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# ORPHEUS

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# ORPHEUS.

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## I. INTRODUCTION.

### FOREWORD.

WHO has not heard the romantic legend of Orpheus and Eurydice? The polished verse of Virgil, in his *Georgics* (iv. 452-527), has immortalised the story, told by "Cærulean Proteus" (*ibid.*, 388). But few know the importance that mythical Orpheus plays in Grecian legends, nor the many arts and sciences attributed to him by fond posterity. Orpheus was the father of the pan-hellenic faith, the great theologer, the man who brought to Greece the sacred rites of secret worship and taught the mysteries of nature and of God. To him the Greeks confessed they owed religion, the arts, the sciences

both sacred and profane; and, therefore, in dealing with the subject I have proposed to myself in this essay, it will be necessary to treat of a theology "which was first mystically and symbolically promulgated by Orpheus, afterwards disseminated enigmatically through images by Pythagoras, and in the last place scientifically unfolded by Plato and his genuine disciples" (T. Taylor's translation of Proclus' *On the Theology of Plato*, Introd., i.); or to use the words of Proclus, the last great master of Neoplatonism, "all the theology of the Greeks comes from Orphic mystagogy," that is to say, initiation into the mysteries (Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, p. 723). Not only did the learned of the Pagan world ascribe the sacred science to the same source, but also the instructed of the Christian fathers (*ibid.*, p. 466). It must not, however, be supposed that Orpheus was regarded as the "inventor" of theology, but rather as the transmitter of the science of divine things to the Grecian world, or even as the reformer of an existing cult that, even in the early times before the legendary Trojan era, had already fallen into decay. The well-informed among



the ancients recognised a common basis in the inner rites of the then existing religions, and even the least mystical of writers admit a 'common bond of discipline,' as, for instance, Lobeck, who demonstrates that the ideas of the Egyptians, Chaldæans, Orphics and Pythagoreans were derived from a common source (*ibid.*, p. 946).

#### THE SCOPE OF THE ESSAY.

Seeing, then, that any essay on the legendary personality of Orpheus might legitimately take into its scope the whole theology and mythology of the Greeks, it is evident that the present attempt, which only aims at sketching a rough outline of the subject, will be more exercised in curtailing than in expanding the mass of heterogeneous information that could be gathered together. No human being could do full justice to the task, for even the courage of the most stout-hearted German encyclopædist would quail before the libraries of volumes dealing directly or indirectly with the general subject. Of books dealing directly with Orpheus and the Orphics, however, there is no great number,

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and of these the only one of my acquaintance that treats the subject with genuine sympathy is the small volume of Thomas Taylor, *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*.

For many quotations from classical writers I am indebted to the encyclopædic volumes of Chr. Augustus Lobeck, *Aglaophamus, sive de Theologiæ Mysticæ Græcorum Causis*, but only for the quotations, not for the opinions on them. With regard to the Mysteries themselves, I shall speak but incidentally in this essay, as that all important subject must be left for greater leisure and knowledge than are mine at present.

#### THE MATERIALS.

At the end of the essay the reader will find a Bibliography, many of the books in which I have searched through with but poor reward; there is, to my knowledge, no other bibliography on the subject, and the present attempt only mentions the most important works. Not, however, that works bearing directly on Orpheus are by any means numerous, as M. de Sales laments in the early years of the century in his *Mémoire* :

“A few texts scattered among the writers of antiquity and of the middle ages, a feeble notice of Fabricius, six pages of Memoirs of an Academy, the *Epigenes* of Eschenbach, and the *Orpheôs* ‘*Apanta* of Gesner—there, in last analysis, you have all the really elementary materials on Orpheus” (*Histoire d’Homère et d’Orphée*, p. 21).

Since then, besides the work of Lobeck, but little of a satisfactory nature has been done; little on the Continent, nothing in England, as may be easily seen by referring to the best classical dictionaries and encyclopædias, the articles in which on this subject are hardly worth the paper on which they are printed.

From antiquity we have no text of a Life of Orpheus. M. de Sales says, that if we are to believe Olympiodorus, Herodotus, the father of Grecian history, wrote a Life of Orpheus, but that this work could no longer be found at the end of the Alexandrine cycle (*op. cit.*, p. 3). As his authority, he quotes Photius (*Bibliotheca*, cod., 80), but I am unable to find the passage in my copy of Photius (1653). That there were several Lives known

to the ancients is not improbable, and Constantin Lascaris in the first volume of his *Marmor Taurinensis* (1743), containing a description of a marble in the Turin Museum, supposed to represent the death of Orpheus, adds the Greek text and Latin translation of a MS. which appears to be based upon these missing works. How little was known on the subject during the scholastic period may be gleaned from the fact that the huge *Thesaurus Græcarum Antiquitatum* of Gronovius (1695), consisting of no less than eighty-five volumes, contains nothing on the subject.

In spite of this, the legend of Orpheus, as stated by the writer in the *Encyclopædia Britannica* (9th ed., art. "Orpheus") persisted throughout the middle ages and was finally "transformed into the likeness of a northern fairy tale," and a rich store of materials for working out the tale may be found in the catalogue of the British Museum under "Orpheus."

"In English mediæval literature it appears in three somewhat different versions:—*Sir Orpheo*, a 'Lay of Brittany' printed from the Harleian MS. in Ritson's *Ancient Metrical*

*Romances*, vol. ii. *Orpheo and Heurodis* from the Auchinleck MS. in David Laing's *Select Remains of the Ancient Popular Poetry of Scotland*; and *Kyng Orfew* from the Ashmolean MS. in Halliwell's *Illustrations of Fairy Mythology* (Shakespeare Soc., 1842). The poems bear trace of French influence."

Surely a legend so wide-spread and so persistent must have had a vigorous life to start with, and that this was the case I hope to show in the following pages.

## II. THE ORPHIC ORIGINS.

### THE MYTHOLOGICAL ORPHEUS.

It would be too tedious to recite here the various glosses of the Orphic legend, or to enter into a critical examination of its history. On the whole the legend has been preserved with sufficient fidelity in the recitals of the poets and the works of mythographers, and the general outlines of it are sketched as follows by P. Decharme in his *Mythologie de la Grèce Antique* (pp. 616 sq.).

Orpheus was son of Œagrus, King of Thrace, and Calliope, one of the Muses. He was the first poet and first inspired singer, and his whole life is the history of the results of divine harmony. Lord of the seven-stringed lyre, all men flocked to hear him, and wild beasts lay peacefully at his feet; trees and stones were not unmoved at the music of his heavenly instrument. The denizens of the unseen world and the princes of

Hades rejoiced at the tones of his harp. Companion of the Argonauts in their famous expedition, the good ship *Argo* glides gently over the peaceful sea at the will of his magic strains; the fearsome moving rocks of the *Symplegades*, that threatened *Argo* with destruction, were held motionless; the dragon of *Colchis* that watched the golden fleece was plunged in sleep profound.

His master was *Apollo*; *Apollo* taught him the lyre. Rising in the night he would climb the heights of *Pangæus* to be the first to greet the glorious god of day.

But great grief was in store for the singer of *Apollo*. His beloved wife *Eurydice*, while fleeing from the importunities of *Aristæus*, was bitten by a serpent hidden in the grass. In vain the desperate husband strove to assuage the pain of his beloved, and the hills of *Thrace* resounded with his tuneful plaints. . . *Eurydice* is dead. . . In mad distraction he determines to follow her even to *Hades*, and there so charms the king of death that *Eurydice* is permitted to return to earth once more—but on one condition—*Orpheus* must not look back. And now they had almost

recrossed the bounds of death, when at the very last step, so great is his anxiety to see whether his dear wife is still behind him, that he turns to gaze, and Eurydice is instantly reft from his sight (Virgil, *Geor.*, iv. 499):

*“ex oculis subito ceu fumus in auras  
commixtus tenues, fugit diversa ;”*

“quick from his eyes she fled in every way, like smoke in gentle zephyr disappearing.”

The death of Orpheus is variously recounted. Either he died of grief for the second loss of Eurydice, or was killed by the infuriated Bacchanals, or consumed by the lightning of Zeus for revealing the sacred mysteries to mortals. After his death the Muses collected his torn members and buried them. His head and lyre were carried by the waves to Lesbos.

#### ORPHEUS, A GENERIC NAME.

Such is the bare outline of the romantic Orphic Legend. That Orpheus ever existed as one particular person is highly improbable; that Orpheus was the living symbol that



marked the birth of theology and science and art in Greece, is in keeping with the general method of mythology, and relieves us from the many absurd hypotheses that historians have devised to reconcile the irreconcilable.

Orpheus was to the Greeks what Veda Vyâsa was to the Hindus, Enoch to the Ethiopians, and Hermes to the Egyptians. He was the great compiler of sacred scriptures; he invented nothing, he handed on. Orpheus, Veda Vyâsa, Enoch, Hermes and others, are generic names. Veda Vyâsa means the 'Veda-arranger.' It is said that the hieroglyphical treatise on the famous Columns of Hermes or Seth, which Josephus affirms were still existing in his time (De Mirville, *Pneumatologie*, iii. 70), was the source of the sacred science of ancient Khem, and that Orpheus, Hesiod, Pythagoras and Plato took therefrom the elements of their theology. There was a number of Hermes, the greatest being called Trismegistus, the "thrice greatest," because he spoke of the "three greatest" powers that "veiled the one Divinity" (*Chron. Alexand.*, p. 47). We also learn from the MS. of Lascaris (*Mar. Taurin.*, "Prolegg. in Orph.",

p. 98) that there were no less than six Orpheis known to antiquity.

Ficinus (*De Immort. Anim.*, XVII. i. 386) traces what the Hindus call the Guru-paramparâ chain, or succession of teachers, as follows:

“In things pertaining to theology there were in former times six great teachers expounding similar doctrines. The first was Zoroaster, the chief of the Magi; the second Hermes Trismegistus, the head of the Egyptian priesthood; Orpheus succeeded Hermes; Aglaophamus was initiated into the sacred mysteries of Orpheus; Pythagoras was initiated into theology by Aglaophamus; and Plato by Pythagoras. Plato summed up the whole of their wisdom in his Letters.”

#### THE DERIVATION OF THE NAME.

Although Orpheus is commonly reported to have been a Thracian, there is no certainty in the matter, and this uncertainty has given licence to the most fantastic derivations of his name, put forward by experienced and amateur philologists to bolster up their own pet theories.

The name Orpheus is derived from the Egyptian, Hebrew, Phœnician, Assyrian, Arabic, Persian or Sanskrit, according to the taste or inventive faculty of the philological apologist. Professor Max Müller, in order to support the solar myth theory, derives the name from 'Ribhu' or 'Arbhu,' of the *Rig Veda*, an epithet of Indra; Indra being said to be one of the names of the Sun (cf. *Comparative Mythology*). The name is also traced to the Alp or Elf of Teutonic folk-lore. Larcher says that Orpheus was an Egyptian; *or* or *oros* standing for Horus, and *phe* or *pho* in Coptic signifying 'to engender' (*Trad. d'Hérod.*, ii. 266. n.). And no doubt there will be writers who will 'prove' that the name Orpheus is from radicals in Chinese, Esquimaux, Maya, or even Volapük! There is very little that cannot be proved or disproved by such philology.

#### THE ORPHIC DIALECT.

It is, however, interesting to note that the original Hymns were written in a very ancient dialect. Clavier supposes that it was only

after the Homeric poets had accustomed Grecian ears to a smoother tongue that the original dialect of these sacred Hymns was altered (*Hist. des Premiers Temps de la Grèce*, i. 85; quoted by Rolle, *Recherches sur le Culte de Bacchus*, iii. 21). Jamblichus says that the Hymns were originally written in the Doric dialect (*De Vitâ Pythag.*, xxxiv.), but Diodorus Siculus (iii. 66) simply uses the word 'archaic' (ἀρχαϊκῶς τῇ τε διαλέκτῳ καὶ τοῖς γράμμασι χρησάμενος). What the particular dialect was, it is difficult to say; the learned among the ancients who busied themselves about such matters, said that the names of the gods and the most sacred things were from the 'language of the gods' (cf. Proclus, *Com. in Polit.*, p. 397; *Com. in Crat.*, p. 38; *Com. in Tim.*, ii. 84; also Gregory Naz., *Or.*, iii. 99, and Maximus Tyrius, vi. 86). This is most clearly set forth by Jamblichus (*De Mysteriis*, vii. 4):

"For it was the gods who taught the sacred nations . . . the whole of their sacred dialect. They who learned the first names concerning the gods, mingled them with their own tongue. . . and handed them down to us."

## PELASGIC, ETRURIAN, OR ÆOLIAN.

Thomas Taylor (*The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus*, p. xli) asserts that the letters referred to in the words of Diodorus Siculus, which I have quoted above, were Pelasgic, and adds in a note, "these letters are the old Etrurian or Eolian, and are perhaps more ancient than the Cadmian or Ionic." The interesting point is that this agrees with the conclusions of a number of writers, among others J. F. Gail (*Recherches sur la Nature du Culte de Bacchus en Grèce*, p. 3), that the poems of Orpheus date back to Pelasgic Greece, to the days of legend, to pre-historic times. Taylor speaks of these letters being Etrurian; if that be so, they may have belonged to the alphabet of that great nation which came from the West, beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and subdued "Africa within the Straits as far as Egypt, and Europe as far as Tyrrhenia (Etruria)," as Plato tells us in the *Critias* (sec. iii). This nation came from the Atlantic Ocean, from an archipelago consisting of an "island larger than Africa and Asia put together" and

“many other smaller ones.” The Africa and Asia of Solon’s time were not of the present dimensions, but consisted of Africa as known to the Egyptians and our present Asia Minor—a sufficiently large territory, however, even at that.

What the language of ‘Orpheus’ was I must, therefore, leave to more capable philologists than myself.

#### THE ‘FABLE’ OF THE ÆOLIANS.

Taylor, however, says that the Pelasgic letters were “the old Etrurian *or* Eolian,” but whether he connects the old Etruscans with the Æolians, or simply puts an alternative, is not clear. In either case it is interesting to refer to the suggestion put forward in the series of articles in the old numbers of *The Theosophist*, entitled “Some Enquiries suggested by ‘Esoteric Buddhism’” (see *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 209 *sq.*). These articles speak of the “old” Greeks and Romans as being “remnants of the Atlanteans,” and define the attribute “old” as referring to “the eponymous ancestors (as they are called by

Europeans) of the Æolians, Dorians and Ionians." Now this Atlantis of Plato, that may for convenience be called Poseidonis, was submerged some 13,000 years ago, according to the priests of Saïs, but "a number of small islands scattered around Poseidonis had been vacated, in consequence of earthquakes, long before the final catastrophe. . . . Tradition says that one of the small tribes (the Æolians) who had become islanders after emigrating from far northern countries, had to leave their home again for fear of a deluge. . . . Frightened by the frequent earthquakes and the visible approach of the cataclysm, this tribe is said to have filled a flotilla of *arks*, to have sailed from beyond the Pillars of Hercules, and, sailing along the coasts, after several years of travel, to have landed on the shores of the Ægean Sea in the land of Pyrrha (now Thessaly), to which they gave the name of Æolia. . . . All along the coasts of Spain, France, and Italy the Æolians often halted, and the memory of their 'magical feats' still survives among the descendants of the old Massilians, of the tribes of the later Carthago Nova, and the seaports of

Etruria and Syracuse." The writer then goes on to enquire what was the language of the Atlantean Æolians (p. 212), and finally speaks of it as a "sacred hieratic or sacerdotal language" (p. 214).

