questioned, Teiresias said that it was indeed the woman who experienced the greater pleasure, and Hera was so incensed by his answer that she robbed him of his sight. Zeus compensated him for this loss by giving him the gifts of prophecy and longevity, promising that he would live for seven generations.

It would take too long to explore every aspect of the myth of Teiresias, but, without going into details, one aspect that stands out is the rich symbolism of the serpent, which touches on three different domains: that of sexuality and the role of the two principles; that of knowledge (clairaudience and clairvoyance), and that of longevity and, by extension, of medicine. In the myth of Teiresias, as in the Caduceus of Hermes, we see two serpents representing the two poles – masculine and feminine, positive and negative.

The Caduceus of Hermes is more than an image of the human organism with the two currents winding down each side of the spine. It also symbolizes the powers which initiates obtain through their work on nature, on themselves, and on other human beings by means of those two principles. This is why the Caduceus has become a symbol for the medical profession. It represents a whole philosophy and a discipline of life. It teaches us how to use the masculine and feminine currents at work in the universe. True initiates work with these two principles. They know the power of the two principles when used as instruments, weapons, or medicines, and such initiates possess this true power.[3]

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

The serpent – *Gen. 3: 1-5*

‘Be wise as serpents and innocent as doves’ - *Matt. 10: 16*

---

[1] See *La respiration, dimension spirituelle et applications pratiques,* Brochure n° 303.

[2] See *Les deux arbres du Paradis,* Complete Works, vol. 3, chap. 9: ‘Les deux arbres du Paradis: 2. Le serpent de la Genèse’.

[3] See *Light is a Living Spirit,* Izvor Coll. n° 212, chap. 9: ‘The Spiritual Laser’.

Chapter X: Iona, Principle of Life - Horev, Principle of Death

I

Nature is the theatre of a perpetual struggle between the principles of life and death. When the principle of life is present, it unites and organizes disparate elements, while the principle of death separates and disperses those elements and sends them back to the cosmic laboratory to be recycled and used in the creation of new organisms. These processes can be observed throughout the animal, vegetable, and mineral kingdoms and, of course, in the world of human beings. Initiatic science calls these two principles *Iona* and *Horev*.

In Hebrew, *Iona* means dove and *Horev* means crow or raven. These are the two birds that Noah sent out from the ark to see if the waters of the deluge had subsided.

> *At the end of forty days Noah opened the window of the ark that he had made and sent out the raven; and it went to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth. Then he sent out the dove from him, to see if the waters had subsided from the face of the ground; but the dove found no place to set its foot, and it returned to him to the ark, for the waters were still on the face of the whole earth. So he put out his hand and took it and brought it into the ark with him. He waited another seven days, and again he sent out the dove from the ark; and the dove came back to him in the evening, and there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf; so Noah knew that the waters had subsided from the earth. Then he waited another seven days, and sent out the dove; and it did not return to him any more.*

Iona, the principle of life, can be identified with the spirit; *Horev*, the principle of death, with matter. From the first instant in which a foetus is formed in its mother's womb, the two principles are at work, locked in their never-ending struggle. As soon as the spirit begins its descent into the body of a child in order to animate it, matter stands in its way: all the forces of life are mobilized to animate the organism, while the forces of death are already stealthily working to hinder the process. In the first years of life the principle of matter is submissive and its role is secondary. It puts obstacles in the way of the spirit whenever possible, but its action is restricted by the will and the power of the spirit. Later, having done its work in the body, the spirit withdraws, and it is at this point that the downward movement really begins.

The ascending period is the period of growth, of burgeoning, of hope. The proud parents see their child shooting up overnight and becoming strong, supple, and radiant. Old people sigh and exclaim: 'How wonderful to be young!' The principle of life, whose role it is to assemble the elements, is active only for a limited time, however, and there comes a moment when its work is less intense and it begins to distance itself from the physical body. It yearns to leave the body and travel to other regions, do other work, learn other things. It is then that the principle of matter becomes bolder and begins actively to pursue its work of disintegration. From time to time the spirit intervenes briefly to counter this disintegration, until the day comes for its final departure.

The destructive principle never ceases to be active. As I have said, as soon as life appears it begins its work. But its power is limited. For a time, it can be held in abeyance by the power of the spirit over matter, but in the long run the principle of death wins the day, for it is a law that all that is born must die. Life and death are brother and sister, who work hand in hand to further the evolutionary process. We see death as something frightful, but just try to imagine what would happen if death ceased to do its work – that would be far worse. *Horev* and *Iona* work on the same site but at different periods. As Solomon says in Ecclesiastes:

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted; a time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; a time to weep, and a time to laugh …'

Only the spirit is immortal, and it incarnates in a constant succession of new forms, each of which is destined to perish.[1] Those who strive to give the spirit precedence in their lives, however, can retard the work of the destructive principle – which is also said to be time, Cronos or Saturn – and be regenerated by immersion in the divine light, the true fountain of youth. In all their actions, they try to open their hearts to kindness, gentleness, and beauty, so that it may be always springtime within them.

Although the destructive principle cannot be vanquished, we must consciously oppose it and strive to retard its action. Above all, we must learn to use it. How? When the ravages of illness and old age begin to be felt, when our strength and our physical faculties fail, we must tell ourselves that the time has come to look for other kinds of action, for other sources of joy. We must learn to make use of everything, and when we are deprived of physical energy, we must delve into ourselves and release the inexhaustible spiritual energies hidden within.

Cosmic intelligence has organized things in this way for our benefit. If the principle that causes human beings to grow and fulfil themselves never had to face opposition or obstacles on the physical plane, we should be in dire straits. Yes, what monsters human beings would become if old age, illness, and other misfortunes were not there to exert a restraining influence! As it is, we all know that there can be only one outcome, death. In this respect all human beings are equal. All are obliged to bow to this fact, to behave with humility, to reflect and mend their ways, to seek the path that leads to God.

As long as they are young and healthy, human beings never really think that the principle of disintegration will eventually get the better of them. They

tend to believe that the world belongs to them and that the future will always smile on them. What a shock when they realize, one day, that things are beginning to slip from their grasp! Faced with this merciless struggle between *Iona* and *Horev,* there are some who are ready to do everything in their power to cling to *Iona*, and this often leads them to do very foolish things. For many people, old age is the most distressing period of their life. When they see that *Horev* is steadily gaining ground, they throw into the battle all their reserves – reserves which should be used for a different task – and in so doing they lose everything.

You will ask: 'But is this not the honest thing to do, to fight?' Yes, but the whole question is to know how to fight. We have not been born on this earth in order to be eternally young and healthy, but in order to learn, to complete an apprenticeship. The two principles are not enemies; they were both created by God and they have to work alternately. *Horev's* task is to send the elements back to where they came from and, in so doing, to free the human soul from the world of illusion. This is why, as time passes, *Horev* deprives *Iona* of its dominion over human beings. A sage is one who knows the twists and turns of the road and tries to make use of every circumstance. In the spiritual world the upward path is smooth and constant, while on earth, whatever we do to prevent it, our faces will be wrinkled, our hair will turn white, our teeth will fall out, and so forth. But you must understand that outer appearances are unimportant. What is important is that behind your wrinkled cheeks and your white hair shines a radiant spiritual life.

People say that death is a hideous thing, but the truth is that this principle of disintegration is our great benefactor, for it sets us free to go further and reach greater heights.[2] The initiates, knowing the designs of cosmic intelligence, accept the existence of these two principles and endeavour to work with *Iona*, which purifies all things and makes them beautiful and luminous. *Iona* is a mental, spiritual principle, and we can nourish and reinforce it by just thoughts and generous feelings and, in this way, retard the action of *Horev* within us.[3]

My purpose in telling you this is not to make you wish you could live in a

state of eternal youth – in any case, you would not succeed. I only want to throw some light on the question, so that you will be motivated to give priority to the spirit, for it is the indwelling spirit that will keep you active and give you flexibility and joy. The secret of staying young is never to stop advancing on the path that leads to the spiritual heights.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Noah sent out the dove and the crow – *Gen. 8: 6-12*

'For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven' – *Ecclesiastes 3:1-4*

II

It is not necessary to be a great philosopher to recognize that there are two opposing forces in life and that the confrontation between them creates the alternation of health and sickness, joy and sorrow, hope and discouragement, restraint and violence that we all experience. These things are simply manifestations of the two principles of life and death, *Iona* and *Horev*. However, it is not enough to recognize these manifestations for what they are; we must also exercise vigilance so as to maintain the balance between these antagonistic forces.

If you are irritable, in a bad mood, or feeling depressed, it means that one side of your inner scale is dangerously low. The solution is to add some weight to the other side. What can you use as a weight? The thought, for instance, that you are a child of God, that you have an immortal soul, that you have parents, children, and friends. There are many, many things that you can use to restore the balance – many thoughts, feelings, or words. You must look for them and try to steep yourself in them until you sense that

your inner balance is restored. And you must consciously develop the habit of reacting in this way, otherwise you will forget about it. There are days when, for no known reason, the scales seem to balance themselves, but this is not always the case, and if you are not in the habit of reacting as soon as you sense that something is not quite right, you could allow one side of your scales to dip dangerously low.

I have already given you so many powerful, effective methods. Suppose, for example, that someone has been very unjust towards you and is so evil that you cannot help but hate him. You suffer because you are constantly struggling against the thought of his wickedness. What can you do about it? There is a thought that you can put on the other side of the scales, and it is this: 'If the poor man is so evil it must mean that he is very unhappy. He must have grown up in appalling conditions. Instead of trying to avenge myself, I should help him, for in comparison with him I am very privileged.' In this way, understanding and compassion do their work and you begin not to hate him so much and to feel freer in yourself. Do it for your own sake, in order to be free of this burden of hatred.[4] If you reason in this way, you will be putting a counterweight on the other side of the scales and will be the first to benefit from the relief and peace it brings.

There are also people who feel unhappy without knowing why. My advice to them is to visit a hospital, a refuge for the homeless, or a prison and see with their own eyes what moral and physical suffering can be. They need to see how well-off they are in comparison with some. Perhaps, then, they would be ashamed to complain so much about their inner ailments, which are simply the result of their own negligence, of their failure to bring order to their psychic life. People are sometimes so lazy! When they have some little pain or discomfort their only recourse is to run and buy some medicine. I am not saying that people should not consult the pharmacist or take medicines. But why do they always rely on material, physical remedies when the source of so many of their problems is not on the physical plane at all, but on a subtler plane?

When you have a headache you take aspirin, but if the cause of your

headache is mental or psychological – anger or anxiety, for instance – even if aspirin gives you some relief, the improvement will be only temporary if you do nothing else about it. You must remember to work on the psychic and mental plane also, for although the results may be slower in coming, one day the cure will be complete.