#### THE RECEDING DATE OF ORPHEUS.

This fabled immigration of the Æolians fits in well with the Orphic Argonautica and opens up a most fruitful field of enquiry in the pre-historic Hellenic period. Moreover, it pushes back the date of Orpheus and his times many cycles of years and widens out the scope of Pelasgic speculations. Who were these Pelasgians who are said to be the 'autochthones,' when the legendary Inachus, Cecrops, Cadmus, Danaus and Deucalion, are fabled to have led their colonies from Phœnicia and elsewhere into the land of Hellas? If we are to believe Plato, these Pelasgi were the degenerate descendants of a great race that once had its capital in Attica, and was the successful opponent of the Atlantic empire in its palmy days. Of these men, he says (*Critias*, sec. iv), "the names are preserved; though their deeds have become extinct



through the death of those that handed them down and the lapse of time." For "the race that survived were a set of unlettered mountaineers, who had heard the *names* only of the (once) ruling people of the land, but very little of their deeds." These names they gave to their children and so handed them down.

#### CASTE IN THE 'DAYS OF ORPHEUS.'

At the time of the Great War women had equal rights with men (*Critias, loc. cit.*).

"The figure and image of the goddess [Athene] shows that at that time both men and women entered in common on the pursuits of war; . . . a proof that all animals that consort together, females as well as males, have a natural ability to pursue in common every suitable virtue."

This once great nation was divided into castes, or tribes (*ἔθνη*), *viz.*, those "engaged in crafts and culture of the soil" (Vaishyas), and the "warrior" caste (*τὸ μάχιμον*), which received nothing from the rest of the citizens but a sufficiency of food and requisites for training. These (Kshatriyas) were set apart by "divine men" (*ὑπ' ἀνδρῶν θείων*) who were the

real rulers. In other words the government was that of an adept priesthood (the true Brâhmans).

What was the language of these "divine men"? Who can say? But I fear that I have wandered far in pursuing this interesting clue, and will conclude the present part of my subject by endorsing the words of Münter (*Comment. Antiq.*, p. 42): "it is evident that the language of the gods, according to the view of the ancients, was the archaic speech of living men." And Arnobius (*Contra Gentes*, iv. 29) tells us that the "gods were once men" (*deos homines fuisse*). And for some similar reason it is that the Hindus call the character in which their ancient sacred books are written, the Deva-nâgarî or "alphabet of the gods."

#### THE BEGINNINGS OF ORPHIC HISTORY.

From the above it may be easily seen that it is hopeless, in the present state of our information, to attempt to treat the legend of Orpheus from a historical point of view, in the ordinary acceptation of the term. We only approach the historical period when we descend

to the times of Homer, though indeed even then we have not entirely reached it. The Stemma, or line of descent, of the Gens Orphica, places ten generations of poets, or schools of poets, between Orpheus and Homer, as may be seen from Charax (apud Suid., *sub voc.*, "Homerus") and Proclus (*Vit. Hom.*, in *Bib. Vet. Lit. et Art.*, i. 8).

#### HOMER AND HESIOD.

Homer, or the Homeric School, however, does not mention Orpheus by name, but Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom.*, vi. 738) affirms that he took many things from Orpheus, and Taylor, translating from the Scholia of Proclus on the *Cratylus* of Plato, shows how and why Homer does not venture on the loftier flight of Orpheus, and so also with regard to Hesiod (*Myst. Hymns of Orpheus*, pp. 184, 185). From all of which we gather that the original poems of Orpheus are lost in the night of time.

We are further informed that the substance of these poems was preserved by various translations into the then vernacular; that there were various collections and recen-

sions of them made by various poets, philosophers, and schools.

#### PHERECYDES.

The first to undertake the task was Pherecydes (Suidas, *sub voc.*). Pherecydes is said to have been the master of Pythagoras, and to have obtained his knowledge from the secret books of the Phœnicians (Smith's *Dict. of Gr. and Rom. Biog. and Mythol., sub voc.*). He is further stated to have been the pupil of the Chaldæans and Egyptians (Joseph., *c. Apion.*, p. 1034, e.; Cedrenus, i. 94, b.; Theodorus Melitenista, *Proœm. in Astron.*, c. 12). The most important subject he treated of, was the doctrine of metempsychosis and the immortality of the soul (Suidas, and Cicero, *Tusc.*, i. 16), and this he set forth in his great prose work *Theologia*, generally known as the "Seven Adyta" (*Ἑπτὰ-μυχος*). He is said to have been the first who used prose for such a subject. From all of which it appears that Pherecydes, by his training and knowledge, was a very fit person to undertake so important a task, and it is further an additional proof of the mystical nature of the Orphic Scriptures.

## ONOMACRITUS.

Onomacritus is the next known editor of Orpheus in antiquity. His date is given generally as B.C. 520-485, but if we are to believe Clemens Alexandrinus (*Strom.*, i. 332) and Tatian (*Adv. Græc.*, 62), he must be put back as far as B.C. 580. It would be too tedious to recount here the long controversy as to the precise relation of Onomacritus to the Orphic writings. Some have even gone so far as to say that he 'invented' them. We learn, however, that Onomacritus was rather a priest than a poet, who collected all the ancient writings he could in support of the mystic theology of the Greeks. Hence he has always been looked upon as one of the chief leaders of the Orphic theology and the Orphic societies (Smith, *op. cit.*, *sub voc.*). Onomacritus is said to have been instructed by the priests of Delphi (Müller, *Prolegg. Mythol.*, p. 309), and Pausanius (viii. 37) states that he was the 'founder' of Dionysian rites. But there is nothing very certain in all this, and the controversy can be infinitely prolonged. Other editors are mentioned, such as

Brontius, Cercops, Zopyrus, Prodicus, Theognetus, and Persinus (Lobeck, *op. cit.*, 347 and 350), but of these nothing of importance is known.

#### THE PYTHAGOREANS AND NEOPYTHAGOREANS.

M. Fréret (*Mém. de l'Acad.*, xxiii. 261) states that after the dispersal of the Pythagorean School in Magna Græcia, at the end of the sixth century B.C., the surviving disciples attached themselves to the Orphic Communities. The School of Pythagoras had become suspected by the civil power, and those members who survived the persecution, following as they did a peculiar discipline and a life apart from men, could only find refuge among the adherents of a cult with an inner doctrine, and this they found in the so-called Bacchic Communities. There they could follow out that life of self-discipline and abnegation which Plato calls the 'Orphic Life.' This for a time vitalized the sacred tradition, which was gradually growing fainter and fainter, and in the days of Plato (*De Legg.*, ii) fell into much disrepute. Then it was that Plato *intel-*

*lectualized* it as being the only way to preserve it from further profanation. Thus it is that Plato in Greece did for the theology of Orpheus what Shankarâchârya in India did for the theosophy of the Upanishads. So it continued until the days when the spiritual forces were seething in the chaldron of the first centuries of the Christian era.

#### THE NEOPLATONISTS.

For it is to the Neoplatonists of these centuries that we owe most of our information as to the inner meanings of the Orphic theology; and, indeed, scepticism enthroned in high places dismisses the whole matter blandly by informing us that this School of Later Platonists not only wrote the interpretation of the Theology, but the original poems themselves! We respectfully bow before the brilliancy of scepticism's imagination, but even were we dazzled by it, would have to admit that the successors of Plotinus were, even so, very wonderful people.

Suidas tells us that about the end of the first century A.D., Charax, priest of Pergamus, wrote a "Synthesis of the Logia of

Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato" (*συμφωνία Ὀρφείως, Πυθαγόρου καὶ Πλάτωνος περὶ τὰ λόγια*), also that Damascius, the Syrian, the last of the Neoplatonists, who lived at the end of the fifth and the beginning of the sixth century, wrote on the same subject.

Marinus (*Vit. Proc.*, xx) also tells us that the Lycian Proclus, surnamed the Platonic Successor (*Διάδοχος Πλατωνικός*), who was born A.D. 412, so loved these hymns that he had them recited to him in his dying moments. Proclus' master, Syrianus, also, as Suidas relates, composed a "Synthesis of Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato." Both master and pupil wrote "Commentaries on the Orphic Theology," and Syrianus also wrote "Readings in Orpheus" (*Ὀρφικαὶ Συνοσΐαι*), but not one of these valuable works, unfortunately, has come down to us (*cf.* Bode, *Orpheus Poetarum Græcorum Antiquissimus*, p. 38; Proclus in *Plat. Tim.* 2, Fabric. i. 142; Eschenbach, *Epig.* præf. Ouwaroff, *De Myst. Eleus.*, p. 57).

Hierocles, the Alexandrian, who also lived about the middle of the fifth century, wrote a Synthesis of the Logia (Photius, *Bibl.*, ccxxiv.).



Asclepiades Mendes, an Egyptian theologian, attempted the same task in a work called "Synthesis of all Theologies" (τῶν θεολογιῶν ἀπασῶν ἢ συμφωνία, *Suidas*, *sub voc.* "Heraïscus"; generally known as τὰ θεολογούμενα, cf. Suetonius in Aug. c. 94).

Such synthetic treatises were numerous enough in those days, but all have been lost. The efforts to restore the universal traditional wisdom (Pammythosophia) failed, and the work that had been done was destroyed and burned, not without the accompaniment of much cursing. Thus it is that we read the record of the work of some now unknown theosophist Aristocrites, preserved in the following anathema: "I anathematize also the book of Aristocrites, which he calls *Theosophy*, in which he attempts to show that Judaism and Hellenism, and Christianity and Manichæism are one and the same doctrine" (from the "Cursing of the Manichæans," Cotelerius ad *Clement. Recog.*, iv. 544).

Photius also (*Bibl.*, clxx) tells us of an anonymous Constantinopolitan of the seventh century, who made a synthesis of the

theosophical teachings of the Greeks, Persians, Thracians, Egyptians, Babylonians, Chaldeans, and Romans, and endeavoured to show their agreement with Christianity; at which Lobeck (*op. cit.*, p. 346) can do no better than sneer.

#### GENERAL CONCLUSION.

We, therefore, conclude that Orpheus is not a 'historical' personage in the accepted sense of the term; that the tracing of the origins of the Orphic writings, though opening up many interesting questions, is a matter of great difficulty; that, in spite of this, the persistent tradition of the mythical founder of Grecian theology, and the great honour in which Orpheus was held by so many generations and by the highest intellects of antiquity, are all-sufficient proofs that that theology came from a venerable and archaic source; that this source is such as a student of comparative religion and theosophy would naturally expect; and that, therefore, the opinion of Aristotle that "Orpheus never existed" does not come to us as a shock, but rather as a confirmation of the truth of our

contention from the point of view of a careful and critical intellect. We admit the truth of Aristotle's opinion as stated by Cicero (*De Nat. Deorum*, i. 38), though this sentence cannot be traced in the known texts of the famous Stageirite, but limit the phrase "*Orpheum poetam docet Aristoteles numquam fuisse*" to the sense of a historically known poet, such as, for instance, Pindar. In brief, the Orphic Origins are lost in the night of Time.

### III. ORPHIC WORKS.

#### THE LOGIA.

I HAVE already in the last chapter spoken of several Syntheses or Symphonies of the Logia of the great teachers of classical antiquity. Now a Logion is a "great saying," and it has precisely the same meaning as Mahâ-vâkyam, the technical term applied to the twelve great mystical utterances of the Upanishads, such as "That art Thou," etc. These Logia were universally recognised as words of wisdom, and were the most sacred legacies of the sages to humanity. They were collected together and formed the most precious "deposits" (*διαθήκαι*) of the various nations, the same term being also given to the Christian Bible.

Thus Herodotus calls Onomacritus a "depository of oracles" (*διαθέτην χρησμῶν*), the word carrying the meaning of "one who arranges," corresponding to the term Vyâsa in Sanskrit.

These collections of Logia were then generally called "deposits," the word also bearing the meaning of "testaments" as containing the divine will or dispensation. The same word is used by Strabo (x. 482) of the Laws of Lycurgus, and ecclesiastical writers refer to the canonical books as ἐνδιάθετοι (Eusebius, *Chron.*, p. 99a). Hence it is that the commentators or arrangers of these scriptures are called διαθέται, the name applied by Herodotus to Onomacritus. Grotius declares that the term (δαθήκη) was applied by the Orphics and Pythagoreans to such sacred laws (*cf.* Jablonski, ii. 397).

These collections were also called Sacred Utterances (Ἱεροὶ Λόγοι), and Clemens Alexandrinus refers to one such saying of Orpheus as "that truly sacred utterance" (τὸν ὄντως ἱερὸν λόγον—Lobeck, *op. cit.*, p. 714).

#### SECRET WORKS.

Such books were very carefully guarded and were the secret scriptures or bibles of many states. Cicero (*De Div.*, i. 44) speaks of such a Bible of the Veii. The Athenians, in the time of the kings, possessed a similar Bible

of Logia (Herodotus, v. 90), and Dinarchus (*Or. c. Demost.* 91. 20) tells us that the safety of the state depended on this secret scripture (ἀπορρήτους διαθήκας). These occult sayings (ἀπόθετα ἔπη) are further called by Suidas (*σὺβ νοσ.*) "withdrawn volumes" (βιβλία ἀνακεχωρηκότα), that is to say, books withdrawn from public perusal, or in other words, apocryphal, hidden or secret (ἀπόκρυφα). And not only was this the case with the ancient writings themselves, but also with the commentaries upon them, and by degrees with everything referring to them, until finally we find Themistius, the Rhetorician, in the fourth century, speaking of that "mass of archaic wisdom not open to the public or in general circulation, but scarce and occult" (στῆφος ἀρχαίας σοφίας οὐ κοινῆς οὐδε ἐν μέσῳ κυλινδουμένης ἀλλὰ σπανίου καὶ ἀποθέτου —Themist., *Or.*, iv. 60).

To the same class of writing we must undoubtedly refer the most precious of the Orphic scriptures, especially as we find that the Hymns were used in the Mysteries. But besides these there was a host of works on various and widely differing subjects, generally referred to Orpheus, of the majority of which we only

possess the titles. The following list of such works is taken from Lobeck (*op. cit.*, pp. 361-410).

## LIST OF WORKS.

1. *Amocopia* (Ἀμοκοπία): a title of unknown meaning. Perhaps it signifies the "Art of the Good Shepherd" (Ἀμνοσκοπία), ἀμνός meaning "a lamb," and σκοπία "watching"; or it may mean "divination by sheep."
2. *The Argolid* (Ἀργολικά): probably an epic poem.
3. *The Argonauts* (Ἀργοναυτικά): the famous Argonautic Expedition.
4. *The Laws of the Stars* (Ἀστρονομικά).
5. *The Bacchic Rites* (Βακχικά).
6. *On Plants* (Περὶ Βοτανῶν).
7. *Agriculture* (Γεωπονικά): especially dealing with the influence of the moon. See no. 11.
8. *The Deposits* (Διαθήκαι): see under heading "Logia."
9. *The Net* (Δίκτυον): see no. 28.
10. *Twin Natures* (Διφυή).

11. *The Twelve Year Cycles* (Δωδεκαετηρίδες); *Works and Days* (Ἔργα καὶ Ἡμέραι), the appropriate days for planting, etc; and *The Calendar* (Ἐφημερίδες).

Such works were usually referred to under the general title "Agriculture" (περὶ γεωργίας); nor were they mere treatises on farming, but dealt with nature-workings and the alchemy of the unseen forces of the world-envelope. Thus the famous *Book of Nabathæan Agriculture* dealt with the worship of the Babylonians. This book is stated by the Arabic translator (904 A.D.), Abû-Bekr A'hmed ben 'Ali ben Wa'hschîjah el Kâsdani, or the Chaldæan, to have been written in Nabathæan or ancient Chaldaic, to have consisted of nine volumes, and to have been compiled by three sages, between the first and last of whom elapsed no less than 18,000 years. (See Chwolsohn's *Die Ssabier und der Ssabismus*, 2 vols., 8vo., Petersburg, 1856, ii. 705.) This book dealt not only with agriculture but with religious worship, magical rites and invocations, the occult powers of herbs and plants, etc. (See *Lucifer*, xiii. 381, art. "Ssabians and Ssabianism.") Moreover we should re-



collect that the great hero in the Eleusinian Mysteries was Triptolemus (Pliny, *Hist. Nat.*, vii. 56; Callimachus, *Hymn. in Cererem*, 22; Virgil, *Georg.*, i. 19), who was fabled to have taught mankind "agriculture," in other words all the arts and sciences. He was the first priest of the Great Mother, to whom she imparted all her mysteries. Triptolemus is generally represented as mounted on a winged car drawn by serpents (*Élite Céramographique*, iii. 48-68; Gerhard, *Auserles. Vasenbilder*, tab. 41 sq.). This is evidently a mythological reminiscence of the "divine men" who taught primitive humanity all its arts and sciences.

12. *The Epigrams* (Ἐπιγράμματα).
13. *The Theogony* (Θεογονία): the degrees of the divine emanation, or the genealogy of the divine powers.
14. *The Enthronings of the Great Mother* (Θρονισμοὶ Μητρῶοι): this refers to the mystic rite known as "Incathedration," which Dion Chrysostom mentions (*Or.*, xii. 387). The adepts (οἱ τελούντες) enthroned the candidate (τὸν μνούμενον) and circled round him in a mystic dance. In the same passage Dion

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speaks of the accompaniment of strange mystic sounds and alternations of light and darkness (πολλῶν δὲ ἀκούοντα τοιούτων φωνῶν, σκότους τε καὶ φωτὸς ἐνάλλαξ αὐτῶ φαινομένων). It was no doubt a ceremony representing cosmic phenomena and their application to spiritual development, the candidate representing the sun and the enactors of the drama representing the planets; or in other words the glorification of the conquering sun, or perfected aspirant, by the subordinate powers. Proclus, in *Plat. Theol.* (vi. 13), speaking of the order to which the Corybantic powers belonged, writes: "Plato, being persuaded by the mysteries, and by what is performed in them, indicates concerning these unpolluted Gods. . . . In the Euthydemus he makes mention of the collocation on a throne, which is performed in the Corybantic mysteries."

15. *Incensing* (Θηηπολικόν).  
 16. *The Sacred Sayings* (Ἱεροὶ Λόγοι): see under "Logia."  
 17 and 18. *The Sacred Vestiture* (Ἱεροστολικά),

and *The Rite of the Girdle* (Καταξωστικόν) : candidates on their initiation were invested with a band or cord. This reminds us of the Brâhmanical thread and Pârsî kusti. It may also have reference to the symbolical draping of the temple statues.

19. *The Descent into Hades* (Κατάβασις ἐς Ἄδου) :
20. *The Earth-Regions* (Κλίσεις Κοσμικαί) : Astrologers assigned seven regions or "climates" (*climata*, κλίσεις) to the Earth. It has been suggested, however, that the proper reading is Κτίσεις Κοσμικαί, which would make the work treat of "The Building of the Kosmos."
21. *The Corybantics* (Κορυβαντικά) : probably having reference to the "enthronings" and the myth of the Corybantes, who guarded the cradle of the young Bacchus with circle dances and musical sounds.
22. *The Cup* (Κρατήρ) : this was also the title of one of the Hermetic works. It is the Cup offered by the Deity to the souls, from which they drink the wine of wisdom. This may be compared with the symbology of the Grail Legend, and

- will be treated of later on. It also refers to the World-Soul.
23. *On Precious Stones* (Λιθικά): the nature and engraving of precious stones as talismans.
  24. *On Myth-making* (Μυθοποιία): that is to say, the art and rules of the making of myths or sacred narratives.
  25. *Temple-Building* (Νεωτεκτικά): this reminds us of the famous "canon of proportion" known to the temple-architects of antiquity, but difficult now to discover (*cf.* M. Vitruvius Pollio, *De Architectura*, ix.).
  26. *The Art of Names* (Ὀνομαστικά): treating of the names of the gods and their interpretation.
  27. *The Orphic Oaths* (Ὀρκοὶ Ὀρφικοί): the oaths or pledges taken in the Mysteries.
  28. *The Veil* (Πέπλος): in the public processions of the Panathenæa this famous mystic Veil or Web (*cf.* no. 9) was borne aloft like the sail of a galley, but this was only the symbol. Mystically it signified the Veil of the Universe studded with stars, the many-coloured Veil of

Nature (*cf.* Philo, *De Som.*, i., p. 92, vol. v. Pfeiff.—τὸ παμποίκιον ὕφασμα, τοντονὶ τὸν κόσμον). This was the famous Veil of Isis, that no "mortal" had raised, for that Veil was the Spiritual Vesture of the man himself, and to raise it he had to transcend the limits of individuality, break the bonds of death, and so become *immortal*. Eschenbach (p. 51) is also quite correct in referring this to the famous Net of Vulcan in which Mars and Venus were taken, and the gods (cosmic powers) laughed in high Olympus. Aristotle, quoting the Orphic writings, speaks of the "animal born in the webs of the net" (*De Gen. Anim.*, II. i. 613 c.). Photius (clxxxv.) tells us that the book of Dionysius Ægeensis, entitled *Netting* (Δικτυακά), treated of the generation of mortals. And Plato himself (*Tim.*, p. 1079. F.) likens the intertwining of the nerves, veins and arteries, to the "net work of a basket" or a bird cage. Johannes Protospatharius (*Hes. Opp.* v. 777) says that: "Homer calls Nature a woman, weaving a web with

purple threads (our bodies with crimson fluids [lit. blood]), on a marble loom (our bones)." And Hippolytus (*De Antichr.*, iii. 6. Fabr.) speaks of the "warp and woof, the flesh woven by the spirit." But all these are only the lower correspondences of the real Web of Destiny, which resides in the spiritual nature itself.

29. *On Earthquakes* (Περὶ Σεισμῶν).
30. *The Sphere* (Σφαῖρα).
31. *Songs of Deliverance* (Σωτήρια).
32. *The Mystic Rites* (Τελεταί): see no. 34.
33. *The Triads* (Τριαγμοί).
34. *The Hymns* (Ἕμνοι): these Hymns were used in the Mysteries, as may be seen from the following arguments, which I have summarized from Taylor's introduction to *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus* (pp. xxxiv-xxxix).

Lycomedes says that these Hymns were used in the sacred rites pertaining to Ceres, *i.e.*, the Eleusinia, an honour not accorded to the Homeric hymns, although the latter were the more elegant. And this is borne out by Pausanias (*Attica*, xxxvii.), who, stating "that it

is not lawful to ascribe the invention of beans to Ceres," remarks: "he who has been initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries, *or has read the poems called Orphic*, will know what I mean." Porphyry (*De Abstinencia*, iv.) tells us that beans were forbidden in the Eleusinia. Again, Suidas informs us that the word *τελετή* signifies *a mystic sacrifice, the greatest and most venerable of all*. This word, or its cognates, occurs in nearly every Hymn, and Proclus (in *Plat. Theol.* and in *Comm. in Alcibiad.*), whenever he speaks of the Eleusinia, calls them the most holy "Teletai" (*ἀγιώταται τελεταί*). In fact, the Thryllitian MS. calls the Hymns "Teletai," and Scaliger remarks that they contain nothing but such invocations as were used in the Mysteries. Moreover, Demosthenes (*Or. c. Aristogit.*) speaks of "Orpheus, our instructor in most holy Teletai." Further, it is evident from several of the Hymns that the rites enjoined in them were performed at night. Now the lesser mysteries, or those in which the drama of the rape of Proserpine was enacted, were performed at night, and Sallust (*De Diis et Mundo*, iv.) informs us that this drama represented the "descent of souls"—which mystic

descent is said by Plato in the *Republic* (Bk. x.) to take place at midnight. From all of which I think it may be fairly concluded "that these Hymns not only pertained to the Mysteries, but that they were used in the celebration of the Eleusinian, which, by way of eminence (κατ' ἐξοχήν) were called *The Mysteries*, without any other note of distinction." And I may further add that this disposes entirely of the theory that the Orphics had nothing to do with the Eleusinia proper.

35. *The Physics* (Φυσικά): not in our sense of the word. "Those who investigated the hidden powers, laws and sympathies of Nature were called Physici" (*qui occultas rerum naturalium vires rationesque et sympathias scrutantur, Physici dici solent.*—Lobeck, *op. cit.*, p. 753).
36. *The Oracles* (Χρησμοί).
37. *Oomancy* (Ὠοσκοπικά): divination by means of the eggs of certain birds. The white of the egg was used by the clairvoyant priest as a mirror of futurity.

ALL THAT IS LEFT TO US.

Such are the titles of the works classed under the vague heading "Orphic." Nearly all are



known by their title only, not a line of their texts remains, and scholars busy themselves with ascribing even such scraps of the flotsam and jetsam from the great wrecks of antiquity to some slightly known or entirely obscure writer who compiled a work (also now lost) with a somewhat similar title. The texts that do remain may be found in any *Orphei Opera Omnia*, as, for instance, of Gesner, and consist of simply the *Argonautica*, *Hymni*, *Libellus de Lapidibus* and some *Fragmenta*, on all of which the brains of scholasticism have been employed more to prove external illegitimacy than internal consanguinity. The *Argonautica* (not to be confounded with the well-known poem by Apollonius Rhodius) contain 1,373 verses; the Hymns are generally given as eighty-six in number, nearly all being very short; the *Lithica* consist of a "proem" of ninety lines, a "hypothesis" of seventy-nine, and descriptions of twenty stones, varying from 129 to four lines. The real Hymns of the Mysteries (whether we possess correct translations of the actual Hymns in those now remaining is extremely doubtful) were guarded with great secrecy (*sub sancti silentii sacramento com-*

*mendata mystis*—Gesner in *Prolegg.* p. xxvii.). Suidas says that the *Lithica* were included in the “Teletai,” that is to say, had to do with the same rites, and we are told that such talismans are without efficacy if not properly “consecrated.” Students of the Kabalah of the Jews and Chaldæans, and of the Mantravidyâ of the Hindus, will then very easily comprehend the connection between the “hymns” and “engraving” of talismans, and it may be further deduced, if it were not immediately apparent, that the Hymns were of the same nature as the Mantras of the *Rig Veda*.

#### ‘ORPHEUS’ THE ‘INVENTOR.’

From a consideration of the titles and nature of the books ascribed to Orpheus, it is not surprising to find him spoken of as the “inventor” of all the arts and sciences, and the father of civilization. He was the poet, the interpreter of the fates, the master of the healing art and the inaugurator of mystic ritual. He, therefore, invented the measures of sacred verse, he was the teacher of Mantravidyâ; he discovered the alphabet, was the maker of hieroglyphics and symbols; he wrote

down the prophecies and oracles, and devised the means of purifying the soul and the body; he was the high priest of all mystic rites, the king-initiator. What matter of surprise, then, is it that all such attainments and such powers were summed up in the one word "magic."

'ORPHEUS' THE 'MAGICIAN.'

As Apuleius (*Apol.*, i. 326) says: "They who study providence in human affairs with greater care [than others] and approach the divine powers (*deos*) with greater frequency, are vulgarly called magicians (*Magos*), as were of old Epimenides and Orpheus, and Pythagoras and Ostances." And Apollonius (*Epp.*, xvi. 390) says that the "followers of Orpheus should be called magicians (*μάγους*)." Pausanias (vi. 20) further cites an Egyptian opinion that "Orpheus was skilled in magic," and Dio, Maximus, Heraclides, Quintilian, and Macrobius, say that it was not the wild beasts that were charmed, so much as that men of a wild and unruly nature were brought back to a milder form of life by Orpheus. Euripides (*Cyclop.*, 639) speaks of the "spell of Orpheus"

(ἐπιφθὴ Ὀρφικῇ) which the Satyrs desired to possess. It is a power that works of its own will, like the "thunder-bolt," and reminds us of Thor's Hammer, the Miölnir, symbolized in the East by the Svastika ☸, and recalls the Âgneyâstra, the "fire weapons," or magic powers, spoken of in the Purânas and Râmâyana (see Wilson's *Specimens of the Hindu Theatre*, i. 297; and *The Dream of Râvan*, pp. 120-137). These Astras or "supernatural weapons" were the higher powers of that art of which the lowest effects are seen in "hypnotic suggestion," etc., and the science is known in Sanskrit as Astra-vidyâ.

#### THE OPINIONS OF THE KABALISTS.

It will not be out of place to record here the opinions of three learned Kabalists on Orpheus. First, then, let us summon Picus Mirandulanus into court (*Opp.*, p. 106, Ed. Basil.):

"Although it is not permitted us to publicly explain the secrets of magic, which we in the first place extracted from the Hymns of Orpheus, nevertheless it will be of advantage to indicate their nature by hints drawn from the leading ideas of his aphorisms, in order to engage the

attention of contemplative minds. The names of the gods, of whom Orpheus sings, are not the titles of deceiving demons but the designations of divine virtues. Just as the Psalms of David are admirably designed for the 'work' of the Kabalah, so are the Hymns of Orpheus for natural magic. The number of the Hymns of Orpheus [? 88] is the same as the number by which the three-fold deity created the æon, numerated under the form of the Pythagorean quaternary. He who does not know perfectly how to intellectualize sensible properties by the method of occult analogy, will never arrive at the real meaning of the Hymns of Orpheus. The Curetes of Orpheus are the same as the powers of Dionysius. The Orphic Typhon is the same as the Zamael of the Kabalah. The Night of Orpheus is the En Suph of the Kabalah," etc.

And we may add that the Pseudo-Dionysius, whose works were the source of mediæval Christian mysticism, and were held in the greatest reverence by Thomas Aquinas, Tauler and Meister Eckhart, were copied from the order of the divine hierarchies as set forth by Plotinus, Jamblichus, and Proclus, who all,

through Plato and Pythagoras, based themselves on Orpheus.