What is a war? A war is the result of a serious imbalance of the scales. A group of people piles all its resentment, ambition, and greed on one side of the scales and places nothing as a counterbalance on the other side. Thus a time comes when the imbalance is so great that violence prevails: *Horev*, the raven, gains the upper hand over *Iona*, the dove. It is impossible to avoid all misunderstandings and hostility between individuals and nations, but if there were enough people whose thoughts, feelings, and prayers counterbalanced the negative elements, the scales would not sink to the point where war became inevitable. And once war is there, what do people do? Ministers and ambassadors meet and discuss and ask the United Nations or other organizations to intervene. Of course, such arbitration is not useless, but it is the exact parallel of a visit to the pharmacist – instead of treating the cause, it treats the symptoms.

Initiatic science teaches that long before a war breaks out on the physical plane, it has already been declared on a higher level. It is on the psychic plane that the egregors, the psychic collective entities of nations, wage war. Human beings are not sufficiently convinced of the power of thoughts and feelings.[5] They do not realize that there is such an accumulation of misunderstandings and hatred in the psychic world that, inevitably, it breaks out in acts. An act is always the consequence of thoughts and feelings. If you love your friends and think well of them, you kiss or hug them when you meet. Whereas, if you harbour all kinds of negative thoughts and feelings about people, you will end by coming to blows.

It is impossible to insist too strongly on the importance of creating centres or focal points of light and peace in order to neutralize the forces of chaos. It is time human beings learned how cosmic forces work, for balance exists on every level. You know that the science of mechanics is used to

calculate the resultant of two opposing forces, but you should also know that the law involved is valid not only on the physical plane, but also on the psychic plane. How can you expect goodness and peace to prevail if only a few thousand human beings are working sincerely for the good of humanity, while, on the other hand, billions are acting with vindictiveness and jealousy in defence of their own selfish interests? Here, too, events will be the resultant of the opposing forces.

Our thoughts, feelings, desires, and actions exert pressure on the invisible world, and those who exert the most pressure win the day. You will object that there are more than a few thousand men and women who want good to prevail. Yes, but their desire is so weak and ineffectual. What they really want is to wake up one fine day in a world of peace, prosperity, and happiness, without having to exert themselves to bring about that peace, prosperity, and happiness. Human beings long for peace, that is true – most of them, at least. But when will they realize that their egoism, their false conception of reality, and their indolence can lead only to war?

---

1 See *A New Dawn – Society and Politics in the Light of Initiatic Science,* Complete Works, vol. 26, chap. 1: 'Forms and Principles'.

2 See *Freedom, the Spirit Triumphant,* Izvor Coll. n° 211, chap. 4: 'Freedom through Death'.

3 See *The Philosopher's Stone – in the Gospels and in Alchemy,* Izvor n° 241, chap. 3: 'You are the Salt of the Earth' – I. Marking Matter with the Seal of the Spirit – II. The Source of Energy'.

4 See *The True Meaning of Christ's Teaching,* Izvor Coll. n° 215, chap. 7: 'Father, Forgive Them, For They Know Not What They Do'.

5 See *The Powers of Thought,* Izvor Coll. n° 224, chap. 1: 'The Reality of

Spiritual Work’.

Chapter XI: The Triad Kether-Chesed-Geburah

I
Sceptre and Orb

The sceptre and orb are emblems of royalty and, in a more general sense, of power. When we see a portrait of an individual with a sceptre in the right hand and an orb in the left, we know that it is the portrait of a monarch. But what do we really know about the deeper meaning of these two objects? Do monarchs themselves understand what they mean?

The sceptre is generally considered to be a symbol of authority and the orb to be a symbol of the territory governed by that authority. In reality, there is far more to it than that. Sceptre and orb represent the masculine and feminine principles. The masculine principle is always symbolized by a straight line (sceptre, caduceus, spear, sword, pillar, or tree) and by the right hand. The feminine principle is symbolized by a curving line (any round or hollow object such as a sphere, a vase, a cup, or by a chasm or cave) and by the left hand. To possess the sceptre and orb signifies that one understands and knows how to work with the two principles.

The equivalent of the royal sceptre and orb can be seen in magic rites. A magus begins his work by tracing a circle to encompass a sacred space, entry to which is forbidden to all entities or elements foreign to that work. And within that circle he uses his wand to command the spirits. The circle, which represents the physical territory within which the magus works,

symbolizes the feminine principle, while the wand represents the active power of the spirit, the masculine principle.

These two symbolic objects, sceptre and orb, express a conception of royalty in which earthly kings are the representatives of the King of Heaven. Ideally, according to this conception, a monarch is both priest and king; it is because a monarch is inspired by the divine model that he is given power on earth. Unfortunately, history shows that this has very rarely been the case; very few monarchs have been capable of incarnating such a lofty ideal of kingship. But in spite of the fact that a great many of those who received the sceptre and orb were weak, ignorant, debauched, and cruel, the symbolism holds good.

Thus, when it became evident that temporal and spiritual power could not be entrusted to a single individual (a priest who exercised temporal power, or a monarch who exercised spiritual power), they were separated. It was judged preferable that the two functions be completely independent, each working exclusively in its own field. There have been periods of history in which the two powers achieved a certain equilibrium, in which priests and monarchs, as individuals conscious of their responsibilities, worked in their respective realms for the good of the people. But such periods have been rare and brief. More often than not there has been abuse of power on both sides, monarchs and priests seeking to dominate each other and impose their own interests. As long as human beings are unworthy of their task and incapable of working selflessly, the best solution is to separate these two powers. Ideally, however, they should work together.

Reverting now to the two symbols of the sceptre – representing the masculine principle – and the orb – representing the feminine principle – let us see what the Sephirotic Tree teaches us about them.

At the summit of the Tree of Life is *Kether*, the Crown. This is the head, and the sephiroth on the two lateral pillars of Mercy and Severity – which represent the two principles, masculine and feminine – are the two arms by means of which the head acts. The king, the head, is above and between the

two arms and is thus in a position to control them and ensure the balance between them – the balance, that is, between leniency and severity, symbolized more particularly by the sephiroth *Chesed* and *Geburah*.

When one reads the Gospels in the light of these notions, one sees that the two currents were represented among Jesus' disciples by St Peter and St John. St Peter was the man of rigour, the one who was ready to do battle and draw the sword. This aspect of his character was consistent with an ability to achieve material goals, and this is why Jesus told him: *'You are Peter (Petros) and on this rock (Petra) I will build my church.'* The life of St John, on the other hand, was totally given over to love and contemplation. St John and St Peter thus represent the two currents that we must learn to use evenly and with discernment. Unfortunately, in the course of its history, the Church has usually given priority to the manner of St Peter.[1]

Kings and queens are not the only ones who are concerned with these two symbols, the sceptre and orb: they concern all human beings. All human beings must learn when to show leniency and when to show severity. Society itself is based on the equilibrium between the two. What would happen if you were always severe (*Geburah*) or always lenient (*Chesed*)? Force and gentleness always stand in opposition to each other, that is clear, and we cannot ask them to be other than what they are. Each one is necessary to life and to nature just as it is. It is up to the one who stands between them to know how to use them. This is the function of the head, *Kether*. When you are obliged to act with severity, you must temper that severity with mercy from your heart, otherwise you will be harsh and unjust. On the other hand, when you want to treat people with gentleness and kindness, you must retain a certain degree of rigour, otherwise they will imagine that your actions betray weakness and that they can do whatever they want with you. Yes, there is a balance to be found, and it is this that is difficult.

Perhaps you cannot see exactly how you are concerned with what I have been saying. But wait until you are in a position of responsibility towards other people, and you will soon see that you have to take these things into account. As parents and teachers, many of you already have such

responsibilities, but what do you do about them? You complain about how difficult your task is and, of course, you blame your children or your students. No, you must blame nobody but yourself, for you have not learned to maintain the balance between the two currents of rigour and mercy, of mind and heart.

All men and all women possess the two psychic principles symbolized by the sceptre and orb, but most of them are unaware of it. They are unconscious of the wealth they possess; above all, they have no idea of how to use that wealth. One very rarely meets a human being who is capable of developing the faculties of heart and mind equally and harmoniously, who is capable of discernment and severity and, at the same time, of leniency, flexibility, and openness to others. The reason for this is that so few people know how to alternate activities that nourish the mind with those that nourish the heart. Great vigilance is necessary in order to attain this equilibrium. Those who are unaware and heedless are always in danger of falling into one extreme or the other.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'You are Peter and on this rock I will build my church' - *Matt. 16: 18*

II
Mind and Heart

Just as on the physical plane we have two feet with which we step forward alternately when walking, so, on the psychic plane, we have the two

faculties of heart and mind with which we must work alternately. And this is more difficult. Most human beings are one-legged on the psychic plane. A minority use only their right leg – the side of the intellect – for this requires at least some study and reflection. But countless millions use only the leg of the heart – for it is so much less effort to allow feelings and emotions to rule one's life.

Some of you were surprised to hear me say that I used to love going to the circus. They were surprised because they are blind to the underlying meaning of a circus and consider that it is an entertainment for children. But if you think about the exploits you see in the ring, you will realize that many of them represent the spiritual victories that every human being must struggle to win in life. To name only a few: the lion-tamer with his lions, tigers, and panthers; the ringmaster who gets elephants or bears to dance; the acrobats who leap through a circle of flame; the trapeze artists who launch themselves into space between trapezes; the tightrope walkers… Yes, the tightrope walkers! It is they who give us the most eloquent lesson, for in order to keep their balance, they must continually adjust the position of their outstretched arms or the long pole they hold – a little more to the right or to the left, a little higher or lower, and so on. This is exactly our situation. Life is a tightrope, and if we are not to fall, we must continually add a little here, take off a little there, so as to keep the two sides of heart and mind in balance.

Our centre of balance is in our ears, and the ears have always been associated with wisdom.[2] A wise person is one who knows how to maintain the balance, how to straighten out a situation. Indeed the very expression, 'to straighten out a situation', shows that things always have a tendency to slip to one side or the other and need to be set straight.

When two people have conflicting interests, there is an instinctive tendency to refer the conflict to a third person or to a higher authority. In theory, arbitration is the function of a court of law, and the fact that the case comes before a court of law means that the rival parties have failed to resolve the problem by themselves. We can resolve our conflicts –

especially our inner conflicts – only by appealing to a third party, a higher authority. And it is this authority, the highest and the most powerful, that we call God. It is to this authority that we should take our problems. This is what we learn from the position of *Kether* above the two pillars.

Heart and mind each possess fifty per cent of the truth, and the intervention of a third factor is needed to say when it is time for the one or the other to express itself. Only when heart and mind are wedded will truth be whole and entire. Who is the priest who marries them? The third factor, *Kether,* the one who is seated at the head of the pillar of equilibrium. Yes, *Kether* is the celebrant, the balancing factor. This is something worth thinking about: when two people marry, why does there have to be a third person – priest or magistrate – who presides over the ceremony? The marriage ceremony is full of meaning; think about it.

Now this notion of a third force that maintains a balance between the other two can also be understood much more broadly. Our psychic life rests on three essential elements, mind, heart, and will. The mind thinks, the heart feels emotions, and the will incites to action. A correct attitude requires that one of the three should always act as moderator to balance the other two. Depending on the circumstances, the heart must maintain the balance between the mind and the will, or the mind must maintain the balance between the will and the heart, or the will must maintain the balance between the heart and the mind. It is important to realize that when you feel troubled, anxious, and disorientated, the cause lies in yourself; it means that you have not known which factor to place in the centre to balance the other two. The third factor must never take sides with one of the others; its role is to see that they are evenly balanced.

The quality that is essential for equilibrium is vigilance. Look at the extraordinary vigilance and concentration of acrobats. One second of inattention and they fall. And it is the same in life – think of all the mistakes you have made or the falls you have had because you failed to realize that there was too much weight on one side of the scale. If you do not want to lose your balance, you must concentrate on the high ideal – which is another

aspect of the third, higher authority – and keep it always within sight of your inner eye.[3] In this way, everything you do will be aligned with the ideal that ensures your stability and prevents you from falling. All the little accidents of life will have less power to affect you, because you will have learned how to remain on an even keel, how to react, how and when to manifest the qualities of the masculine or the feminine principle.

III
A Straight Line and a Curved Line

Everyone knows that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. But does the path we take in life always have to follow a straight line? Those who try to reach their goal by the most direct route almost always come up against interests that conflict with theirs. This means that it is sometimes advisable to follow a sinuous path that circumvents areas of conflict. Also, as the opportunities that present themselves are not always propitious, it is sometimes necessary to wait for the right moment before acting. All this means that when you want to achieve a particular goal, you must not be in too much of a hurry to impose your views; you must use a little psychology, a little patience and flexibility.

Generally speaking, men are more inclined to follow a straight path, while women follow a winding one. These tendencies can even be seen in their physical build: there are usually more straight lines in a man's physique and more curves in a woman's. But, in spite of their physical fragility, women have greater endurance, because they adapt themselves more easily than men. Women – who have been kept in a state of subservience to men for so long and who know very well that they can never hope to get the better of

them by force – have developed the qualities of perspicacity and flexibility. In certain areas they are more intelligent than men. Because a man has a tendency to forge straight ahead, he inevitably encounters obstacles, and since he is determined to overcome them he refuses to retreat and this leads to conflict. However, it is possible that in the long run, because of all these conflicts, he may develop into a truly exceptional being and become capable of assuming great responsibilities, for he will not allow the criticism, difficulties, and obstacles he meets to upset him.

If you want to become someone exceptional, therefore, you must be capable of following a straight line, but this does not mean that you must always choose a straight path in preference to a winding path; it depends on the area and the circumstances involved. The path of light is both straight and sinuous, and this teaches us that we must advance according to the two principles symbolized by both kinds of lines, straight and sinuous. Everything in nature is constructed according to these two lines; they can even be seen in our faces, with the nose – representing a straight vertical line – and the mouth – representing a horizontal curve.

The natural tendency in all human beings, however, both male and female, is to impose their own will, to clamour for their rights, to demand and coerce, and the extraordinary thing is that they always seem to think that it is going to be easy. Before giving an order or demanding something, they do not pause to consider that they are almost bound to meet with opposition and are going to have to engage in a struggle that will exhaust them. If those who have a constant tendency to give other people orders went in for a little self-analysis, they would soon understand why they are always so tired. Of course, many would say that their work requires them to bear heavy responsibilities and that they are tired because other people create so many difficulties for them. No, work is not fatiguing when one knows how to go about it. If people are fatigued by their work, it is because they think that to work means to impose their will on others.

Many people do not realize that the will to dominate is manifested in everything they do. Whether in their professional or their family life, they

always feel the need to impose their own point of view, and it is this attitude that exhausts them. You will perhaps say: 'It is also very fatiguing to have someone on your back who is always telling you to do this, that, or the other thing. That, too, is exhausting!' Yes, but it is exhausting only because you do not know how to transform those emissive currents. If you knew how to do that, instead of allowing them to crush you, you could use them to become stronger. Try it and you will see. Endurance is an art that must be learned. While others use up their energies in an effort to impose their will, you can grow stronger by receiving and transforming those energies. Why do women live longer than men? Because men always want to manifest their will-power and their need to dominate. Women are more accustomed to endure, and often, without realizing it, they increase their powers of endurance by adopting a more passive attitude.

A straight line teaches us to develop our will-power, but the will must always be subject to intelligence and inspired by the heart. Those who are driven by will-power alone are constantly at war with others and with themselves, and the effect is disastrous. At the same time, however, the will is always the motivating power behind our acts; there is nothing worse than to be lacking in will-power. We need to have a strong will, therefore; we need to be capable of advancing in a straight line, and at the same time we must be able to use a wavy line – that is, to move forward with intellectual discernment and kindness of heart.[4]

---

[1] See *A Philosophy of Universality,* Izvor Coll. n° 206, chap. 4: 'The Advent of the Church of St. John'.

[2] See *The Second Birth,* Complete Works, vol. 1, chap. 4: 'Wisdom is Hidden in the Ears'.

[3] See *Le haut idéal,* Brochure n° 307.

[4] See *Le rire du sage,* Izvor Coll. n° 243, chap. 11: ‘Le plus grand parmi vous sera votre serviteur’.

Chapter XII: The Law of Exchange

Life in society is based on the equilibrium of the balance – in other words, on a system of fair exchange. And fair exchange can be summed up in two words: give and take. The human activity that most eloquently expresses this idea is commerce, buying and selling. You go into a shop, ask for a pound of cherries, and the salesman weighs out exactly what you asked for by putting the cherries on one side of a scales and a one-pound weight on the other. Of course, present-day scales are much more sophisticated than this, but the principle is the same. Having weighed them, the salesman hands you the cherries and in exchange you hand him some money. If you pay what he asks, well and good, for you will be quits; problems arise only if you refuse to pay.

One might wonder how it is that human beings have such a clear sense of the necessity for equilibrium in the exchanges of everyday life. For thousands of years they have striven to perfect instruments with which to calculate weights and measures in order to facilitate commercial exchange. And it was for this same purpose that money was invented. On the material plane everybody understands this; everybody knows what a fair and equitable exchange means. However, this is not enough, for the law of exchange applies on all levels of existence. A man who pays his taxes, gives his employees a fair wage, and never cheats his customers may claim to be honest and just. Perhaps, but how does he treat his parents, or his wife and children?

It is so much easier to be fair and honest on the physical plane than on the psychic plane. In fact, one sometimes meets people who are always calling attention to their honesty and fairness in business and financial dealings, hoping to conceal a lack of honesty in the less clearly defined and far subtler area of their relationships with other human beings. Well, such

people may sometimes deceive others, but they cannot deceive divine justice, whose notion of the true meaning of give and take differs greatly from that of human justice.

Divine justice judges not only your acts, but also your thoughts, feelings, and intentions. If you knowingly give people bad advice or incite them to revolt or despair, you will not be convicted in a court of law, for there is no material or objective evidence of an offence for which you can be condemned. If your victims brought a suit against you for the destruction of their peace of mind, the judge would say that the law has no provision for such a complaint and that he can do nothing for them. Many, many people know that no court of law can punish them for their lies or for their evil thoughts, feelings, and intentions, and because they are sly enough to be always blameless in their acts, they are never indicted.

Some people, for instance, are very skilful in the use of innuendo and enjoy sowing doubt in the minds of others. Suppose a man wants to make trouble for a colleague who is inclined to be jealous of his wife. One morning he casually says: 'I was walking down X street yesterday and I think I saw your wife,' knowing full well that the bad reputation of the street in question will instantly arouse the husband's worst suspicions. That evening, when he gets home, there will be a scene between him and his wife, and only after bitter recriminations and denials will he realize that the tale was not true. But even if the mischief-maker later pretends to be remorseful and apologetic, saying hypocritically that he must have been mistaken, the evil is done; he has succeeded in planting a nagging doubt in the mind of his colleague. Is there a court of law empowered to condemn such an act? No. There are thousands of ways to wrong others without being answerable to human justice, but nobody can escape divine justice.[1]

You may be outwardly honest, you may never be in danger of finding a policeman at your door with a warrant for your arrest, but if you are unfair in your dealings with others, if you have taken and refused to give, there will always be a voice within you to torment you with its accusations. You may not be fully conscious of it, but it will be there. You will have a nagging

sense of disquiet that prevents you from being happy.

One meets so many people who are a prey to this kind of inner disquiet. They cannot put their finger on any particular misfortune, but they constantly feel dissatisfied or dejected, and because they have no idea where the feeling comes from, they blame others for it. They fuel this detrimental inner state by continually finding fault with the way their friends and acquaintances treat them. 'Why does nobody come to see me? Why was I not invited? Why does nobody write to me? Why did nobody admire my new car – or new dress, or new hairstyle? It must be because they do not like me, or because they envy me.' Yes, they have countless reasons for recrimination. Never will they admit that the cause of their disquiet is within themselves.

The real tragedy of human beings is that they always expect something from others, something that no other can give them, and, at the same time, they ignore the precious things they do receive because they are expecting something else. They are always hoping for something different, and because that something does not come, not only are they ungrateful for what they do receive, but they also become vindictive. See for yourselves: do human beings have any gratitude toward their Creator? No, instead of being grateful they are full of recriminations. Do children have any real gratitude toward their parents? No, again; they often criticize or laugh at them. As for the grievances of disciples toward their Master... Why does he not rid them of all their physical and psychic ailments? Why does he not tell them how to find a husband, a wife, or a good job? Why does he not reveal the secrets of initiatic science to them? Their Master gives them all the methods they need to work at their own perfection and become truly radiant, luminous sons and daughters of God, but that is not what they want, and they reproach him for not responding to their needs. For, of course, a Master is there to satisfy the whims and appetites of his disciples – and if you did not already know that, you know it now!