Next Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim writes as follows in his *Philosophia Occulta* (II. lviii. 203):

“The names of celestial souls are many and diverse on account of their manifold powers and virtues with regard to lower objects. Hence have they been allotted the diverse names which the ancients used in their hymns and invocations. In this connection we make remark that every soul of this kind is said, according to the Orphic theology, to have a double virtue, polarized into an intellectual and a vivifying nature. Thus we find in the heavenly spheres the Cribronian Bacchus (*Δικνίτης*) and the muse Calliope, and in the heaven of [fixed] stars Picionius (*Περικιόνιος*) and Urania. In the heaven of Saturn, Amphietus and Polyhymnia; in the heaven of Jupiter, Sabasius and Terpsichore; in the heaven of Mars, Bassarius and Clio,” etc.

Finally Athanasius Kircher, in his explanation of the Isiaic Tablet, writes as follows (*Œd. Œ.*, iii. 123):

“All this, Orpheus correctly and graphically

describes : ' Holy Lady, many-named, sceptre-bearer of the famous pole, thou, who holdest the midmost throne of all ; Lord, who from the Bear holdest the seals of the nine !' And Hecatæus, quoted by Clemens Alexandrinus, tells us that the polar plane was, among the Egyptians, indicated by an ennead [or hierarchy of nine], and Psellus that the all-embracing power of the Bear rules with nine holy seals."

From these opinions we learn that those who had a knowledge of occult nature took a totally different view of the Orphic Hymns and writings from the mere scholiast, philologer or archæologist. It is further interesting to note that Picus refers to the Psalms as having certain magical properties ; in other words, the Psalms were originally Songs of Initiation and invocations, like the Mantras of the *Rig Veda*. I was recently told at Rome by a learned priest, that a musician had just re-discovered the ancient rhythm (called by the Hindus Svara) of the Psalms, that, although this was known to have existed in antiquity, no scholar had been able to discover it, but that musical genius had at last come to the help of the incapacity of scholarship. Moreover, that the

old "bulls" of the Pope had a certain rhythm, and without this rhythm none were genuine. That is to say that the Pope when speaking *ex cathedrâ* was supposed to be under a certain *afflatus* or inspiration.



#### IV. GENERAL REMARKS ON ORPHIC THEOLOGY.

##### ORPHIC SYMBOLISM.

Taylor says that the Grecian theology was first "mystically and symbolically" promulgated by Orpheus, and so at once goes to the root of the whole matter. To understand that theology, therefore, we must treat it from the point of view of mysticism and symbolism, for no other method is capable of extracting its meaning. Moreover, in this we only follow the methods and opinions of its own adepts, for, as Proclus says: "The whole theology of the Greeks is the child of Orphic mystagogy; Pythagoras being first taught the 'orgies' of the gods ['orgies' signifying 'burstings forth, or 'emanations,' from ὄργαω] by Aglaophemus, and next Plato receiving the perfect science concerning such things from the Pythagorean and Orphic writings" (quoted by Lobeck, p. 723; who unfortunately gives no reference, and so far I have not been able to discover the passage in Proclus).

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These symbolical Orphic fables have for ages baffled the intelligence of rationalistic literalists, and shocked the prudery of ecclesiastics who, erroneously regarding the Jewish myths as actual realities, have fallen into the same error with regard to the fables of Orpheus. Nonnus states the simple fact in saying (*Expos. in II. Invest. c. xviii. 526*): "Orpheus describes the series of powers, and the modes, energisings and powers of being, by means of fabulous symbols; and these fables he composes not without shameful obscenity." This "shameful obscenity," refers to the stories of rape, incest, dismemberment, etc., of the Gods, so familiar to us in Grecian mythology; all of which things would be highly improper, if recited of men or anthropomorphic entities, but which are at once removed from such a gross interpretation, when understood as symbolical representations of the emanations of divine and lesser powers, and the interactions of occult natures. It is contrary to the most elementary ideas of justice to ascribe thoughts and intentions to the ancient makers of these myths, which only exist in the prurient minds and ignorant misconceptions of posterity.

Thus we find Proclus (*Theol.*, I. iv. 9) writing, "the Orphic method aimed at revealing divine things by means of symbols, a method common to all writers of divine lore (*θεομυθίας*)"; and Plutarch (*De Pyth. Orac.*, xviii.), "formerly the wisdom-lovers exposed their doctrines and teachings in poetical fictions, as, for example, Orpheus and Hesiod and Parmenides"; and Julian, the so-called apostate (*Or.*, vii. 215b), "many of the philosophers and theologians were myth-makers, as Orpheus," etc. In the same *Oration* (217), he continues, "concerning the myths of the Mysteries which Orpheus handed down to us, in the very things which in these myths are most incongruous, he drew nearest the truth. For just in proportion as the enigma is more paradoxical and wonderful, so does he warn us to distrust the appearance, and seek for the hidden meaning." Philostratus also (*Heroic.*, ii., 693) asserts that, in reading the disputes among the Gods in the *Iliad*, we must remember that the poet "was philosophising in the Orphic manner"; and Plutarch (*De Dædal.*, Frag. IX. i. 754) tells us that, the most ancient philosophers have covered up their teachings in a lattice-work

of fables and symbols, especially instancing the Orphic writings and the Phrygian myths—“that ancient natural science both among the Greeks and foreigners was for the most part hidden in myths—an occult and mysterious theology containing an enigmatical and hidden meaning—is clear from the Orphic poems and the Egyptian and Phrygian treatises.”

#### PHALLICISM.

These myths were not only set forth in verse and prose, but were also represented pictorially and in sculpture in the Adyta of the temples. And though it can be argued that in a pure state of society, in which the nature and interaction of divine and lesser powers could be taught, such myths and symbols could be understood without damage to morals, nevertheless, in a degenerate age, when the meaning of these symbols was forgotten, grave dangers arose, and the insanity of phallicism inoculated its virus into the community. Of such symbolical pictures and sculptures we hear of a number in antiquity, and even to-day they are to be found in Hindu temples. Against such abuses the Christian fathers, ignorant of

the original intent, and seeing only the evil effect (an effect due to the impure minds of the populace of their day and not to the devisers of the myths) arrayed themselves. They especially instanced a picture of Zeus and Hera in the temple of Samos, which Chrysippus, the Stoic, long before their time, in the third century B.C., had already explained as representing the reception of the divine intellections (*σπερματικούς λόγους*) by primordial matter for the creation of the universe, "for matter is Hera and deity is Zeus." (Cf. Clemens, *Homil.*, V. xviii. 667, and Origen, *Contra Celsum*, IV. xlvi. 540, Ed. Spencer.) And Eustathius (ad. Dion v. 1) quotes an Orphic fragment which speaks of "the circle of tireless glorious-streaming Ocean, which pouring round Earth clasps her within the embraces of his circling eddies"—where Ocean represents the demiurgic Zeus and Earth his consort Hera.

And so we find Proclus (in *Polit.*, p. 388) writing "all that Homer says of the intercourse of Zeus and Hera is stated theologically," that is to say symbolically and mystically. And again (in *Parm.*, ii. 214, Cousin, vol. iv.):

“Theologists symbolise these things by means of ‘sacred marriages.’ In brief the interaction of Divine causation is mystically called ‘marriage.’ And when they see this interaction taking place among elements of the same kind, they call it the ‘marriage’ of Hera and Zeus, of Heaven and Earth, of Cronus and Rhea; but when between lower and higher, they call it the ‘marriage’ of Zeus and Demeter; and when of superior with inferior they designate it the ‘marriage’ of Zeus and Core.”

#### IDOL-WORSHIP.

The statues in the Mysteries were also of a symbolical character, and Zosimus (v. 41), in the fifth century, when relating the sack of Rome by Alaric, king of the Visigoths, laments that, “the statues consecrated by the holy mysteries, with the downfall of these mysteries, were soulless, and without efficacy.” The consecration of such statues and symbols pertained to the art of theurgy, which may throw some light on ‘idol-worship.’ And Proclus tells us (in *Crat.*, p. 28) that, “the adepts placed such ‘organs’ in sympathetic re-

lation with the gods, and held them (*e.g.*, the shuttle, the sceptre and the key) as symbols of the divine powers." And Taylor, referring to the same passage of Proclus, writes (*Myst. Hymn.*, p. 52, n.): "Initiators into the Mysteries, in order that sensibles might sympathise with the Gods, employed the shuttle as a signature of *separating*, a cup of *vivific*, a sceptre of *ruling* and a key of *guardian* power. Hence Pluto, as guardian of the earth, is here said to be the keeper of the earth's keys." Perhaps students of the Tarot may trace the signatures of the four suits in the above symbols.

Into such statues it was believed that a "soul" or "divine power" entered, the technical term for such "immixture" or "insinuation" (*εἰσκρισις*) being the same as that employed for the reincarnation of the soul into a body. This may be compared to the Hindu theory of *Â-vesha* and *Â-veshana*, which the western dictionaries explain as "possession by devils," and the pandits as the taking possession of a body by a soul, either that pertaining to the body, or that of another person.

## CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS ON SYMBOLISM.

The following quotations, from the Fifth Book of the *Stromateis*, or "Miscellanies," of Clement of Alexandria, will throw some light on the symbolical method of the ancients, and are all the more interesting as the Church father brought them forward in an apology of the Christian scriptures which, he said, were of a like nature. I use the translation of the Rev. William Wilson, as found in Vol. XII. of *The Antenicene Christian Library*, as I have no text of Clement handy. Thus he writes: "Many rod-bearers there are, but few Bacchi," according to Plato" (cap. iii). That is to say, there are many candidates, but few reach to real Initiation, and this Clement compares with the saying: "Many are called, but few chosen." Then he continues (cap. iv): "Wherefore, in accordance with the method of concealment, the truly sacred Word, truly divine and most necessary for us, deposited in the shrine of truth, was by the Egyptians indicated by what were called among them *adyta*, and by the Hebrews by the veil. Only the consecrated—that is,



those devoted to God, circumcised in the desires of the passions for the sake of love to that which is alone divine—were allowed access to them. For Plato also thought it not lawful for ‘the impure to touch the pure.’

“Thence the prophecies and oracles are spoken in enigmas, and the mysteries are not exhibited incontinently to all and sundry, but only after certain purifications and previous instructions.”

Thus he cites the various styles of writing practised among the learned of the Egyptians : (i) the epistolographic ; (ii) the hieratic which the sacred scribes practise ; and finally (iii) the hieroglyphic, divided into two modes, (*a*) literal and (*b*) *symbolic*, which is further described as being of three kinds. “One kind speaks literally by imitation, and another writes as it were figuratively, and another is quite allegorical, using certain enigmas.”

“All then, in a word, who have spoken of divine things, both Barbarians and Greeks, have veiled the first principles of things, and delivered the truth in enigmas, and symbols, and allegories, and metaphors, and such like tropes.”

Later on he instances Orpheus as follows :  
“ Now wisdom, hard to hunt, is the treasures of God’s unfailing riches. But those, taught in theology by those prophets, the poets, philosophize much by way of a hidden sense. I mean Orpheus, Linus, Musæus, Homer and Hesiod, and those in this fashion wise. The persuasive style of poetry is for them a veil for the many.” The second paragraph of this horribly inelegant translation is to be explained by the fantastic theory of several of the fathers, that the ancient poets of Greece copied from the Hebrew prophets, and Pythagoras and Plato from Moses !

And though Clement does not adduce much towards the spiritual interpretation of the Orphic writings, he instances an example of natural interpretation as follows (cap. viii) :  
“ Does not Epigenes, in his book on the *Poetry of Orpheus*, say that by the ‘ curved rods ’ is meant ploughs ; and by the ‘ warp, ’ the furrows ; and the ‘ woof ’ is a figurative expression for the seed ; and that the ‘ tears ’ of Zeus signify a shower ; and that the ‘ parts ’ are, again, the phases of the moon, the thirtieth day, and the fifteenth, and the new moon, and that Orpheus

accordingly calls them 'white-robed,' as being parts of the light? . . . .

"Myriads on myriads of enigmatical utterances by both poets and philosophers are to be found; and there are also whole books which present the mind of the writer veiled, as that of Heraclitus *On Nature*, who on this very account is called 'Obscure.' Similar to this book is the *Theology* of Pherecydes of Samos." And so also the work of Euphorion, the *Causes* of Callimachus and the *Alexandra* of Lycophron.

"Thus also Plato, in his book *On the Soul*, says that the charioteer and the horse that ran off—the irrational part, which is divided in two, into anger and concupiscence—fall down; and so the myth intimates that it was through the licentiousness of the steeds that Phaëthon was thrown out."

After adducing many examples the famous Alexandrian continues (cap. ix):

"But, as appears, I have, in my eagerness to establish my point, insensibly gone beyond what is requisite. For life would fail me to adduce the multitude of those who philosophize in a symbolical manner. For the sake, then,

of memory and brevity, and of attracting to the truth, such are the scriptures of the Barbarian philosophy.

*“For only to those who often approach them, and have given them a trial by faith and in their whole life, will they supply the real philosophy and the true theology. . . .*

“They say that Hipparchus, the Pythagorean, being guilty of writing the tenets of Pythagoras in plain language, was expelled from the school, and a pillar raised for him as if he had been dead. Wherefore also in the Barbarian philosophy they call those ‘dead’ who have fallen away from the dogmas, and have placed the mind in subjection to the carnal passions. . . .

“It was not only the Pythagoreans and Plato, then, that concealed many things; but the Epicureans too say that they have things that may not be uttered, and do not allow all to peruse those writings. The Stoics also say that by the first Zeno things were written which they do not readily allow disciples to read without their first giving proof whether or not they are genuine philosophers. And the disciples of Aristotle say that some of their

treatises are esoteric, and others common and exoteric. Further, those who instituted the mysteries, being philosophers, buried their doctrines in myths, so as not to be obvious to all. Did they then, by veiling human opinions, prevent the ignorant from handling them; and was it not more beneficial for the holy and blessed contemplation of realities to be concealed? But it was not only the tenets of the Barbarian philosophy, or the Pythagorean myths, but even those myths in Plato (in the *Republic*, that of Hero [? Er] the Armenian; and in the *Gorgias*, that of Æacus and Rhadamanthus; and in the *Phædo*, that of Tartarus; and in the *Protagoras*, that of Prometheus and Epimetheus; and besides these, that of the wars between the Atlantini and the Athenians in the *Atlanticum* [or *Critias*]) are to be expounded allegorically, not absolutely in all their expressions, but in those which express the general sense. All these we shall find indicated by symbols under the veil of allegory. Also the association of Pythagoras, and the twofold intercourse with the associates which designates the majority, hearers (ἀκουσματικοί) and the others that have a genuine attachment

to philosophy, disciples (*μαθηματικοί*), yet signified that something was spoken to the multitude, and something concealed from them."

From all of this it is amply apparent that the method of allegory and symbol was the rule of the ancient Theologists, and that, if we refuse to admit their method, and endeavour to confine their meaning to the mere literal superficial sense, we shall not only miss their whole intent, but do the greatest possible violence to the best they have bequeathed to us.