Dear Lord, what can anybody do with such creatures? Is there any wonder that they are eternally miserable? If human beings could only learn

to give a little in exchange for all they receive from the Lord, from their parents, or from their Master, if they have one; if they could only feel a little gratitude, the balance would be restored and they would find peace and joy again. Since an equal balance of give and take is a law of nature you must understand that ingratitude destroys that balance and one day you will receive nothing more.[2]

When a virtuoso – a pianist, for example – gives a concert, he offers his listeners the gift of his inspiration and the fruit of many years of hard work, and if they fail to recognize that gift – if they are noisy or merely inattentive – he will sense the absence of a true exchange. In such conditions even the world's greatest virtuoso will be unable to give all that he is capable of giving. On the other hand, in glancing at his audience he may catch the eye of just one person who is listening with rapturous attention, and then he will play for those eyes. Perhaps he will not even know whether they are the eyes of a man or a woman, but he will play for them, for the light that shines from them in the darkness of the concert-hall, and his genius will come into its own. Human beings need, in one way or another, to sense that their words and gestures meet with a response. If there is no reciprocity, there can be no exchange, and exchange is the law of life.

You will deprive yourselves of a great deal if you fail to recognize the value of what others give you. Even the most patient and generous of beings will end by being discouraged. What is the use of trying to give you something good if you do not even notice it? Those who would like to help you will feel that they are wasting their time and will turn to others who are capable of appreciating what they have to offer. Even a spiritual master is obliged to take this into account, for it is a reality. If he senses an echo in his disciples, he will give them his wealth and knowledge, otherwise he will say nothing. A master will not entrust his precious cargo to a leaking boat. You will perhaps say that you did not know these things, that you did not realize that one had to be so attentive. Well, now is the time to learn the truth. We sometimes speak of 'having commerce' with people, meaning that we have a relationship with them, and commerce, as you know, means an exchange. Think about this and meditate on all the different applications of

this word.

On the physical plane, when you give something away, you no longer have it. And after you have paid for your pound of cherries, there is less money in your purse. But the extraordinary thing is that when you are grateful, even though nobody gives you anything, you actually receive something. Yes, because gratitude opens your heart and soul, and when you open yourself, you receive all that is beautiful and good in nature and in life. Even if the gifts you receive were not specifically destined for you, you receive them, and if those for whom they were destined are ungrateful, they will receive nothing.

In an initiatic school you are taught that the law of exchange is implacable, you cannot get round it: if you take, you are obliged to give. In fact, even if you do not take, you still have to give. Why? Because when you give, you set in motion a process and receive something in return. But begin by learning to give whenever you take – this will already be a step forward.

Start by reviewing your relationships with the beings around you. Take an unbiased look at your behaviour toward your parents, children, friends, and society as a whole, as well as toward nature; and, finally, toward God. You will begin to see that you have taken all kinds of things from visible and invisible beings alike without bothering to give anything in return. This means that you have debts, and you must understand that you have been reincarnated in order to pay those debts. All of us, without exception, have a karmic debt to pay, and it makes no difference whether it is due to an individual or a collective karma. Personal, societal, national, and racial karmas exist, but it is not really necessary to make the distinction. The only thing that matters is that justice obliges us to pay our debts, otherwise our karmic indebtedness grows and grows.

Karma is the consequence of an imbalance of the scales. Once human beings understand the philosophy of equilibrium, they will balance things so well that they will no longer be indicted or condemned by the laws. Listen to

me and try to understand what I am saying. When you hear the word 'justice' your whole being should vibrate at the thought that this word contains all the secrets of cosmic balance.

---

[1] See *Man, Master of his Destiny,* Izvor Coll. n° 202, chap. 4: 'Two Justices: Human and Divine'.

[2] See *Le rire du sage,* Izvor Col. n° 243, chap. 12: 'Remercier, source de lumière et de joie'.

Chapter XIII: The Key and the Lock

Have you ever reflected about what a key is? Several times a day, mechanically, absent-mindedly, you put a key into a lock. You never really think about what a key is – still less does it occur to you to interpret the symbolism of a key and a lock. And yet there is a tremendous science here. How can one hope to resolve life's problems if one has never thought about the meaning of a key and a lock?

Briefly, one could say that a key consists of three parts: a shank, on one end of which is a notched form which moves the bolt of a lock, and on the other, a geometrical form which is usually circular, but which can also be triangular or cruciform. And the function of a key, as all the world knows, is to fit into a lock in order to open or close a door.

Now, let us have another look at the second Tarot card. The High Priestess is seated in front of a veil hanging between two pillars. Her right hand rests on a book lying open on her right knee, and in her left hand she holds two keys, one gold and one silver. The gold key has a triangle at one end and the silver one has a cross. Triangle and gold correspond to the masculine principle, the spirit. The cross and silver correspond to the feminine principle, matter. This means that the knowledge of the two principles is the key that makes it possible to open the great book of nature. You will say, 'But there are two keys!' Yes, but these two keys make up, as it were, a single key: the knowledge of the two principles.

Do you remember what I said about the number Two? According to initiatic science the number Two is not 1+1, it is the polarized One, the One that is both masculine and feminine. We must always bear in mind, therefore, that the One contains the potential Two, and that Two is the polarization of One. When an initiate puts the two keys into the lock (we can see nature as an

immense lock), the door opens – in other words, the veil which hangs between the two pillars of the Temple is drawn aside.

These symbols, the key and the lock, exist in every realm of life. Everywhere there are keys with which to open locked doors, because everywhere there is matter into which the spirit must enter in order to bring to light the treasures locked within.

Cabbalists teach that those who have trodden the thirty-two paths of wisdom are capable of opening the fifty gates of *Binah*. *Binah* is the divine Mother, primordial matter, the purest and subtlest matter. And the heavenly Father is the key that unlocks matter. Those who know how to unlock the door of matter will find it an inexhaustible source of wealth. In a certain sense, one could say that this is what nuclear physicists have done: they have succeeded in opening the door of matter and releasing a tremendous power capable of consuming everything by fire. Scientists have found a key that enables them to split the atom, but they have not yet learned to use it as it should be used for the good of humanity. Only by means of the spirit, the only true key, will they truly succeed in unlocking matter and releasing all its latent possibilities. At the moment, they are still a long way from knowing the secrets of this primordial matter, because their attitude toward the feminine principle is not what it should be. This is why the divine Mother refuses them access to her treasures.

Matter contains all treasures. Yes, but not the matter we are familiar with. This visible matter is only an illusion, a shadow; it is not true matter. Even chemists and physicists do not deal with true matter. When they disintegrate matter they find that it releases energy, but if their instruments were more sophisticated, they would see that the matter they disintegrate is replaced by a subtler, more tenuous form of matter, which belongs to a different region. Human beings will never succeed in disintegrating primordial, ultimate matter; only God can do that. When God eventually disintegrates matter, it will be reabsorbed into the divine being and nothing more will exist. There will be absolute silence; it will be the cosmic night. Until then, the disappearance of matter can be compared to the disappearance of clouds. You have all

seen how, in a perfectly clear blue sky, clouds suddenly begin to form. Where have they come from? And then, just as suddenly, they melt away and nothing is left of them. They were there, and now they are no longer there. In reality, it is simply that the density of the matter of which they were formed has changed. Matter does not actually disappear, for it is the complementary pole of the spirit. Even in nuclear fission matter does not disappear.

For primordial matter to have the power to attract God, and for him to use it in order to create, it must be something extraordinarily vital, pure, and luminous. True matter is the spouse of God, that which cabbalists term *Shekinah*.[1] And although they are not conscious of doing so, human beings repeat these cosmic processes in their lives. They do not realize that in even the simplest acts of life they reproduce the mysteries of creation. A man needs a woman to give form to the energies that emanate from him and bring a child into the world, just as an artist needs matter to provide a form for his ideas. This, too, is the mystery of the key and the lock.

Behind the symbols of key and lock are all powers, all riches. But human beings use their key mechanically in any lock they can find. And what doors do they open in this way? Doors through which every kind of demon enters to fall upon and devour them. Human beings know neither which doors to open nor how to open them. Instead of turning the key to the right, they turn it to the left. And when they want to close a door that they have had the misfortune to open by mistake, they still do not know how to do it, so they allow all kinds of evils to escape. It is a case of Pandora's box all over again.

When human beings consent, at last, to study the key and the lock seriously, they will be given keys with which to open locks that they have never dreamed of. Yes, for the ears, mouth, nostrils, and eyes are all locks. The brain itself is a lock. As long as human beings do not understand this, they will never have the keys they need to open either the doors of nature or their own doors. So many people are still locked up in their own inner dungeon, still disconsolate prisoners surviving on bread and water, whereas if

they had keys to their own doors, they could be enjoying a life of freedom and plenty. People all have their own explanation for their misfortunes, but I tell you that the origin of all your misfortunes is your ignorance of keys and locks.

To sum up, one could say that keys exist in the three worlds of spirit, soul, and body. There are three keys, therefore, which together represent the one key that is to be found only on high. Hermes Trismegistus called this one key that opens all doors Telesma, and said that it was 'the strength of all strengths which overcomes every subtle thing and penetrates every solid substance.' Telesma is a force that comes from the sun, and that is where you must go to look for it. When you are contemplating the sun, ask it to show you this key that will give you eternal life.

---

[1] See *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life,* Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 10: 'The Cosmic Family and the Mystery of the Trinity'.

Chapter XIV: The Work of the Spirit on Matter The Holy Grail

Although the two principles, masculine and feminine – the principles of spirit and matter – originate in the celestial regions on high, they are not restricted to those regions. They manifest and are active on every level of creation, including the physical plane. Indeed, they are active in every area of the physical plane, for polarity is manifested in every area. You yourselves, when you are working, are the spirit acting upon matter. This is true not only when you are actually making something with your hands or cooking a meal, but also when you are working spiritually, for a spiritual activity is also a work of the spirit on matter. 'What matter?' you will ask. Patience! You will soon understand.

As soon as you become aware that certain aspects of yourself need to be improved and you decide to do something about it, you become polarized. One pole is you, the other is the matter on which you have decided to work. Spiritual work requires, first of all, that we know ourselves, that is, that we be capable of distinguishing the self from the non-self. We have to distance ourselves from what we ordinarily think of as the self – which is not our true self – so as to draw closer to the true self, the self that is divine.[1] The simple fact that we want to do this means that we already realize that the 'object' on which we intend to work is not our true self. It is by setting ourselves apart from it that we become polarized.

Polarization takes place as soon as we decide to undertake this work, but it does so without our being aware of it. Gradually, however, as the distance between the self and the non-self becomes greater, we begin to be conscious of being polarized. We become more and more aware of the difference between that part of us that is working, the spirit, and the matter that we are

working on. In the long run, we even begin to realize that our thoughts and feelings are simply tools that are at our service and that we can use for this work. We understand that our true self exists above and beyond our thoughts, feelings, and acts. Our true self neither thinks, nor feels, nor acts: it exists on a higher plane; it is pure light.

To distance oneself from self, however, does not mean a total rupture with self. We do not abandon the self; on the contrary, we keep it well within our sights, and once our thoughts have carried us up to the heavenly regions, we come down again, so as to guide it and work to refine the matter of which it is made. Alternately, then, we go and come back... go and come back. We go heavenwards and, having found strength, enlightenment, and illumination, we come back to take possession once again of our mental, astral, and physical bodies. The physical body is our dwelling place, but in spite of what some materialists would have us believe, we are not in full possession of our bodies until we work on them in this way. On the contrary, we drag them after us, we are buried, crushed, even stifled by them, but we are not really and truly at home in them.

The spirit can be truly at home only in a dwelling place that is fit for it. In the meantime, the spirit – or what we think of as the spirit – accompanies the body wherever it goes, rather as a man and woman stagger along, arm in arm with each other. Yes, this may seem a strange comparison, but it is a picture of all those who have not yet understood that they have work to do on themselves, that they must work to release the divine principle within them, so that it may soar to the greatest possible heights and, on its return, purify and illuminate its dwelling place.

Suppose you are given a piece of land which has never been cultivated and which is covered with weeds. You have the choice of leaving it in its uncultivated state or of clearing and ploughing it. If you do the latter, you can sow seeds and water them and, after a while, reap a magnificent harvest of grain, fruit, vegetables, or flowers. By tending your land, you will be 'spiritualizing' it. But before starting to work the ground, you will have to procure the tools you need.

Take another example. Many men, unable to earn enough to provide for their families, go in search of work in another country. Then, when they have earned some money, they come home again, happy in the knowledge that they now have enough to take care of their wives and children. But it is only if they begin by leaving home for a while that, when they come back, they can take care of the needs of those they love. This is exactly what disciples are doing when they pray and meditate – with the one great difference, of course, that the spirit does not leave the physical body for several years, but only for a few moments. If the spirit constantly adhered to the physical body, it would be unable to do much to help it, so it goes 'abroad' to earn some money – I should say, rather, to acquire some light. And when it comes back, it communicates this light to the body and all its inhabitants, thus enlightening, vivifying, purifying, and regenerating them. If you sometimes have a sense of emptiness and loss, it is because your spirit is away on a journey. There is no need to worry when this occurs. Your spirit will soon be back, and when it returns, you will feel active and creative once again.

Those who are unwilling to travel abroad have to plod on, laboriously dragging their bodies with them. And when I speak of their bodies, I am referring particularly to the brain, for if they never go abroad, the brain will never be fit to understand the great mysteries of nature or to find the best solutions to life's problems. This alternation of distance and closeness, therefore, is essential. It is this double movement that is symbolized by the two triangles of the Seal of Solomon: the spirit (the triangle that points downward) incarnates by descending into matter, and matter (the triangle that points upward) must strive to refine and purify itself so that it no longer resists the vibrations of the spirit which is working to restore it to its pristine purity and light. Alchemists called this double process *solve* and *coagula* – dissolution and coagulation.

If you want the spirit to come to you, you must dedicate yourself to heaven. Say: 'Angels of God, archangels and divinities, you who serve Almighty God and the divine Mother, take possession of all that I have and

am, so that the kingdom of God may come on earth, so that mankind may know the Golden Age.' Until you have dedicated yourself in this way, your orientation will not really be fixed and you will be no use either to yourself or to anybody else. You will not even know for whom you are working.

There is a war going on in the world between the powers of light and the powers of darkness, and if we want to contribute to the triumph of light, we must begin by ridding our inner being of all that is dim and dark. In this way we shall be carrying out the programme that Jesus gave us in the *Lord's Prayer*[2] : *'Hallowed be your name (in our minds); May your kingdom come* (in our hearts); *May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven,'* and this last will be the consequence of the first two.

Every individual is visited either by luminous spirits or by spirits of darkness, for human beings are a source of nourishment for both. Depending on the orientation of our lives and the ideal that animates us, we attract entities either from heaven or from hell. Our task, therefore, is to work on the matter of our own being in every way possible in order to attract luminous spirits and become fit to receive the Deity within us. The Deity will not descend into a dirty vessel. It can only descend into a luminous, crystalline vessel such as the Holy Grail.

In the light of our teaching – a teaching which embraces all spiritual traditions down the ages and which animates these symbols and gives us the key to their meaning – the legend of the Holy Grail is of special significance. According to this legend, the chalice of the Grail was carved out of the emerald that fell from Lucifer's brow when he was cast into the abyss. This was the chalice that Jesus used at the Last Supper and in which Joseph of Arimathea is said to have collected a few drops of Jesus' blood after the crucifixion. Joseph of Arimathea bequeathed this chalice to his son, and all trace of it was eventually lost. A great many people have since tried to find it, but in vain.

The emerald chalice is the feminine principle – green is the colour of the purest aspect of Venus. It is the receptacle, the material form which

receives and protects within itself the masculine principle. And the masculine principle, the spirit, is symbolized by the blood – red is the colour of Mars. According to initiatic science, this legend means that the Grail represents the body of the ideal human being, the physical body of all those who have learned to work on their own matter until it is so pure, so stainless and incorruptible, that it becomes a vessel fit to receive the most precious quintessence, the blood of Christ, the spirit.

Every disciple of an initiatic school is a Parsifal setting out on his quest of the Grail. But in reality our quest must take place within ourselves. The Grail is our body, not only our physical body, but also our astral and mental bodies, respectively the site of feelings and thoughts. Indeed, the fact that we are alive means that our body already contains divine life, the spirit, the blood of Christ, but it is an imperfect vessel. We still have a great deal of work to do before it is as resplendent and as marvellously effective as the Holy Grail. According to the legend, those who went in quest of the Grail were knights, for the virtues required of those who undertake such a quest are those usually attributed to a knight: fearlessness, fortitude, loyalty, fidelity, and nobility. Our teaching gives us all the methods we need to cultivate these virtues.

Many people are afraid to embark on the spiritual life because they have the impression that they would be taking a blind leap into space. And, of course, it is very dangerous to leap into space until one has grown wings. But those who leap into space because they are animated by a genuine desire to serve the spirit will not fall. Their wings will unfold and they will fly. It is not because you remain immersed in matter that you will be spared a fall – on the contrary – and if some of those who choose the spiritual life do fall, it is because their choice was made from motives that were not pure, selfless, and truly spiritual.

Try to see the future that lies before you. Once you discover the wonders of the spiritual life, you will find that they are far more precious than silver or gold. You will perhaps say: 'Yes, but one day you told us that you possessed the secret for obtaining gold. That must mean that you, too, are

interested in gold.' Yes, I told you that, but you have forgotten what I added. I said that when one aspires to the highest degrees of initiation, one must never again use one's knowledge or powers for material wealth, only for spiritual wealth.(* *On another occasion, in a similar context, the Master said: 'True human strength and greatness lie in never using one's powers for one's own benefit. Those who use magical rites for the purpose of acquiring love, glory, or money, or in order to rid themselves of an enemy, are practising black magic. True magic, divine magic, consists in employing all one's faculties and all one's knowledge for the sole purpose of realizing the kingdom of God in oneself and in others. Very few magi reach the highest degree, the level on which one has no interest in magic for its own sake, the level on which one no longer uses magical rites or attempts to command the spirits in order to achieve a purely personal ambition, the level on which one's sole idea is to work in the light and for the sake of light. Those who reach this level are the true theurgists. Only they practise divine magic, only their work is totally unselfish. Such as these are the benefactors of humanity.'*) One day, wanting to see for myself whether the method I had learned was really effective, I put it to the test and a few days later I received several small gold coins. Oh, you need not look so amazed – it did not amount to much. Ah, you want to know what I did with those coins? I gave them away. Do you also want to know to whom I gave them? How inquisitive you are! I gave them to some children. I magnetized those little coins and gave each one to a child as a talisman. What else would you have wanted me to do with them? My only interest was to test the method I had learned about. I tested it, I saw that it worked, and that was enough for me. My mind is on other things. My work is elsewhere.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'Hallowed be your name' – *Matt. 6: 10*

Jesus gives wine to his disciples – *Matt. 26: 27-29*

Joseph of Arimathea – *John 19: 38*

[1] See *Man's Psychic Life: Elements and Structures,* Izvor Coll. n° 222, chap. 13: 'The Higher Self'.

[2] See *'Notre Père',* Brochure n° 313.

Chapter XV: Union of the Ego with the Physical Body

The destiny of beings that incarnate in a human form on earth is determined to a great extent by their gender. This is why the first thing parents in every country of the world want to know about their child is whether it is a boy or girl, for, depending on their physical structure, human beings are predestined for certain functions or types of activity rather than others. We do not expect men to manifest physically, emotionally, or mentally in exactly the same way as women, and vice versa. They both have their respective faculties and qualities to develop, for they both have their respective roles to play.

On the physical plane a human being must be either a man or a woman, and, generally speaking, the difference is quite clear. On the psychic plane, however, the question is far more complex, for on this plane every human being possesses both principles. Men cannot be clearly identified with the masculine principle, neither can women be identified with the feminine principle. Initiates of past ages, meditating on the enigmas of human nature, translated these ideas into geometrical figures, symbols, or myths. In the Chinese symbol Yang-Yin, the feminine form, which is black, contains a white dot, and the masculine form, which is white, contains a black dot. This expresses the idea that the masculine always contains an element of the feminine and the feminine always contains an element of the masculine. In Greek and Roman mythology we find the same idea expressed in paintings or sculptures of a bearded Aphrodite (Venus) or of Zeus (Jupiter) with both a beard and the breasts of a woman.

Living men and women are not abstract principles; each one is a combination of masculine and feminine in unequal proportions. Not only that,

but from one incarnation to the next, their gender may well change. Cosmic intelligence has ordained that human beings must experience both states, both conditions, in order to evolve and become perfect; only in this way can they acquire the qualities of both principles in all their fullness. It can happen, therefore, that a woman is in reality a man hidden within a feminine form, and in this case you would not find the feminine principle that you might be looking for in her. Why does this being have the physical form of a woman although her temperament is that of a man? In order that she may learn to temper the masculine principle which caused her, in a past incarnation, to be too harsh and tyrannical. Having the appearance of a woman, she is obliged to develop qualities that are proper to the feminine principle. And just as there are women who are inwardly men, so there are men who are inwardly women and who are ill at ease in their male body.

Most human beings possess a similar proportion of the two principles and are thus able to adapt equally well to either a male or a female body. In others this is not the case, and this explains many cases of homosexuality. Some individuals find the complementary principle they need in people of the same sex, for, generally speaking, it is not so much the external, physical form that counts, but the feeling one has in the presence of that form. They are drawn to a being – man or woman – in whom they find the complementary principle on both the psychic and the spiritual planes.