#### SOME STRIKING INSTANCES OF ORPHIC SYMBOLISM.

It will be interesting here to adduce one or two instances of this Orphic symbolical method, such as the "swallowing," "incest," and "marriage" of the Gods. In his Scholia on the *Cratylus* of Plato, Proclus writes:

"Orpheus says with divinely inspired mouth, 'Jupiter *swallows* his progenitor Phanes, *embosoms all his powers*, and becomes all things intellectually which Phanes is intelligibly.'" (Taylor, *Myst. Hym.*, p. 180.) The precise meaning of which will become apparent when we come to treat of the various orders of powers.

And again, in his Commentaries on the *Timæus*, Proclus writes (iv. 267) :

“Orpheus gave the Deity the name of the Manifestor (Φάνητα—Phanes) because he brought into manifestation (ὡς ἐκφαίνοντα) the noëtic monads. . . . He also called him the Key of the Mind. . . . On him the demiurgic power [Zeus, Jupiter] depends ; that is to say, as Plato explains it, that this power turns towards the self-subsistent life [Phanes] and, to use the words of Orpheus, ‘leaps upon’ and ‘swallows’ it, at the bidding of ‘Night.’”

And this is further explained (ii. 99) in the sentence :

“Zeus [the demiurgic power] becomes one with him [Phanes, the Manifestor, the ‘Third Logos’] in the midst of ‘Night,’ and, filled [with his essence] becomes the noëtic world in the noëric order.”

I have ventured to use the terms “noëtic” and “noëric” as less liable to misinterpretation than the usual translations “intelligible” and “intellectual” ; for “intellectual” conveys to the ordinary mind a higher sense than “intelligible,” whereas “noëtic,” the equivalent of

“intelligible,” is of superior dignity, in platonic terminology, to “noëric.”

And so Orpheus sings :

“‘Thus, then, he [Zeus] swallowed the might of the First-born [Phanes], and held within his hollow belly the frame of all; with his members he mingled the power and might of God.’”

In proof of this he cites six fragments of Orpheus, further revealing the nature of the demiurgic power, and its place in the order of emanation, as set forth by his master Syrianus in his treatise, entitled *Orphic Lectures*. He further states in his Commentaries on the *Timæus* (v. 313), “the whole demiurgic activity of the gods has its end in rebirth (*παλιγγενεσίαν*)” —a subject that will be dealt with at length later on. Here it is only necessary to remark that the “swallowing” of Phanes by Zeus has its direct correspondence in the re-incarnation of a human soul.

The Emperor Julian (ap. Cyrill., ii. 44, B. ed. Spanh.) also writes :

“The Greeks were myth-makers, for they said that Cronus swallowed his sons, and vomited them forth again, and they speak of incestuous marriages. For Zeus was husband



of his mother, and then became husband of the daughter he had begotten by his mother as wife, and then after once coupling with her gave her to another."

Again Proclus, in this Commentary on the *Cratylus* (Taylor, *Myst. Hymn.*, p. 188), writes :

"Ocean is said to have married Tethys, and Jupiter Juno, and the like, as establishing a communion with her, conformably to the generation of subordinate natures. For an according co-arrangement of the Gods, and a connascent co-operation in their productions, is called by theologists *marriage*."

But this term "marriage" can only be applied to the noëric and demiurgic order and not to the noëtic. Therefore, in his Commentaries on the *Timæus* (v. 293), he writes :

"So he calls 'Earth' the first 'wife,' and her union with 'Heaven' the first 'marriage.' But the term 'marriage' cannot be applied to the noëric concourse of 'Light' [Phanes] and 'Night.'"

And so also with regard to slaughter and quarrels, when applied to the Gods, all must be taken in an allegorical fashion; "for slaughter, when applied to the Gods, signifies a segre-

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gration from secondary, and a conversion to primary natures" (Taylor, *Myst. Hymn.*, p. 91, n.).

Instances of a like nature could be numerously multiplied, but enough has been said to give the reader an idea of the nature of our task, and further examples will be adduced as the treatment of the subject permits.

#### THE ONE GOD.

If there is one doctrine more insisted on than any other in the Orphic theology, it is that all the deific orders and powers are but aspects of the One. It is entirely unnecessary to enter here into a consideration of the comparative merits of monotheism and polytheism. Both are true as facts, both are false as exclusive theories. Nor was the doctrine above enunciated peculiar to the Orphics; it was the common opinion of all the better instructed of antiquity. All men worshipped that aspect or those aspects of the One Deity, which were appropriate to their understanding and suited to their religious needs. Thus we have worship of every kind, from the praying wheel

to the highest Samâdhi, from the eikon and household image to the at-one-ment of supernal ecstasy. And yet God is One.

In order that this statement, which cannot be challenged by the educated, may recommend itself to those of less information, I shall here set down a few quotations out of a very large number.

In speaking of the Orphic theology, Taylor writes (*Myst. Hymn.*, xxv) :

“The peculiarity . . . of this theology, and [that] in which its transcendency consists is this, that it does not consider the highest God to be simply the principle of beings, but *the principle of principles, i.e.*, of deiform processions from itself, all which are eternally rooted in the unfathomable depths of the immensely great source of their existence, and of which they may be called super-essential ramifications, and superluminous blossoms.”

It is quite true that the quaint diction of Taylor is likely to offend those who are not trained in Neoplatonic terminology, and that minds deeply steeped in materialism will be repelled by the sublime metaphysics of mystical religion, but the blame should lie rather with

the poverty of our language in fitting expressions than with one who had no fit materials to build with.

Just as the Eastern disciple, in his mystic exercises, gradually removes all attributes from the concept of Deity, and blends into the essence of the Divine, so did the Orphic student and Neoplatonist approach the contemplation of the Divine by a method of elimination. Thus Simplicius (in Epictet.), one of the victims of the Justinian persecution, and one of the group of seven brilliant intellects which crowned the line of the Later Platonists, writes as follows :

“ It is requisite that he who ascends to the principle of things should investigate whether it is possible there can be anything better than the supposed principle ; and if something more excellent is found, the same enquiry should again be made respecting that, till we arrive at the highest conceptions, than which we have no longer any more venerable.

“ Nor should we stop in our ascent till we find this to be the case. For there is no occasion to fear that our progression will be through an unsubstantial void, by conceiving

something about the first principles which is greater than and surpasses their nature. *For it is not possible for our conceptions to take such a mighty leap as to equal, and much less to pass beyond the dignity of the first principles of things.*"

On which Taylor again quaintly but justly remarks :

"If it is not possible, therefore, to form any ideas equal to the dignity of the immediate progeny of the ineffable, *i.e.*, of the first principles of things, how much less can our conceptions reach the principle of these principles, who is concealed in the superluminous darkness of occultly initiating silence."

So clearly was it the case that the "Heathen" possessed in its fulness the idea of the "One God," that the Church fathers were put to great shifts to explain it away. For instance, Justin Martyr, in keeping with his absurd theory of "plagiarism by anticipation," asserts that Orpheus, Homer, and Solon, had visited Egypt and become saturated with the Mosaic books (*Cohort. ad Græc.*, 15, c. ; xv. 77, Grab.). To this end he cites several Orphic fragments, among them the remarkable Hymn, "I will

speak it forth to the initiate ; close the doors, ye profane," etc., and the famous couplet : " Zeus, Hades, Helios, Dionysus, are one ; one God in all."

Cyril in his onslaught on Julian, the Emperor Neoplatonist (*Contra Jul.*, i. 25), quotes the same passage to the same end. In this connection see Thomas Taylor's *Arguments of the Emperor Julian against the Christians* (1809), translated from the Greek fragments preserved by Cyril, Bishop of Alexandria. This small volume of ninety-eight pages was " privately printed at the expense of Mr. Meredith, who destroyed, for fear of persecution, the entire impression with the exception of five or six copies which he had given away. For one of these copies he in vain offered £100." The present writer is the fortunate possessor of one of those copies.

Aristobulus (c. 180 B.C.), the Jew, whose crack-brained theory was that the whole of Grecian philosophy was taken from the books of Moses, quoted by Eusebius (*Præp. Ev.*, xiii. 12, p. 664), cites the longest fragment of Orpheus referred to, to show that he taught " the God over all."

Clemens Alexandrinus, in his *Cohortatio ad Græcos* (vii. 63), calls this lengthy fragment, "I will speak it forth," a "palinode of truth." Now a palinode is a "recantation," and the learned father would have his readers believe that Orpheus recanted the whole of his theology in favour of this one monotheistic tenet—which suggestion is both misleading and absurd.

Didymus, head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria in the fourth century, in his treatise *De Trinitate*, cites the opinion of the Greeks on One God, quoting from some now unknown poets, "There is one God, the highest king of all," etc.; "Of his own will God supports all things, the immortal," etc.; "The source and fountain of life," etc. (*op. cit.*, III. ii. 322, 323; xxi. 402, *et alibi*).

And so also in the Sibylline Oracles we read (i. 25): "There is one God, who sends the rain, and the winds," etc. And another Oracle, preserved by Eusebius (*Præp. Ev.*, III. xv. 125 d.), asserts in answer to the question, who was Apollo, that he is "Helios, Horus, Osiris, King Dionysus, Apollo, the dispenser of seasons and times, of winds and showers, handling the reins of the dawn and star-

spangled night, lord of the stars and their shining; fire that never dies."

Julian again (*Or.*, iv. 245 c.) in speaking of altars in Cyprus raised in common to Zeus, Helios and Apollo, quotes the verse: "Zeus, Hades, Helios, Serapis, all are one."

Socrates again, in his *Ecclesiastical History* (iii. 23), records an oracle which identifies Attis, Adonis and Dionysus.

Natalis Comes (II. vi. 150) cites the verses: "Pluto, Persephone, Demeter, Cypris, the Loves, the Tritons, Nereus, Tethys and Poseidon, Hermes and Hephæstus, far-famed Pan, Zeus and Hera, Artemis, and far-working Apollo—all are one God."

Ausonius (*Ep.* xxviii.) quotes another oracle: "I am the Osiris of Egypt, the Phanaces of the Mysians, Bacchus among the living, with the dead Aïdoneus, fire-born, two-horned, titan-slaying Dionysus."

And Nonnus (*Dionys.*, xl. 400) sings of: "Star-robed Hercules, king of fire, world-leader, called Belus on the Euphrates, in Libya Ammon, Apis on the Nile, in Arabia Cronus, Zeus in Assyria."

These and many more passages could be



cited to show that names were of little moment to the theologians of antiquity, who were all profoundly convinced that "Brahman is one, no second." Thus Malela and Cedrenus (Lobeck, *op. cit.*, 479) in speaking of the orders of the Orphic Gods, declare that all these powers are the "single power and single might of the only God, whom no one sees."

Simplicius (*Phys. Ausc.*, ii. 74 b.) declares that Plato in the *Laws* asserts that "God is all things"; and Macrobius (*Sat.*, i. 23) further states that "the [intellectual] sun is all things," that is to say, the sun as a "wholeness" (*ὁλότης*), and to that end he quotes Orpheus, who apostrophizes the sun as "all-producer, thou All of golden-light and ever-changing colours."

Fischer in his notes on Plato's *Critias* (viii. 189) quotes an anonymous verse, which is by some attributed to Orpheus: "There is one God. There is one co-existence with God—Truth."

And Jamblichus, or whoever was the writer of the *De Mysteriis* (III. xix.), asserts that "God is all things, is able to effect all things, and fills all things with himself, and is alone

worthy of sedulous attention, esteem, the energy of reason and felicitous honour"; on which Taylor comments that "God is all things causally, and is ably to effect all things. He likewise does produce all things, yet not by himself alone, but in conjunction with those divine powers which continually germinate, as it were, from him, as from a perennial root. Not that he is in want of these powers to the efficiency of his productive energy, but the universe requires their co-operation, in order to the distinct subsistence of its various parts and different forms." (Taylor's *Jamblichus On the Mysteries*, p. 166, n.)

From the above it is plainly evident that the tenet of the One God was not only not peculiar to Judaism, but that the ideas of the instructed heathen on the subject were more elevated than the tribal ideas of the Old Testament. But this is explainable by the fact that the God and gods of the populace were adapted to popular comprehension, whereas the more elevated ideas on Deity were reserved for those who were fit to receive them. Thus it was that the doctrine of One God was included in those "mystic utterances"

(μυστικοὶ λόγοι) the full explanation of which was for many years kept secret; and perhaps wisely so, for the partial publication of the truth has led to that rivalry, oppression and exclusiveness, which have marked the fanatical path of those religionists who have sought to impose their limited individual view of Deity on the rest of the world.

#### THE MONADOLOGY OF ORPHEUS.

Another important point to bear in mind in studying the Orphic theology, is that the whole system is fundamentally a monadology, and if this is not clearly seized, much difficulty will be experienced in fitting the parts into the whole.

The first writer who drew attention to this important tenet in modern times was Thomas Taylor, and so far as I know, no scholar has added to his researches. I shall therefore append here the most important passages in his books on this subject, advising my readers to carefully think out what he says, and this not in a material but in a mystic manner.

“ Another and still more appropriate cause may be assigned of each of the celestial Gods

being called by the appellation of so many other deities, which is this, that, according to the Orphic theology, each of the planets is fixed in a luminous ethereal sphere called a *δλότης*, or *wholeness*,\* because it is a part with a *total* subsistence, and is analogous to the sphere of the fixed stars [cf. *Somnium Scipionis*, with Macrobius' Commentaries]. In consequence of this analogy, each of these planetary spheres contains a multitude of Gods, who are the satellites of the leading divinity of the sphere, and subsist conformably to his characteristics." (*Myst. Hymn.*, p. xxviii.)

These "wholenesses," therefore, are something totally different from the physical planets, which are simply their symbols in the starry vault. Their hierarchies have each their appropriate dominant "colour," and also their sub-colours contained in the dominant. The whole has to do with the "radiant egg" or "envelope" of the mystic universe, which has its correspondence in man. This is the basis of real astrology, the knowledge of which has been lost.

\* "Each of these spheres is called a *wholeness*, because it contains a multitude of *partial* 'animals' co-ordinate with it."

And again :

“ In each of the celestial spheres, the whole sphere has the relation of a monad, but the cosmocrators (or planets) are the leaders of the multitude in each. For in each a number analogous to the choir of the fixed stars subsists with appropriate circulations.” (Proclus on *Timæus*, ii., 270, where the theory is much further developed.)

Here we have the idea of every monad being a mirror of every other monad in the universe, and having the power of giving to and receiving from every other monad. The monad, as monad, is the “same,” or Self; the cosmocrators, or “planets,” in each are characterized as the “other.” The perfect number is *ten*. The triad contains the intellectual hypostases; the hebdomad the formative or demiurgic powers.

From this it follows that each of these “planets,” or “spheres,” contains its appropriate powers, which are the same in the various spheres, and only differ from each other by having a predominance of the characteristic of any particular sphere. As Taylor says:

“ From this sublime theory it follows that

# CHART OF THE ORPHIC THEOGONY.



Unaging Time.