A spirit or soul unites itself to a physical body for a single lifetime. At death the two are separated, and later, in a subsequent incarnation, another union is formed. The human ego is neither man nor woman; only when it incarnates on earth does it become one or the other, depending on whether it is positively or negatively polarized. If it is positively polarized, it usually incarnates in the form of a woman in order to possess the two principles. Similarly, if it is negatively polarized it will incarnate as a man. You are perhaps wondering what determines the polarization of the human ego: it all depends on its degree of evolution and on the work it still needs to accomplish in order to achieve perfection.

Our incarnation on earth is already, in a way, a form of marriage.[1] The

first marriage of every human being is the union of the ego with its physical body, and this marriage obliges us to be faithful.

---

[1] See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature,* Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 8: 'Le vrai mariage'.

Chapter XVI: The Sacrament of the Eucharist

If some of you think that I attach undue importance to the question of the masculine and feminine principles, it is because you have never learned to interpret certain passages of the Gospels.

I recommend that you read again the account in St John's Gospel of the conversation between Nicodemus and Jesus. Nicodemus was a Doctor of the Law in Israel, and, fearing to compromise his position in the eyes of the other members of the Sanhedrin, he went to see Jesus at night. In answer to his questions, Jesus revealed, in symbolic terms, a truth of such wealth that it can never be exhausted. He said: *'Very truly, I tell you, no-one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit.'* What is water? The feminine principle. And what is spirit? The masculine principle.[1]

Another passage of the Gospels is equally important for the understanding of the two principles. This is the passage that tells us of Jesus' words during the last meal he took with his disciples. While they were eating, Jesus took some bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: *'Take, eat; this is my body.'* Then he took a cup of wine, blessed it and passed it to them, saying: *'Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood. Do this in remembrance of me.'*[2] During Mass, the priest repeats these words and gestures. You cannot understand the true meaning of the Mass if you do not understand that it is a magic rite, of which Communion is the most significant moment. The bread and wine represent the two eternal principles, masculine and feminine, which underlie the whole of creation.

Why is it that in the Catholic Church the faithful receive only the host, the bread, the body of Christ, which represents the masculine principle? Only the priest receives the wine, the blood of Christ, the feminine principle.

This means that the faithful are nourished by only the masculine principle; the feminine principle is missing.

For me, these things are sacred, and I have no wish to interfere in the affairs of the Catholic Church, but the day will perhaps come when it realizes that there is something not quite complete here. I do not know why this custom was adopted; for all I know, there may be very good reasons and it is not my business. But true Communion requires the two principles, and the absence of one of them creates an imbalance.

You will perhaps say that this does not really matter, that Communion is a purely symbolic act and the host in the ciborium can equally well represent both the body and the blood of Christ. No, on the contrary, every aspect of a symbolic act has to be taken into account if we are to understand its meaning. The important thing is not that the faithful swallow a host or eat some bread and drink some wine – it is not this that will make them healthier or less healthy. The important thing is that they understand the symbol, and if the form in which the symbol is presented to them is incomplete, their understanding of it will also be incomplete.

The absence of the feminine principle in Communion is charged with consequence. The Catholic Church has deprived religion of something that is essential to the understanding of the great mysteries of life. Life cannot be born of one principle alone; it is born of the union of the two, masculine and feminine. Can you picture a wedding at which only the bridegroom was present? I think that the wedding guests would not be very pleased to hear the announcement that the bride was staying at home, but that it did not matter, they would go on with the ceremony without her. Nowhere is such a thing possible. Even in countries where women are shut away from public gaze, a bride is always present at the wedding. She may be veiled, but she is there. At a wedding ceremony, both the man and the woman are present, because they represent the two principles, by means of which life continues to perpetuate itself.

The Eucharist and Marriage are two sacraments which celebrate the union

of the masculine and feminine principles, the means by which all life, from the highest to the lowest level of creation, is perpetuated. The only difference between them is that Marriage concerns principally the physical and social plane, whereas the Eucharist concerns the spiritual plane and the inner life. But the symbolism is the same, and it is this symbol that we find at the beginning and at the end of Jesus' public life. According to the Gospel of St John, Jesus performed his first miracle when, as a guest at a wedding in Cana of Galilee, he changed water into wine. The fact that Jesus was not only present at the wedding but also that he worked his first miracle there shows that the ceremony held a great deal more meaning for him than for most. And the institution of the Eucharist was the last thing he did before his death. How can we fail to see that the whole of Jesus' teaching rests on a knowledge of the two principles?

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

Nicodemus goes to see Jesus at night – *John 3: 1-21*

'Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and spirit' – *John 3: 5*

'Take, eat; this is my body' – *Matt. 26: 27-28*

'Do this in remembrance of me' – *Luke 22: 19*

Jesus changes water into wine – *John 2: 1-12*

---

[1] See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water,* Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 1: 'The Two Principles of Creation, Water and Fire'.

[2] See *The True Meaning of Christ's Teaching,* Izvor Coll. n° 215, chap. 6: 'He That Eateth My Flesh and Drinketh My Blood Hath Eternal Life'.

Chapter XVII: The Androgynes of Myth

I

In *The Symposium*, Plato recounts the myth of the primitive androgynes. In very early times, it was said, the human beings who inhabited the earth were simultaneously male and female. They were spherical in shape, with four legs, four arms, two faces, two genital organs, and so on. These extraordinarily vigorous and masterful creatures were so keenly aware of their power that they dared to attack the gods themselves. Faced with this threat, the gods sought a way to disarm them, and it was Zeus who found that the solution was to split them in two. This was duly done, and that is why, from that day to this, these separate halves of single beings, yearning to unite and recover their original wholeness, roam the world in search of their missing half.

This notion of a primitive, androgynous being, a perfect being who possessed the characteristics of both sexes, is found in one form or another in most of the major religious and philosophical traditions. Even in *Genesis,* certain cabbalists find a trace of it in the episode in which God makes Eve from one of Adam's ribs. They see this as an account of the separation of the sexes. Alchemists also find this double polarity of masculine and feminine in the mineral world, and they express it in the symbol of the Rebis (from the Latin *res bina,* double thing). The Rebis is an egg-shaped figure (the egg symbolizes totality) enclosing a body with two heads: the head of a man surmounted by the sun, the masculine principle, and that of a woman surmounted by the moon, the feminine principle. All these traditions express the idea that creation is the result of the polarization of unity. Each human

being is one half of a whole, and as men and women sense this, they have a constant sense of being incomplete and cannot rest until they find their other half.

Thus, the whole human saga can be summed up as the quest for a lost half. Men and women throughout the world pursue this one goal. They do not know why they seek each other out, but they continue to do so. They have an instinct, an inner voice, that tells them that in this way they will recover their original wholeness. From time to time, for a few minutes or a few seconds, they may enjoy an indescribable sense of happiness, of mysterious fulfilment, but the sensation never lasts. It is always followed by disappointment and distress. In spite of this, they continue to hope and to seek someone or something else.

Why does this situation continue? And why do human beings never fulfil their deepest aspirations? Because the union they are seeking is not one that concerns primarily the physical plane. Union on the physical plane should be a consequence, the fruit of a work that has already been accomplished on the psychic and spiritual planes. If this is not the case, the best one can hope for is some fleeting gratification and pleasure. There are some rare beings who have succeeded in finding a true and lasting unity on the physical plane, but this is because they had previously done a great deal of inner work.[1] It is primarily within themselves that human beings must strive to unite the two principles. This is the philosophy of androgyny, and it is the most exalted of all philosophies.

There is one particularly significant detail in the myth recounted by Plato, and that is the way Zeus found to undermine the power of these creatures who were threatening the gods: he split them in two. The conclusion is obvious: the power of a human being lies in possessing the two principles. It is when human beings possess both the masculine and feminine principles that they are like gods.

As a matter of fact, even in their present incomplete state, all human beings possess both principles, even on the physical plane. Yes, the mouth

is both masculine and feminine, for in the mouth is the tongue, which represents the masculine principle, and the lips, which represent the feminine principle, and together they produce a child: speech, words. This is why we can say that the true power of a human being is in the power of words. Think of it for a moment: by our words alone we can obtain results equal to any obtained by other material means. We can build up or destroy; we can gather and separate; we can restore peace or declare war; we can heal or cause disease. When the androgynes of primitive times were split in two, one might say that, symbolically, women retained the lips, the feminine principle, and men the tongue, the masculine principle. This is why, in order to recover the power they once possessed, they seek to unite. This is the remote origin of the impulse to unite which is common to all men and women.

Although this impulse often seems to be no more than the pursuit of pleasure or a form of play, the underlying meaning is always the same: the urge to recover the unity of the divine Word, the unity of the creative principle, which is both male and female. In the upper part of their bodies, men and women possess these two principles in their mouths, in which the tongue and the lips are united. This means that although no man or woman can create a child alone, each can be creative by means of speech, thanks to the two principles contained in their mouth.[2]

The Gospels in their entirety are an illustration of this idea. It was through the power of speech that Jesus worked miracles. To the paralytic he said: *'Stand up, take your mat and walk.'* When he brought Lazarus back to life, he stood before his tomb and cried out in a loud voice: *'Lazarus, come out!'* When he brought the daughter of Jairus back to life, he called out: *'Child, get up!'* To the demon who had taken possession of a man, he simply said: *'Go!'* and the demon left him. When he healed a leper, he said: *'Be made clean!'* And when he calmed the storm, he said to the waters: *'Peace! Be still!'*

I have often told you that we have much to learn from the way our physical bodies are designed. As far as the two principles are concerned, our bodies teach us that it is only in the world below, on the physical plane, that they are separate. Physically, a human being must be either a man or a

woman. Hermaphrodites are extremely rare. But on high, on the divine plane, the two principles are united, just as they are united in our mouth. This is why, on the higher planes, human beings are creators and live in freedom and fulfilment. All their difficulties arise because, when they descend and incarnate, all their attention is taken up by their physical appearance as either man or woman so that they forget that on the higher, divine plane they are both. The task of an initiate is to remind them of this.

Now when I speak of a higher plane, you must not think that this plane is light-years away. No, the higher plane is also within us; it is the higher part of ourselves. A woman must realize that the masculine principle is within her, that it is waiting for her in her higher self, and that, at the end of her spiritual quest, it will reveal itself to her and give her strength, knowledge, and wisdom. And in a man, it is the feminine principle that is within his higher self, waiting to give him true beauty, love, and divine life in all its fullness.

True initiation is the inner process by which a human being becomes one with the complementary aspect of his or her being. This is why initiates never feel deprived or isolated. As countless men and women can attest, it is not the bonds of the flesh that prevent human beings from feeling less lonely. However many relationships or amorous experiences they may have, inwardly they are desolate and alone. Yes, because it is inwardly, on the psychic and spiritual planes, that these relationships should be taking place. On the lower, physical plane, we can find only what we have already achieved on the higher plane. Outside ourselves, we can find only what we have already achieved within.

The extraordinary thing about human beings is that when you tell them something about love and sexuality with the intention of helping them they always tend to misinterpret it. As soon as one tries to explain, for instance, that they will never find what they are looking for if they cling to the same old point of view, the same old attitudes, they imagine that one wants to stop them loving and being happy. Experience has shown them dozens of times already that those attitudes bring nothing but failure and disappointment, and yet they are determined to continue in the same old way. According to them,

it is not their understanding that is at fault; no, no, it is simply that they have not yet met their soul-mate. Happiness, in their minds, is a question of meeting the right person. So they keep looking for their soul-mate. They study their horoscopes and consult clairvoyants in order to find out if this meeting will soon take place. Or else they wait for their master to introduce them to the person that Providence has destined for them.

Unfortunately, this is not how things happen, for the soul-mate is primarily a spiritual notion. Soul-mates are drawn to each other as love and wisdom are drawn to each other. Soul-mates are the soul and spirit that seek each other out in order to unite. According to initiatic science, soul-mates are a reiteration of the two great eternal principles, masculine and feminine. It is important to understand this correctly. A soul-mate is not a man or woman whom you might be fortunate enough to meet in the street and with whom you fall in love at first sight. To meet one's soul-mate is, first and foremost, a psychic process in which, as I have just explained, the higher part of one's being attracts its complement. And this can only be achieved after working for a very long time to identify and fuse with one's higher self. A woman who is mediocre cannot attract an archangel, and a man who is mediocre will not attract the Queen of heaven. But those who make an effort to become worthy of their divine half will attract it. A bond will grow up between them, for their divine half dwells within them. Those who have truly found their soul-mate in this way love all men and all women on earth. They can love them spiritually because they are fulfilled by the presence of their soul-mate.

Whatever you do, therefore, if you want to find your soul-mate, you must not begin by seeking it outside yourself. Work with light and your soul-mate will come to you, drawn by the light that shines within you. You may not know where to find it, but it knows where to find you. Do not try to find your soul-mate for yourself, because you will almost certainly fail. You must be content to wait for it inwardly. It will come.

The only true union is the inner fusion between you and the divine principle that dwells within you. Once you have succeeded in igniting the

spark, you will sense that your whole being vibrates in unison with immensity, that you melt into one with the universe, and the whole of your existence will be transformed by this experience. The important thing is to achieve this fusion at least once, for the experience will live on like a drop of light within you. You will have found yourself, and you must continue to sustain that union until you achieve the perfection of all knowledge and all power. It is only then that your real work can begin. You will have passed over to the other shore; you will be on the path of perfection, but you still have a long way to go. You will have captured one drop of light, and thanks to that one drop, you can drink from – and rejoice in – the ocean of light. But you are not yet in possession of the whole ocean. You must continue to advance until you become one with the ocean of divine light. Only then will you have truly found yourself.

Once you find your complementary principle, you will sense that you meet it wherever you turn; in all beings, in the whole of nature. You will no longer feel the inner emptiness that you are always trying to fill. You will sense that you are enriched by every encounter. Once you achieve fulfilment, you will recognize your complementary principle in all other beings; you will be fulfilled through them. These are things that can neither be explained nor adequately described. Only those who have experienced them can understand. There is still much ground to be covered before you reach this point; so much suffering, so many disappointments, so much seeking without finding! Perhaps, one day, you will say: 'Ah, this is it, I have found it at last!' And then, before long, you may realize that the one you have found is not the one you were really looking for. Perhaps this one? Perhaps that one? And this vain search will go on until you finally understand that it is only within yourself that it can be found. And it is when you find it within yourself that you find it also everywhere outside yourself.

Now, you must not misunderstand me. I am not advising against physical union; I am not condemning it. I simply want to make it clear to you that if you really wish to find fulfilment on the physical plane, you must begin by uniting the two principles within you. If both partners in a marriage are conscious of the work that needs to be done, they will be precious

collaborators for each other. By their attitude and their thoughts they will help each other to discover the complementary principle within, and in the unity thus restored they will sense that they have found the paradise that was lost.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

'Stand up, take your mat and walk' – *Matt. 9: 6*

'Lazarus, come out!' – *John 11: 44*

'Child, get up!' – *Mark 5: 41*

'Go!' – *Mark 5: 8*

'Be made clean!' – *Luke 5: 13*

'Peace! Be still!' – *Mark 4: 39*

II

The Gospels tell of a conversation between Jesus and a group of Sadducees who came to question him about the resurrection of the dead.[3] Jesus told them: *'When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.'* Many people have thought that this meant that the angels were asexual and that in the next world, therefore, there will be neither men nor women, but only asexual spirits. This is a false interpretation. In order to understand what Jesus was saying, you

need a few correct notions, which I shall now give you.

When we speak of spirits, we are speaking of discarnate beings, and this implies nothing about the question of sex. Spirits do not have a physical body and therefore do not have a sex in the sense in which we understand it. However, since spirits are polarized, they are not truly asexual. In every region and on every level of the universe, all the way to the very throne of God, polarization exists, for there can be no manifestation without polarization. Manifestation supposes polarization, and polarization supposes manifestation. Do away with polarization and there is no more manifestation; everything sinks back into the primordial abyss, which is the state of non-differentiation.

Thus spirits are polarized as masculine and feminine, and the relationships, the exchanges, that take place between them are more beautiful than anything we could imagine. Unlike humans on earth, angels are not united by the bonds of marriage, but they are constantly united in an intercourse of love, and from this intercourse is born a rich and abundant life that flows out to the entire universe. The fact that they are free, that they have neither wife nor husband, does not mean that there is no intercourse between them. On the contrary, just as the sun's rays penetrate the whole of creation, so do angels penetrate each other with the pure rays of their love. They live in a perpetual state of beauty and joy.

Surely it is not so difficult to understand this? If you learned to observe yourselves, you would realize that much of your emotional life is made up of such spiritual intercourse. You leave home in the morning and meet men and women who are your friends, for whom you feel affection or admiration. You greet them, they return your greeting, and the exchange makes you feel happy. In such an exchange the intermediary is your heart, mind, soul, or spirit. And even if the men and women you meet in the flesh never spark your love and admiration, you can always hear on the radio or see on television others who do inspire such feelings. There are also the books you read, the music you listen to, the works of art you contemplate which give you a sense of wonder. Is this not an exchange, intercourse, between

yourself and other beings? Artists, by means of their masterpieces, give you something, and you, by your admiration and love, give them something in exchange. You will say: 'But many of them are already dead!' Physically, yes, but the souls and spirits that created these masterpieces are immortal, and they continue to nourish your soul and spirit.

So, as you see, it is simple: the spirits of the invisible world enjoy such intercourse. They meet in space, greet each other, and go on their way. The fact that they have no physical body does not mean that they have no intercourse. And this is true for you too: you have intercourse with thousands of non-physical beings of all kinds. You do not kiss everyone you meet. You do not go to bed with everyone. But you are constantly meeting other people and other beings, who nourish you and make you happy.[4]

Love as most people understand it is a veritable slavery. There are no words to express the imperfections of a love so limited, possessive, jealous, and cruel. You will object that you cannot get away from the fact that you have a body; you cannot manifest as though you were an angel. Well, let me tell you that it is not your body that is the main obstacle to a spiritual manifestation of love: it is your unruly psychic life, your intemperate appetite for possessions, your need to impose your will on others, your mercenary spirit, your jealousy and desire for revenge. It is not the body that constitutes an obstacle to this spiritual conception of love, for the soul and spirit are just as real as the physical body.

Our souls exist, our spirits exist, and they are capable of intercourse with all the other souls and spirits in the universe. One day, when human beings are tired of suffering, they will be obliged to change their understanding of love in many ways. You will say: 'You are preaching a philosophy of free love.' No, not at all! The love that I am talking about is a love that sets people free, not a licentiousness that enslaves them. It is up to you now to find this love that will set you free.

BIBLICAL REFERENCES

‘When they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage’ – *Mark 12: 25*

---

[1] See *Sexual Force or the Winged Dragon,* Izvor Coll. n° 205, chap. 4: ‘Pleasure: I. Do not Seek Pleasure for it Will Impoverish You – II. Replace Pleasure with Work’.

[2] See *Langage symbolique, langage de la nature,* Complete Works, vol. 8, chap. 10: ‘Comment les deux principes sont contenus dans la bouche’.

[3] See *Christmas and Easter in the Initiatic Tradition,* Izvor Coll. n° 209, chap. 5: ‘The Resurrection and the Last Judgment’.

[4] See *The Yoga of Nutrition,* Izvor Coll. n° 204, chap. 11: ‘The Law of Symbiosis’.

Chapter XVIII: Union with the Universal Soul and the Cosmic Spirit

Who or what is God? Many philosophers, theologians, and mystics have struggled to answer this question, but none has really succeeded, because words cannot explain God. Only when we lose ourselves in God and become one with him can we know what he is. But this knowledge will be ours alone. It is not something that we can explain to others.[1]

I have already explained to you that the entity or being we call 'God' is both masculine and feminine. When we speak of the cosmic spirit and the universal soul, we are speaking about God as a single, unique being who is polarized. Although we can neither describe nor even conceive of such a being, we can draw closer to it. Through meditation and prayer, our spirit enters into communion with the universal soul, and our soul with the cosmic spirit. It is in this way that a perfect fusion can take place.

The subject most frequently treated in Christian art is, without doubt, the Virgin and Child. Usually, what we see is a simple picture that touches our hearts, a portrait of a woman, Mary, with her son, Jesus. But initiates see something more. They see the twofold principle, the masculine and feminine, the divine Mother bearing the cosmic spirit. And seeing this, they see a reference to the most mysterious aspect of religion, that which cabbalists express by inscribing the letter Yod within the letter Heh, . Of course, there is no possible comparison between the soul and spirit of a human being and the soul and spirit of the cosmos, and yet, in their essence, they are identical. This is why our souls and spirits need to fuse with these divine entities, the eternal Masculine and the eternal Feminine. Our souls rise to unite with the cosmic spirit and our spirit unites with the universal soul. In

this way, our two spiritual entities establish a relationship of exchange with these divine entities. The masculine aspect of ourselves unites with the feminine aspect of God, while the feminine aspect of ourselves unites with the masculine aspect of God. But how much work needs to be done before fusion can take place!

The only people who have not only understood this but also devoted their whole lives to living it are the initiates and the great mystics, and in doing so, they have enjoyed boundless delights. How could we explain their behaviour otherwise? Perhaps you think that they were poor, unfortunate creatures who, for no apparent reason – perhaps because they were not quite right in the head – abandoned all earth's pleasures to live in solitude and privation, in the aridity of the desert. Oh no! they went out in search of the greatest of riches, the most perfect fulfilment. All religions tell us that we must adore and pray to God, but do you know why? These precepts are based on the laws that govern the relationship between human beings and God, between the human soul and spirit and the cosmic soul and spirit. We are dealing here with the most secret arcana of initiatic science. This is why I cannot reveal everything to you, but I can at least point you in the right direction.