The  
Primordial  
Triad

The  
One-Many-  
All



{ Universal Good  
{ Universal Soul  
{ Universal Mind

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Æther

denominated *ὁλότητες*, *wholenesses*, and have a perpetual subsistence."

Taylor reproduces this passage from a note in his *Theoretic Arithmetic* (p. 5), printed four years previously to his translation of Proclus on *The Theology of Plato*. He bases his definition principally on Proclus and Damascius.

Seeing also that man is a mirror of the universe, man contains all these powers in himself potentially. If it were not so, the possibility of the attainment of wisdom and final union with the Divine would be an empty dream. What these "powers" are may be seen from the following outline of Orphic Theogony.

## V. GENERAL OUTLINE OF ORPHIC THEOGONY.

### THE ORDERS OF THE DIVINE POWERS.

IN order to understand the Ladder of the Powers and the emanation of the hierarchies of Hellenic theology, it is necessary to study the matter by the light of the perfected intellect and mystic insight of the great Neoplatonic revival, and by the help of the karmic links which united it to its Orphic source.

Thus Maximus Tyrius writes: "You will see one according law and assertion in all the earth, that there is one God, the king and father of all things, and many gods, sons of God, ruling together with him." (*The Dissertations of Maximus Tyrius*, trans. by Thomas Taylor, i. 5.)

And Aristotle remarks (*Metaph.* XII. viii.):



“Our ancestors and men of great antiquity have left us a tradition, involved in fable, that the first essences are gods, and that the Divinity comprehends the whole of nature. The rest indeed is fabulously introduced, for the purpose of persuading the multitude, enforcing the laws and benefiting human life. For they ascribe to the first essences a human form, and speak of them as resembling other animals [living beings], and assert other things similar and consequent to these. But if among these assertions, any one separating the rest, retains only the first, *viz.*, that they considered the first essences to be gods, he will think it to be divinely said; and it may be probably inferred that as every art and philosophy has been invented as often as possible, and has again perished, these opinions also of the ancients have been preserved as relics to the present time. Of the opinions of our fathers, therefore, and men of the highest antiquity, thus much only is manifest to us.”

The above passage shows clearly that Aristotle believed in the growth and decay of many civilizations before his own time and

also in the persistent tradition of religion through them all.

Taylor sums up the emanation of primal principles or monads, setting forth the septenary order of primal essences as follows (*Proclus on the Theol. of Plato*, pp. x. xi.): "According to this theology, therefore, from the immense principle of principles, in which all things causally subsist, absorbed in super-essential light, and involved in unfathomable depths, a beauteous progeny of principles proceed, all largely partaking of the ineffable, all stamped with the occult characters of Deity, all possessing an overflowing fulness of good. From these dazzling summits, these ineffable blossoms, these divine propagations, being, life, intellect, soul, nature, and body depend: monads suspended from unities, deified natures proceeding from deities."

These are the roots and summits of the manifested Universe; each a monad from which all of its kind proceed; all beings proceeding from the one Being, etc., and all bodies from the "vital and luminous" Body of the Universe. Thus we have a septenary scale.

1. The Ineffable.
- { 2. Being.
- { 3. Life.
- { 4. Intellect.
- { 5. Soul.
- { 6. Nature.
- { 7. Body.

Here we have a monad and two triads, which may very well be symbolized by the two interlaced triangles with the point in the centre.

The order is further subdivided into Triads. Thus we get (in *The Select Works of Plotinus*, Taylor, Introd., p. lxxi; Bohn's ed.):

#### THE TRIADS.

1. Primordial.
- { 2. Noëtic (θεοὶ νοητοὶ).
- { 3. Noëtic and also Noëric (νοητοὶ καὶ νοεροὶ).
- { 4. Noëric (νοεροὶ).
- { 5. Supercosmic (ὑπερκόσμοι).
- { 6. Liberated or Supercelestial (ἀπόλυτοι ἢ ὑπερουράνιοι).
- { 7. Cosmic (ἐγκόσμοι).

The numbers are only put for convenience and have no virtue or dignity in themselves; 2, 3, and 4, constitute the Supersensible World (Sansk. Arûpa Loka), while 5, 6, and 7, constitute the Sensible World (Sansk. Rûpa

Loka). Each Triad is constituted according to three hypostases: (*a*) Hyparxis (or Father), (*b*) Power (or Mother), and (*c*) Mind (or Son). Zeus, the Demiurgic or Manifested Logos (the Brahmâ or Īshvara of the system) is the "Mind" of the Noëric Triad, and thus the Monad or Arche (Source) of all below. Therefore, to put it mathematically and neoplatonically:

The Demiurge : Sensible World :: The One : Supersensible World.

The hypostases underlying each Triad subsist as (*a*) Being, (*b*) Life, and (*c*) Intelligence; and so also with regard to the first triad of orders (2, 3 and 4). Being "abides," Life "proceeds," and Intelligence "returns" or "converts." These are the preservative, creative, and regenerative (or destructive) powers of the Hindu Trimûrti, or Vishnu, Brahmâ and Shiva. The Noëtic Order, therefore, must principally subsist as to Being; the Noëtic and Noëric, as to Life; and the Noëric as to Intelligence—the keynotes of the three supersensible orders being respectively permanent Being, permanent Life, and permanent Intelligence. But each order in its turn is

likewise triple, and thus the Noëric is termed "triplely convertive." But to proceed more to detail.

#### THE PRIMORDIAL TRIAD.

This Triad is beyond our present human conception, and is the reflection of that "thrice-unknown darkness" which is the veil of the Ineffable. As Taylor says (*Myst. Hymns of Orph.*, p. xxiv.): "According to the theology of Orpheus, all things originate from an immense principle, to which through the imbecility and poverty of human conception we give a name, though it is perfectly ineffable, and in the reverential language of the Egyptians is a *thrice-unknown darkness*, in the contemplation of which all knowledge is refunded into ignorance."

For as Damascius writes (*On First Principles*): "Of the first principle the Egyptians said nothing, but celebrated it as a darkness beyond all intellectual conception, a thrice-unknown darkness (σκότος ἄγνωστον τρίς τοῦτο ἐπιφημίζοντες)."

For indeed "clouds and darkness are about Him," the brilliancy of the primal veil being

too strong even for spiritual sight. Thus it is "darkness," but darkness transcending the strongest light of intellect. The first Triad, which is manifestable to intellect, is but a reflection of, or substitute for, the Unmanifestable, and its hypostases are: (a) The Good, which is superessential; (b) Soul (the World-Soul), which is a self-motive essence; and (c) Intellect (or the Mind), which is an impartible, immovable essence. But we are still in the region of transcendent ideality, or rather of that which transcends all ideals. The matter is one of great difficulty, and will be dealt with at length only when the present writer attempts an essay on the Theosophy of Proclus. Let us now pass on to

#### THE NOËTIC TRIAD.

The type underlying the triadic hypostases is what Plato calls (a) Bound, (b) Infinity, (c) Mixed; these being posterior to The One or The Good. Now this Mixed is also called Being (Proclus' *Theol. of Plato*, Taylor, p. lix.), or rather the Triad Bound, Infinity, and Mixed subsist in Being or Life (*ibid.*, i. 179). Now the Mixture requires three things, Beauty,

Truth, and Symmetry (*ibid.*, 176), and all these are found in the Vestibule of The Good (*ibid.*, 177), but subsist primarily as to Symmetry (*ibid.*, 180). This mixture, then, is the ideal Kosmos or Order (Symmetry) of the Universe.

Each Triad of the Noëtic order is in its turn triadic, and Bound, Infinity and Mixed are the first Triad; (a) Bound is the same with Hyparxis, Father and Essence; (b) Infinity with Power; and (c) Mixed with Noëtic (or Intelligible) Life, the first and highest order of Gods; or, in other words, the essential characteristics of the trinity are (a) to be or to abide, (b) to live, and (c) to energize intellectually.

But, says Proclus in his Scholia (*On the Cratylus of Plato, op. cit.*, add. notes, p. iii.): "Of the intelligible [noëtic] Gods the first genera, which are conjoined with *the one itself*, and are called occult, have much of the unknown and ineffable. For that which is perfectly apparent and effable cannot be conjoined with the perfectly ineffable, but it is requisite that the progression if intelligible [the Noëtic Order], should be terminated in this order, in which there is the first effable

[the prototype of the Third or Manifested Logos], and that which is called by proper names. For the first forms are there, and the intellectual nature of intelligibles there shines forth to the view.”

This is the third triad of the Noëtic Order; the “intellectual nature of intelligibles” meaning that the third triad has in it the nature of the Mind or Intelligence, the root of the Noëric Order, whereas the first and second triad are emanated severally according to Hyparxis and Power — the three severally corresponding to Father, Mother and Son.

Proclus then continues: “But all the natures prior to this being silent and occult, are only known by intelligence. Hence the whole of the telestic art energizing theurgically ascends as far as to this order.” That is to say, that these orders belong to the contemplation of the higher Mind (“intelligence”) alone. Man must be at one with the Mind if he would know these ineffable orders. And even to ascend to the last of the Noëtic Order requires the practice of theurgy, the equivalent of the Yoga-art of Indian mystics.



Īshvara, the Logos, is only to be known in Ecstasis or Samādhi.

And so of this third triad or Logos, Proclus writes (*ibid.*): "Orpheus also says that this is first called by a name by the other Gods: for the light proceeding from it [Fohat in Northern Buddhism, Daivi-prakriti with the Vedântins] is known to and denominated by the intellectual [noëric] orders. But he [Orpheus] thus speaks, 'Metis bearing the seed of the Gods, whom the Gods above lofty Olympus call the illustrious Phanes Protogonus.'"

With regard to this Light, or Life (the active power of Deity), Proclus quotes the Oracle in which the Powers exhort us "To understand the fore-running form of light," and thus explains it: "For subsisting on high without form, it becomes invested with form through its progression; and there being established occultly and uniformly, it becomes apparent to us through motion, from the Gods themselves; possessing indeed an efficacious energy, through a divine cause, but becoming figured through the essence by which it is received."

It would be difficult to find a clearer statement with regard to this sublime cosmogony. But as Taylor admirably remarks in his Introduction to the *Parmenides* of Plato (*Plato's Works*, vol. iii.): "He then who is able, by opening the greatest eye of the soul, to see that perfectly which subsists without distinction, will behold the simplicity of the intelligible [noëtic] triad, subsisting in a manner so transcendent as to be apprehended only by a super-intellectual energy, and a deific union of the perceiver with this most arcane object of perception. But since in our present state it is impossible to behold an object so astonishingly lucid with a perfect and steady vision, we must be content, as Damascius well observes [see *Excerpta a Damascio*, a Wolfio, p. 232], with a far-distant, scarcely attainable, and most obscure glimpse; or with difficulty apprehending a trace of this light, like a sudden coruscation bursting on our sight."

Those are the "flashes" of illumination spoken of by Plotinus, the lightning glances of "Shiva's Eye." This illumination is sometimes referred to as the opening of the

“third eye,” which is said to have its “physical basis” in the pineal gland, now atrophied in the vast majority of mankind.

If then we would obtain such a sight we must “open the greatest eye of the soul,” says Taylor (*ibid.*), “and entreat this all-comprehending deity to approach: for then, preceded by an adorned Beauty, silently walking on the extremities of her shining feet, he will suddenly from his awful sanctuary rise to our view.”

But even then what human words can reveal the vision; what phrases can tell how the One becomes Many, how the Unity becomes Multiplicity? For to use a Pythagorean phrase, this transcendent object is “void of number.” As Damascius says (*ibid.*, p. 228): “And since this is the case, we should consider whether it is proper to call *this* [the Noëtic Triad] which belongs to it [the Ineffable] [*a*] *simplicity* (ἀπλότης), [*b*] *something else, multiplicity* (πολλότης), and [*c*] *something besides this, universality* (παντότης). For that which is intelligible [noëtic] is *one, many, all*, that we may triply explain a nature which is one. But how can one nature be *one* and *many*?

Because *many* is the infinite power of *the one*. But how can it be *one* and *all*? Because *all* is the every way extended energy of *the one*. Nor yet is it to be called an energy, as if it was an extension of power to that which is external; nor power, as an extension of hyperxis abiding within; but again, it is necessary to call them three instead of one for one appellation, as we have often testified, is by no means sufficient for an explanation of this order. And are all things here [in the Noëtic Triad] indistinct? But how can this be easy to understand? For we have said that there are three principles consequent to each other: *viz.*, *father*, *power*, and *paternal intellect*. *But these in reality are neither one, nor three, nor one and at the same time three.* But it is necessary that we should explain these by names and conceptions of this kind, through our penury in what is adapted to their nature, or rather through our desire of expressing something proper on the occasion. For as we denominate this triad *one*, and *many*, and *all*, and *father*, *power*, and *paternal intellect*, and again *bound*, *infinite* and *mixed*—so likewise we call it a *monad*, and the *indefinite duad*, and

a *triad*, and a paternal nature composed from both these. And as in consequence of purifying our conceptions we reject the former appellations, as incapable of harmonizing with the things themselves, we should likewise reject the latter on the same account."

In brief, all words fall miserably short of the reality; the understanding of these highest realms is reserved for seers and prophets; philologers and sophists are without these precincts. Nor was the Noëtic Triad a fiction of the later Platonists, for the same Damascius (*On First Principles*, see Wolfii *Anecd. Græc.*, iii. 252) traces it back to Orpheus as follows: "The theology contained in the Orphic rhapsodies concerning the intelligible [noëtic] Gods is as follows: Time is symbolically placed for the one principle of the universe; but Æther and Chaos for the two posterior to this one; and Being, simply considered, is represented under the symbol of an Egg. And this is the first triad of the intelligible [noëtic] Gods. But for the perfection of the second triad, they establish either a conceiving or a conceived Egg as a God, or a white garment, or a cloud; because from

these Phanes leaps forth into light. For indeed they philosophise variously concerning the middle triad. But Phanes here represents intellect. But conceiving him over and above this, as father and power, contributes nothing to Orpheus. But they call the third triad Metis as *intellect*, Ericapæus as *power*, and Phanes as *father*. But sometimes the middle triad is considered according to the three-shaped God, while conceived in the Egg; for the middle always represents each of the extremes, as in this instance, where the Egg and the three-shaped God subsist together. And here you may perceive that the Egg is that which is united; but that the three-shaped and really multiform God is the separating and discriminating cause of that which is intelligible. Likewise the middle triad subsists according to the Egg, as yet united; but the third according to the God who separated and distributes the whole intelligible order."

Damascius tells us that this was the "common and familiar Orphic theology." We therefore get the following diagram of the Noëtic Triad, according to the Orphics,

classified according to Father (F.), Power (P.), and Intellect (I.).