The human soul and spirit are not the brain-children of some woolly-minded thinkers. They are realities which correspond to cosmic realities. Whatever name we choose to give them, we all possess a fragment of these two creative principles. The human body is an image of the created universe, and the human soul and spirit, which we cannot see, are reflections of the two great principles, masculine and feminine, cosmic spirit and universal soul.

You may ask why, if this is true, you are so limited on the physical plane. Why? Because in previous incarnations you did not pay enough attention to your soul and spirit. Your efforts were mostly centred on your heart and mind, and because the heart and mind, which represent the inferior aspect of the soul and spirit, were not illuminated by their divine counterparts, they prompted you to act in your own interest, to satisfy your own selfish

desires. In their turn, heart and mind fashion the physical body, for the form of the physical body is determined by the forces that reign on the level immediately above it, the forces of the astral plane – the heart – and of the mental plane – the mind. The first task of those who choose the spiritual life, therefore, is to purify, ennoble, and enlighten their hearts and minds through the power of the soul and spirit.

All that exists on the physical plane was first created on high, on the divine plane, by the cosmic spirit and the universal soul. It is thanks to their union, their intercourse, that the whole of space is filled with constellations, nebulae, and galaxies, and the myriad beings that dwell in them. We, too, are their creation. We, too, can create as they do. Yes, we, too, have the power to create as God creates, but only when we become fully conscious, when we are free, when the masculine and feminine principles within us attain their full potential. And before this can happen, we must unite with God. Prayer, meditation, and contemplation are the means, the only means, by which we can understand all divine mysteries and become creators. Our desire to rise to divine heights and penetrate the universal soul, the light that is the matter of creation, enables our spirit to fertilize it. In return, our soul receives the seed of the cosmic spirit and gives birth to divine children – revelations, joy, and noble actions.

When we pray or meditate, our soul is drawn to the universal spirit and our spirit to the universal soul, and it is in their coming together that we find fulfilment. It is this union that gives meaning to prayer and meditation. If it were not for this, what would be the point of praying? Prayer is not a question of asking God for things: 'Lord, I want this... I need that...' No, prayer allows us to discover the true dimensions of our being. The purpose of prayer is precisely this meeting between something within ourselves and something of the same nature in the universe. And this meeting is a crossing, the cross-fertilization of two polarized entities. This is the greatest secret of religion, this mutual penetration in which the human soul is wedded to the divine spirit and the human spirit to the universal soul. Our soul is fertilized by the cosmic spirit and our spirit fertilizes the universal soul. God is androgynous, and human beings, in their soul and spirit, are also

androgynous.

If men and women were sufficiently highly evolved to achieve this meeting of their souls and spirits, their love would be an abundant, inexhaustible source of riches and joys. Unfortunately, the only meeting between them is usually that of their bodies, and this inevitably results in misunderstandings and disappointments. So, while waiting to attain a degree of evolution sufficient to enable you to give each other this abundance, try at least to find it on a higher plane by uniting yourselves to the universal soul and the cosmic spirit.

Those who succeed in reaching the realms of divine light and love receive a current of very pure, very potent particles which flows into them, penetrating the innermost depths of their being and nourishing all the cells of their body. But a great deal of preparation is necessary before we can safely receive this current, for it is so unbelievably powerful that it burns everything that stands in its way, every trace of impurity. It becomes a terrible fire which can cause a great deal of damage to one's psychic, and even physical, health, triggering uncontrollable sensuality, mental derangement, and physiological disorders of the heart and brain.

Yes, it is important to know that these practices require lengthy preparation. It is not enough merely to wish to meet the cosmic spirit or universal soul. Wishing will not make it so. It is essential to do a great deal of preliminary work in order to purify oneself. I have already said this hundreds of times – but I repeat it today, because I can see that it is far from being understood: it is dangerous to try to penetrate the spiritual world without having purified oneself.[2] This must be absolutely clear. The desire to attain the universal soul and the cosmic spirit must be inspired by the highest possible ideal, by the single-minded need to perfect oneself and serve the will of God.

When we study initiatic science, we are dealing not only with forms of knowledge that concern the intellect, but also with realms that affect every aspect of human beings and their deepest and most intimate resources. For

this reason we must proceed with extreme caution. To work with the soul and the spirit is to work with the two creative principles, and this means that we are approaching the most powerful forces and beings in the universe. Insofar as they create life, the sexual organs of men and women are the physical equivalent of the soul and spirit, and those who play with the powers of the soul and spirit are like the sorcerer's apprentice: they are soon powerless to control the tremendous forces they have unleashed which create havoc even in the physical body.

Those who approach initiatic science in the hope of obtaining powers that will make them rich and allow them to dominate others are exposing themselves to grave danger, for when the currents of energy reach them and enter channels that are clogged and impure, they cause their organism to overheat and trigger an excitement that affects even the genital organs. You must not close your eyes to this reality. There have been many cases in history of people who dabbled in the occult and who, to the astonishment of all, came to a very bad end. For years they seemed to be beings of wisdom and spirituality, who spent their time in study, reflection, and meditation. Then, all of a sudden, as though an uncontrollable force had taken hold of them, they gave themselves up to senseless acts of debauchery and violence. Their few successes had turned their heads. They had never understood that the higher one's aspirations, the more altruism and humility one must demand of oneself. Instead, they wanted everything for themselves, and their greed and ambition created such an accumulation of obstacles and impurities within them that these terrifyingly powerful forces swept away everything in their path. They fell victim to their own high ambitions.

There is also the danger of considering the spiritual life as a drug, an opiate. I sometimes receive letters from people who tell me of all the suffering, failures, and disappointments they have experienced in the past. But now, they say, they have found initiatic science and it has changed their lives, and they expect me to be pleased by the changes they describe. The truth is that, far from delighting me, what they say causes me some concern, for what they are expressing is primarily a desire to avoid work,

effort, or responsibility of any kind, as though the spiritual life consisted in being carried along effortlessly by agreeable currents, in drifting in some vague and hazy realm of the imagination. No, the spiritual life has its exigencies, far greater exigencies, indeed, than those of the material and social life. Properly understood, the spiritual life is not an escape from the realities of existence: on the contrary, it should make us better able to assume our life on earth. For this, too, is the balance we must strive for: the harmony between spirit and matter.

Initiates and great spiritual masters have always warned those who are impure not to approach holy ground. But what is purity? Contrary to what many believe, purity is not primarily concerned with sexuality. Sexual purity is only one, very limited, aspect of the question. There are other, far higher and more essential forms of purity. True purity, which lies first and foremost in our thoughts, feelings, and desires, consists in keeping nothing for oneself. It means that all that one learns and all that one acquires is used, in one way or another, for the benefit of others. Impurity is every form of self-centredness. The desire to be pure for one's own protection is not really purity. The truly pure are those who seek purity in order to be better able to give to others, in order to give only what is most precious.

True purity must serve only to prepare a fit dwelling for the Holy Spirit, for only when the Spirit dwells within you will you have the conditions you need in order to work for the coming of the kingdom of God on earth.[3] Too many so-called spiritualists still believe that purity means keeping oneself shut up in a glass cage, away from all contact with others. No, a static, inactive purity is useless, even harmful – the devil alone knows what fermentation and putrefaction can develop in such a state of inactivity. It would astonish you very much to know what goes on in the minds of many supposedly pure and chaste people. In reality, if you have found true purity, it will make very little difference to you whether nobody is allowed to touch you or whether everybody touches you. In either case, you will still be pure, because the Holy Spirit will be in you, and once the Holy Spirit is there, nobody can contaminate you. You will have become a free-flowing spring and all impurities, whatever their origin, will be washed away.

There are people who do everything possible to defend themselves against infection, but as there is always something within them that attracts microbes, they are constantly contaminated. And then again, one sees other devoted, unselfish souls, who are always ready to care for people suffering from contagious diseases and who are never themselves contaminated. It is as though the purity of their feelings and motivations purified their blood and protected them. Now you must not use what I am saying to justify throwing yourselves into the arms of any and everybody or nursing people with contagious diseases without taking some precautionary measures. Until such time as you have really succeeded in establishing inner purity, you must protect yourselves, but not for selfish reasons; you must protect yourselves for the sake of others, in order to be able to help them. This is true purity. Any other kind of purity is, in fact, impure, because it is selfish. Is this clear?

True purity is divine love, because divine love is life; it is the stream of water bubbling up from a spring whose outpouring washes away all that is dirty, dull, and obscure. Even if you are as white as snow, purity in which there is no love is not really purity. Too many people believe that purity consists in shielding themselves from love. Yes, there are beings who are as pure as snow but who are also as cold as snow, for they have no love; their purity is sterile. True purity is like crystal-clear water that gushes from a spring and flows over the ground to water fields and gardens. It is not from love that we need to shield ourselves, but from selfish thoughts and feelings. As soon as such thoughts and feelings enter one, one is not pure.

In his wisdom, immensity, and generosity, God has given human beings the power to manifest their love in the higher realms of the soul and spirit. This means that instead of being miserable because you have known all kinds of disappointing experiences and have still not found the love of your life, you should remember that God has given you the capacity to manifest your love continuously by uniting your soul and spirit to the universal soul and the cosmic spirit. Like the rain that falls from the heavens and soaks into the ground to reach and nourish the roots of plants, this energy from

above will inundate and permeate you, bringing particles of light to every organ of your body, right down to the soles of your feet.

I know that these notions are still far beyond your grasp, but that does not matter. The pole star is also very far away, but we can still steer by it – mariners have been doing so for thousands of years and it has always led them to their destination. These truths that I have revealed to you are as far away as the pole star, but like that distant star, they will guide you.

---

1 See *The True Meaning of Christ's Teaching,* Izvor Coll. n° 215, chap. 2: 'My Father and I Are One', *The Faith That Moves Mountains,* Izvor Coll. n° 238, chap. 9: 'Proof of God's Existence Lies Within Us'.

2 See *Looking into the Invisible – Intuition, Clairvoyance, Dreams,* Izvor Coll. n° 228, chap. 3: 'The Entrance to the Invisible World: From Yesod to Tiphareth', and *Angels and other Mysteries of The Tree of Life,* Izvor Coll. n° 236, chap. 14: 'Yesod, Foundation of the Spiritual Life'.

3 See *The Mysteries of Fire and Water,* Izvor Coll. n° 232, chap. 18: 'The Coming of the Holy Spirit'.