Unaging Time,  
the First Principle,  
produces

*The*

*Noëtic Triad.*

(F.)	{	(f.)	Æther	{	The
		(p.)	Chaos		Triple
		(i.)	Egg		God
(P.)	{	(f.)	Egg containing	{	The
		(p.)			Triple
		(i.)			God
(I.)	{	(f.)	Phanes		
		(p.)	Ericapæus		
		(i.)	Metis		

Damascius further tells us in the same place that, according to Hieronymus and Hellanicus, the Orphic theogony described the third principle symbolically as being “a Dragon, naturally endowed with the heads of a Bull and a Lion, but in the middle having the countenance of the God himself.” This Power was portrayed with golden wings and denominated Time and Hercules. It was the Karmic Ruler of the Universe, for “Necessity resides with him, which is the same as Nature,

and incorporeal Adrastia, which is extended throughout the universe, whose limits she binds in amicable conjunction." This fourfold Power corresponds to the Lipika of the Stanzas of Dzyan. It is sufficient here to point to the vision of Ezekiel and the "four living creatures." "They four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side; and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle. Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upwards; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies" (i. 10, 11). Later on we shall return to this interesting symbolism.

Thus Phanes (the "Manifestor") is called the "Animal Itself" (Proclus, *Theology of Plato*, VI. xvi.), and also the Forefather of the Demiurge, for, as we shall see later on, Zeus (the Demiurge) is the last Power of the Noëric Triad, and as such the last Power of the Supersensible World; whereas Saturn (his Father) is the first Power of the Noëric Triad, the paternal monad, who is the son of Phanes (the third Power of the Noëtic Triad)—Phanes evolving Saturn by means of the intermediate



Triad, that acts as Power or Mother to the Paternal or Noëric Triad. We now come to the middle Triad of the Supersensible World, the Noëtic and at the same time Noëric Triad, which depends from Phanes as its Monad or Arche.

#### THE NOËTIC-NOËRIC TRIAD.

This is by far the most difficult Triad to deal with, for it partakes both of the Noëtic and Noëric Triad, and yet is neither. As Damascius remarks of the Orphic theologians, "indeed they philosophise variously concerning the middle triad." Its dominant characteristic is that it subsists according to Life or Power.

As Proclus tells us (*Theol. Plat.*, IV. iii.; Taylor, i. 231): "In the intelligible and at the same time intellectual [*i.e.*, the noëtic-noëric] order, each triad has essence, life and intellect; one indeed intelligibly and at the same time intellectually, but more intelligibly, so far as it is in continuity with the first intelligibles; the other intellectually and intelligibly, but more intellectually, because it is proximately carried in intellectuals; and another according to an equal part, as it comprehends in itself

H

both the peculiarities. Hence the first triad, that we may speak of each, was in intelligibles [the noëtic order] bound, infinity, and essence; for essence was that which was primarily mixed. But here [in the noëtic-noëric order] the first triad is essence, life and intellect, with appropriate unities."

It would be too long to follow out this interesting subject in the present place, and so we must reserve it for another occasion.

Each member of the Triad is, in its turn, triadic. The first subsists according to essence, life and intellect. The second subsists according to infinity, or infinite power, for the power of the cause which is generative of being, is infinity (*loc. cit.*, p. 167). Thus its characteristic is intelligible life, "the proceeding" (*loc. cit.*, p. 182). It is further said to be "parturient with multitude and the origin of separation" (*loc. cit.*, p. 181). The third subsists according to intelligible intellect. It is said to be "all perfect" and "folds into light in itself, intelligible multitude and form" (*ibid.*). It "converts the intelligible end to the beginning and converts the order in itself," therefore it is called "the returning" (*loc. cit.*, p. 182).

The Orphic Uranus, or Heaven, is placed in this Order, for Proclus tells us that: "Plato himself in the *Cratylus*, following the Orphic theologies, calls the father indeed of Jupiter [the Demiurge], Saturn, but of Saturn, Heaven" (*op. cit.*, IV. v.). Uranus is the Mind or Intellect of this order. Thus Phanes is the Forefather, or Great-Grandfather; Uranus the Grandfather; and Saturn, the Father of the Demiurge, who is, in his turn, the "Father of all"; the two latter belonging to the Noëric Order.

Now there are certain spheres or firmaments pertaining to this Triad. Thus the "Arch" which separates the Noëtic Order from the Noëtic-Noëric Order is called the "Super-celestial Place," the "Plain of Truth," or the "Kingdom of Adrastia" (*op. cit.*, IV. iv.). Whereas the "Celestial Arch," or "Heaven," is in the midst of the Triad; and the basis or firmament which separates this Order from the Noëric Order is called the "Subcelestial Arch." (See Taylor's "Concise Exposition of Chaldaic Dogmas according to Psellus," in his *Collectanea*, of articles in the *European and Monthly Magazines*, p. 39, note).

This Plain of Truth is referred to by Maximus of Tyre in the following beautiful passage (*Dissertation I.*, "What God is according to Plato"):

"This is indeed the enigma of the Syracusan poet (Epicharmus),

"'Tis mind alone that sees and hears.'

"How, therefore, does intellect see, and how does it hear? If with an erect and robust soul it surveys that incorruptible light, and is not involved in darkness, nor depressed to earth, but closing the ears, and turning from the sight, and the other senses, converts itself to itself. If forgetting terrene lamentations and sighs, pleasure and glory, honour and dishonour, it commits the guidance of itself to true reason and robust love, reason pointing out the road, and presiding love, by persuasion and bland allurements, alleviating the labours of the journey. But to intellect approaching thither and departing from things below, whatever presents itself is clear, and perfectly splendid, and is a prelude to the nature of divinity, and in its progression, indeed, it hears the nature of God, but having arrived thither, it sees him. The end, however,

of this journey is not Heaven, nor the bodies it contains (though these indeed are beautiful and divine, as being the accurate and genuine progeny of divinity, and harmonizing with that which is most beautiful), but it is requisite to pass even beyond these, till we arrive at the Supercelestial Place, the Plain of Truth, and the serenity which is there;

“Nor clouds, nor rain, nor winter there are found,

‘But a white splendour spreads its radiance round.’

(*Odys.*, iv. 566 ; vi. 43, *seq.*)

“Where no corporeal passion disturbs the miserable soul, and hurls her from contemplation by its uproar and tumult.”

Plutarch in his *Morals* (“On the Cessation of Oracles,” xxii.) recounts a conversation which one of his friends had with a certain mysterious stranger (see my article “Plutarch’s Yogî,” *Lucifer*, ix. 296), who spoke of a certain symbolical triangle as follows: “The area of the triangle is the common hearth of all, and is called the Plain of Truth, in which the logoi and ideas and paradigms of all things which have been and which shall be, lie

immovable; and the Eternity [lit., æon] being round them [sci., the ideas], Time flows down upon the world like a stream. And the sight and contemplation of these things is possible for the souls of [ordinary] men only once in ten thousand years [*i.e.*, at the end of a certain cycle], should they have lived a virtuous life. And the highest of our initiations here below is only the dream of that true vision and initiation; and the discourses [sci., delivered in the mysteries] have been carefully devised to awaken the memory of the sublime things there above, or else are to no purpose."

But we must leave this deeply interesting theme and turn our attention to

#### THE NOËRIC TRIAD.

The peculiarity of the Triad is that each member is subdivided into a hebdomad or septenary. The Triad consists primarily of Father (F.), Mother or Power (P.), and Son or Intellect (I.), *viz.* :

(F.) Cronus.

(P.) Rhea.

(I.) Zeus.

—that is to say, of (*a*) a noëtic paternal

monad, constituting seven such monads; (*b*) a monad of life, constituting seven vivific monads; and (*c*) of a monad of intellect, constituting seven demiurgic monads.

But conjoined with Rhea there is another triad called the Curetic or Unpolluted Triad, for their Powers are pure and virgin according to their name (from *κόρος* = virgin), each of the triad being also hebdomadic. These may be compared to the Kumâras of Hindu mythology (the word *kumâra* also signifying virgin), who were also seven in number. The permutations and combinations are worked out by Proclus (*Theol. of Plato*, V. ii.) and the final result comes to seven septenaries or forty-nine—the forty-nine “Fires” of *The Secret Doctrine*.

As Proclus says (*Theol. of Plato*, V. iii.): “Plato, following Orpheus, calls the inflexible and undefiled triad of the intellectual [noëric] Gods Curetic, as is evident from what the Athenian guest says in the *Laws*, celebrating the armed sports of the Curetes, and their rhythmical dance. For Orpheus represents the Curetes, who are three, as the guards of Jupiter [Zeus]. And the sacred laws of the Cretans, and all the Grecian theology, refer a

pure and undefiled life and energy to this order. For τὸ κόρον, *to koron*, indicates nothing else than the pure and incorruptible. Hence we have before said that the mighty Saturn [Cronus], as being essentially united to the cause of undefiled purity, is a pure intellect. The paternal Gods [Cronus, Rhea, Zeus] therefore are three, and the undefiled Gods [the Curetes] also are three. Hence it remains that we should survey the seventh monad."

This "seventh monad" is, however, not named, for it has to do with the mystery of the "fabulous exections" (*i.e.*, exsections or "cuttings off," dismemberment), for Plato thought "that such like narrations should always be concealed in silence, that the arcane truth of them should be surveyed, and that they are indicative of mystic conceptions, because these things are not fit for young men to hear." This seventh monad is called the "separative deity" and has to do with what has been called the "Secret of Satan." But Plato "assents to such opinions being narrated to those who are able to penetrate into the mystic truth, and investigate the concealed meaning of fables, and admits the separation of wholes,



whether (mythologists) are willing to denominate them executions for the purpose of concealment, or in whatever other way they may think fit to call them."

And there we must leave the subject for the present. The Goddess Rhea stands between her father and husband Saturn, and her son and husband, Jupiter. She is "the stable and united cause of all intellectuals, and the principle and original monad, abiding in herself, unfolding into light all intellectual multitude, and again convolving it into herself and embosoming her progeny" (*loc. cit.*, xi.). She is therefore said to stand in the midst between the two fathers (Saturn and Jupiter) "one of which collects, but the other divides intellectual multitude" (*ibid.*). This symbolized the polarizing force of the Third Logos, the fohatic action of the creative energy.

The noëric Curetic triad depends on the Mother Rhea, who is then called Core (the Virgin Mother). And her reflection in the next order is Minerva clad in the breastplate of righteousness, just as are the Curetes.

Of Jupiter the Demiurge it would be too long to speak in this place, for it would be neces-

sary to analyse the *Timæus* of Plato, and, more important still, Proclus' Scholia on the *Timæus*, a task which must be postponed until we treat of the Theosophy of the Greeks according to Proclus. Jupiter is the Demiurge or last monad of the Noëric Order and so of the Supersensible World ; he is the " father of Gods and men."

#### THE SUPERCOSMIC TRIAD.

This is again triadically subdivided. Thus we get (*a*) a paternal or ruling triad, (*b*) a vivific triad, and (*c*) a convertive triad, or :

( <i>a</i> )	{	Jupiter—Celestial Jupiter	
		Neptune—Marine Jupiter	
		Pluto—Subterranean Jupiter	
		Coric or Virginal	
		Diana	
( <i>b</i> )	{	Coric or Virginal	} The Corybantic Triad
		Proserpine	
		Coric or Virginal	
		Minerva	
( <i>c</i> )	{	Divine or Superessential Light	
The Triple		Intellectual Light (Truth)	
Sun		Sensible Light.	

The last triad is called the Apolliniacal triad, and for further details the reader is

referred to Proclus (*Theol. of Plato*, Taylor, ii. 43, 44).

The first triad is referred to as the "Sons of Saturn" and they all "energize demiurgically."

"With respect to the allotment and distribution of them, in the first place it is according to the whole universe, the first of them producing essences, the second lives and generations, and the third administering formal divisions. And the first indeed establishing in the one demiurgus all things that thence proceed; but the second calling all things into progression; and the third converting all things to itself. In the second place, the allotment and division of them are according to the parts of the universe. For the first of them adorns the inerratic sphere, and the circulation of it; but the second governs the planetary region, and perfects the multiform, efficacious, and prolific motions in it; and the last administers the sublunary region, and intellectually perfects the terrestrial world" (*loc. cit.*, p. 34).

These are correspondences to the Super-celestial, Celestial and Subcelestial Regions in

the Supersensible World, and will be mentioned again later on.

Thus much for the paternal or ruling triad of the Supercosmic or Supermundane Order. Next, and in the midst, we have the vivific triad, consisting of three zoogonic monads, divided in their turn according to hyparxis, power and vivific intellect, and named respectively Coric Diana, Coric Proserpine, and Coric Minerva.

Of these three Proserpine is preëminently designated Core, and attached to her, as the Curetes are attached to Rhea, is a triple order of Corybantes (from *κόρον*=purity). And Proclus referring to this order (*loc. cit.*, p. 49), says: "The mystic tradition of Orpheus makes mention of these more clearly. And Plato being persuaded by the mysteries, and by what is performed in them, indicates concerning these unpolluted Gods. And in the Laws indeed he reminds us of the inflation of the pipe by the Corybantes, which represses every inordinate and tumultuous motion. But in the Euthydemus, he makes mention of the collocation on a throne, which is performed in the Corybantic mysteries,

just as in other dialogues he makes mention of the Curetic Order, speaking of the armed sports of the Curetes. For they are said to surround and to dance round the demiurgus of wholes, when he was unfolded into light from Rhea. In the intellectual Gods [the noëric order], therefore, the first Curetic order is allotted its hypostasis. But the order of the Corybantes which precedes Core (*i.e.*, Proserpine), and guards her on all sides, as the theology says, is analogous [in the supercosmic order] to the Curetes in the intellectual [noëric] order."

Last in order comes the Apolliniacal Triad; the physical sun or rather "sensible light" being the last member of the triad.

This Supercosmic Order is also called Assimilative, the reason for which is set forth by Proclus (*loc. cit.*, p. 52) as follows: "Everything which is assimilative, imparts the communication of similitude, and of communion with paradigms, to all the beings that are assimilated by it. Together with the similar, however, it produces and commingles the dissimilar; since in the images (of the similar) the genus of similitude is not naturally

adapted to be present, separate from its contrary. If, therefore, this order of Gods assimilates sensibles to intellectuals [*i.e.*, the Sensible World to the Noëric Order of the Super-sensible World], and produces all things posterior to itself according to an imitation of causes, it is indeed the first effective cause of similitude to natures posterior to itself."

For some such reasons as the above the Supercosmic or Supermundane Order was called the Assimilative. We are also told by Proclus in the same Book that they were designated Principalities (*Ἀρχαί*), the identical term used by Paul and Dionysius; Archangels and Angels corresponding to the two following Orders, *viz.*, the Liberated and Cosmic (or Mundane) Gods. We next, therefore, pass to the Liberated Order.

#### THE LIBERATED ORDER.

This Order is also called Supercelestial and is conformed according to the dodecad. It is curious to remark how the orders are enumerated. First 3, then 7; the 7 being a summation, assimilation or juxtaposition of wholes,

something intellectual or mânasic ( $3+4=7$ ). Whereas among sensibles we come to multiplication, and division into parts, and generation, and so have 12 ( $3 \times 4 = 12$ ).

Thus Proclus (*op. cit.*, VI. xviii.) tells us that: "Plato apprehended that the number of the dodecad is adapted to the liberated Gods, as being all-perfect, composed from the first numbers, and completed from things perfect; and he comprehends in this measure all the progressions of these Gods. For he refers all the genera and peculiarities of them to the dodecad, and defines them according to it. But again dividing the dodecad into two monads and one decad, he suspends all (mundane natures) from the two monads but delivers to us each of these energizing on the monad posterior to itself, according to its own hyperaxis. And one of these monads indeed he calls Jovian, but he denominates the other Vesta. He likewise makes mention of other more partial principalities [than the assimilative or supercosmic principalities], and which give completion to the aforesaid decad, such as those of Apollo, Mars and Venus. And he suspends, indeed, the prophetic form of life

from the Apolliniacal principality; but the amatory from the principality of Venus; and the divisive from that of Mars; for hence the most total and first genera of lives are derived; just as when he [Plato] introduces into the world souls recently fashioned, he says that some preside over one, and others over another form of life. And it appears to me, that as Timæus makes the division of souls at one time supermundane, but at another mundane, for he distributes souls equal in number to the stars, and disseminates one into the moon, another into the earth, and others into other instruments of time; after the same manner also Socrates prearranges twofold rulers and leaders of them; proximately indeed the mundane Gods, but in a still higher rank than these, the liberated Gods."

I shall not apologize for the many lengthy quotations which I am weaving into the present essay, for I desire to clearly set forth, first, the opinions of the Greeks themselves on their own religion; and secondly to place within ordinary reach information that is at present hidden in rare and costly books, which but few libraries contain.



From the above passages, therefore, we see that the Liberated Order is not fully set forth. It is a dodecad, but only five of its members are given. We shall, however, shortly see that the next Order, the Cosmic or Mundane, also consists of a dodecad and that all its members are named. It is, therefore, almost certain that we must find the prototypes of the Mundane Gods in the Liberated Order. As far as our definite information goes, however, the Liberated Gods are divided as follows :

Jovian Monad.	Vestan Monad.
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The Decad  
 Completed by  
 Apollo or the Prophetic Life.  
 Mars or the Divisive Life.  
 Venus or the Amatory Life.

The Stemma of the Gods is completed by the Mundane Gods or

#### THE COSMIC ORDER.

This is again a dodecad and consists of four triads as follows (see Proclus, *op. cit.*, VI. xxii., and Taylor, *Myst. Hymn. Orph.*, pp. xxxiii., and 171 note).

I

Fabricative Triad:	Jupiter	Neptune	Vulcan
Defensive Triad:	Vesta	Minerva	Mars
Vivific Triad:	Ceres	Juno	Diana
Harmonic Triad:	Mercury	Venus	Apollo

Fabrication as applied to the first triad is explained as "procession," and the last triad is also called "elevating" or "anagogic."

These various Powers will be referred to later on; all that is at present attempted is to present the reader with a chart, that will enable him to steer a straighter course in the sea of Grecian mythology than he may have previously supposed possible. It would be possible to give the correspondences between this scheme of hierarchies and those of other religions, but the task would be too long for the present essay. I shall, however, trespass on my readers' patience so far as to append the Chaldaic scheme, for the following reason. In *The Theosophist* for January, 1882 (Vol. III., No. 4,) appeared some valuable notes written down by H. P. Blavatsky, entitled "Notes on some Âryan-Arhat Esoteric Tenets" (See *A Modern Panarion*, pp. 475-480), in which the tenets set forth in such books as *Esoteric Buddhism* and *The Secret Doctrine* are referred

to as the "Âryan-Chaldæo-Tibetan" doctrine. Elsewhere these teachings are referred to as "Pre-Vedic 'Buddhism'." Now as the Chaldaic scheme is shown by Taylor to be identical with the Orphic, and the ancient Chaldaic is stated to be closely related to the Pre-Vedic tradition by the informant of H. P. Blavatsky, it is evident that the doctrines set forth under the title "Esoteric Buddhism" far antedate historical Buddhism and pertain to the most ancient forebears of the Âryan race, and that Orpheus in all probability got his information from these sources.

As H. P. Blavatsky writes (*loc. cit.*): "There is reason to call the Trans-Himâlayan esoteric doctrine Chaldæo-Tibetan. And, when we remember that the Vedas came—agreeably to all traditions—from the Mansarovara Lake in Tibet, and the Brâhmans themselves from the far north, we are justified in looking on the esoteric doctrines of every people who once had or still have them, as having proceeded from one and the same source, and to thus call it the 'Âryan-Chaldæo-Tibetan' doctrine, or Universal Wisdom Religion."

And now for a long quotation from Taylor, entitled "A Concise Exposition of Chaldaic Dogmas by Psellus" (*Collectanea*, pp. 38-43).

"They assert that there are seven corporeal worlds, one empyrean and the first; after this, three ethereal, and then three material worlds,\* the last of which is said to be terrestrial, and the hater of life: and this is the sublunary place, containing likewise in itself matter, which they call a profundity. They are of opinion, that there is one principle of things; and this they celebrate as *the one*, and *the good*.† After this, they venerate a certain paternal profundity‡, consisting of three triads; but each triad contains father, power, and intellect. After this is the intelligible *Inyx*,§

\* "These are the inerratic sphere, the seven planetary spheres, and the sublunary region."

† "So Plato."

‡ "This is called, by the Platonists, the *intelligible [noëtic] triad*; and is celebrated by Plato in the *Philebus*, under the names of *bound, infinite, and the mixed*; and likewise of *symmetry, truth, and beauty*, which triad, he says, is seated in the vestibule of *the good*."

§ "The *Inyx, Synoches, and Teletarchæ*, of the Chaldæans, compose that divine order, which is called, by the Platonists, the *intelligible*, and, at the same time, *intellectual order* [the noëtic-noëric order]; and is celebrated by Plato in the *Phædrus*, under the names of the *supercelestial place, heaven, and the subcelestial arch*."





then the *Synoches*, of which one is empyrean, the other ethereal, and the third material. The *Teletarchæ* follow the *Synoches*. After these succeed the *fontal fathers*,\* who are also called *Cosmagogi*, or *leaders of the world*. Of these, the first is called *once beyond*, the second is *Hecate*, and the third is *twice beyond*. After these are the three *Amilicti*;† and last of all, the *Upezokus*. They likewise venerate a fontal triad of *faith, truth, and love*. They assert that there is a ruling sun from a solar fountain, and an archangelic sun; that there is a fountain of sense, a fontal judgment, a thundering fountain [sound], a dioptric [that which lends assistance to vision] fountain [colour], and a fountain of characters, seated in unknown impressions. And, again, that there are fontal summits of Apollo, Osiris and Hermes. They likewise assert that there are *material fountains* of centres and elements; that there is a zone of dreams, and a fontal soul. [This fontal plane reminds us of the Vedân-

\* "The fontal fathers compose the *intellectual* [noëric] triad of the Greeks, and are Saturn, Rhea and Jupiter."

† "The three Amilicti are the same with the *unpolluted triad* or *Curetes* of the Greeks. Observe, that a *fontal subsistence* means a *subsistence according to cause*."

tic Kâranopâdhi or plane of causal limitation.]

“After the fountains, they say the *principles\** succeed: for fountains are superior to principles. But of the *vivific† principles*, the summit is called *Hecate*, the middle, *ruling soul*, and the extremity, *ruling virtue*. They have likewise *azonic Hecatæ*, such as the Chaldaic *Triecdotis*, *Comas*, and *Ecklustike*. But the *azonic‡ Gods*, according to them, are *Serapis*, *Bacchus*, the series of *Osiris*, and of *Apollo*. [Psellus is here giving the equivalent names in other systems—names more familiar to the Greeks than the Chaldaic originals.] These Gods are called *azonic*, because they rule without restraint over the zones, and are established above the apparent Gods. But the *zonic Gods* are those which revolve round the celestial zones, and rule over sublunary affairs, but not with the same

\* “These principles are the same with the Platonic *supermundane* order of Gods.”

† “The vivific triad consists, according to the Greek Theologists, of Diana, Proserpine, and Minerva.”

‡ “The azonic Gods are the same with the *liberated* order of the Greek Theologists, or that order which is immediately situated above the *mundane* Gods.”



unrestrained energy, as the azonic. For the Chaldæans consider the *zonic* order as divine; as distributing the parts of the sensible world; and as begirdling the allotments about the material regions.

“The *inerratic circle* succeeds the zones, and comprehends the seven spheres in which the stars [planets] are placed. According to them, likewise, there are *two solar worlds*; one which is subservient to the ethereal profundity; the other *zonaic*, being one of the seven spheres.

“Of human souls, they establish a two-fold fontal cause; *viz.*, the *paternal intellect*,\* and the *fontal soul*:† and they consider partial‡ souls, as proceeding from the fontal, according to the will of the father [the Pitri-Devatâ]. Souls of this kind, however, possess a self-begotten, a self-vital essence: for they are not like alter-motive natures. Indeed, since according to the Oracle, a partial soul is a portion of divine fire, a splendid fire, and a

\* “The *Jupiter* of the Greeks, the artificer of the universe.”

† “Called by the Greeks, *Juno*.”

‡ “That is, such souls as ours.”

paternal conception, it must be an immaterial and self-subsistent essence: for everything divine is of this kind; and of this the soul is a portion. They assert too, that all things are contained in each soul [monadology]; but that in each there is an unknown characteristic of an effable and ineffable impression. They are of opinion, that the soul often descends into the world [reincarnation] through many causes; either through the defluxion of its wings,\* or through the paternal will. [That is, through Karma, either (a) because there is not strength to escape from the things of sense, or (b) because the father-soul (Higher Ego) sends its son (Lower Ego) back to earth to reap the karmic results of its deeds.] They believe the world to be eternal, as likewise the periods of the stars. [This is the idea of manvantaric eternity.] They multifariously distribute Hades, at one time calling it the leader of a terrene allotment, and at another the sublunary region. Sometimes they denominate it the most inward of the ethereal and material worlds; at another

\* "So Plato: see my translation of the Phædrus."

time,\* irrational soul. In this, they place the rational soul, not essentially, but according to habitude, when it sympathizes with, and energizes according to partial reason. [Hades therefore embraces the kâmalokic and devachanic spheres of the Esoteric Philosophy—Hades simply meaning the ‘Unseen’ (sensible) World.] . . .

“With respect to these dogmas, many of them are adopted by Plato† and Aristotle; but Plotinus, Porphyry, Jamblichus, Proclus, and their disciples, adopt the whole of them, and admit them without hesitation, as doctrines of a divine origin.”

Michael Constantinus Psellus lived in the eleventh century, was called the Prince of Philosophers (*φιλοσόφων ἕπατος*), and was the most learned and voluminous writer of his age. The Chaldæan Oracles are not to be considered merely in their Greek dress, but per-

\* “Hades is, with great propriety, thus called: for the rational, when giving itself up to the dominion of the irrational soul, may be truly said to be situated in *Hades*, or *obscurity*.”

† “Indeed, he who has penetrated the profundity of Plato’s doctrines, will find that they perfectly accord with these Chaldaic dogmas; as is everywhere copiously shown by Proclus.”

tain to a genuine Chaldaic tradition. As Taylor says (*op. cit.*, p. 35):

“That they are of Chaldaic origin, and were not forged by Christians of any denomination, as has been asserted by some superficial writers, is demonstrably evident from the following considerations: in the first place, John Picus, Earl of Mirandula [the famous Kabalist], in a letter to Ficinus, informs him that he was in possession of the Oracles of Zoroaster *in the Chaldæan tongue*, with a commentary on them, by certain Chaldæan wise men.” He also adduces the commentaries of the Neoplatonists upon these Oracles, who certainly were not friendly to Christianity. It is all the more probable that the Oracles they commented upon were genuine, seeing that they exposed the forgeries of a number of false revelations ascribed to Zoroaster “by many Christians and heretics who had abandoned the ancient philosophy.” The ascription of these Oracles to Zoroaster in the Chaldæan MS. of Picus is exceedingly interesting as it brings the old Avesta religion (so strongly resembling the old Vedic system), into line

with the "Âryan-Chaldæo-Tibetan" doctrine.

I do not flatter myself that any but a very few readers will take a vital interest in the difficult exposition attempted in this chapter. There are, however, a few who will be struck with the startling resemblances between the Orphic and Chaldaic traditions of Theogony and the Cosmogensis of the Stanzas of Dzyan. These students will at once see the common basis of the three traditions, and will admit that the establishment of this point is well worth the labour expended. Here we have simply the exoteric traditions. The "under-meaning" (*ὑπόνοια*) has never been fully revealed; and this not because of any jealous exclusiveness, but simply because no human language can paint the inconceivably rapid transmutations of primal vital processes. Moreover, it is absolutely impossible to convey to one who is not possessed of spiritual sight, phenomena and noumena that have never fallen under his observation.

Having thus presented the reader with an Outline of the traditional Orphic Theogony, we will proceed to fill in a few details.

## VI.—SOME COSMOGONICAL DETAILS.

### A KEY TO THE MULTIPLICITY OF THE POWERS.

IF we imagine to ourselves the seven colours of the spectrum, the result of the breaking up of a ray of pure sunlight by means of a triangular prism; and if we further imagine each of these seven rays being split up into seven sub-divisions, resembling the seven parent rays, but each ray retaining its dominant tint in all its seven sub-divisions—then we shall obtain a clue that will aid us in grasping the intricacies of the permutations and combinations of Nature-Powers. As this is a most important subject and as, without a thorough grasp of the theory, the Orphic Theogony and Cosmogony would remain an unintelligible chaos, I append a most valuable passage from Proclus' *Com-*

*ment. on the Timæus*, Book IV; (Taylor, ii. 281, 282):

“ Each of the planets [? ‘ planetary chains ’] is a *whole world*, comprehending in itself many divine genera, *invisible* to us. Of all these, however, the visible star has the government. And in this, the fixed stars differ from those in the planetary spheres, that the former [the fixed stars] have one monad [the sphere of fixed stars], which is the wholeness of them; but that in each of the latter [planetary spheres] there are invisible stars [‘ globes ’], which revolve together with their spheres; so that in each, there is both the wholeness, and a leader [the ‘ planetary ’] which is allotted an exempt transcendency. For the planets being secondary to the fixed stars, require a twofold prefecture, the one more total, but the other more partial. But that in each of these, there is a multitude co-ordinate with each, you may infer from the extremes. For if the inerratic sphere [of fixed stars] has a multitude co-ordinate with itself, and earth is the wholeness of terrestrial, in the same manner as the inerratic sphere is of celestial animals [the ‘ sacred animals ’—the stars being

ensouled], it is necessary that each [intermediate] wholeness, should entirely possess certain partial animals ['globes' or 'wheels'] co-ordinate with itself; through which also they are said to be wholenesses. The intermediate natures, however, are concealed from our sense [are invisible], the extremes [the spheres of fixed stars (or suns) and visible planets] being manifest; one of them through its transcendently luminous essence, and the other through its alliance to us. If likewise, partial souls ['globes'] are disseminated about them, some about the sun [the substitute of an invisible planet], and others about the moon [also a substitute], and others about each of the rest [the visible planets], and prior to souls, dæmons [*daimones*] give completion to the herds of which they are the leaders, it is evidently well said that each of the spheres is a world; theologians also teaching us these things when they say that there are Gods [cosmocratores, cosmagogi] in each prior to dæmons, some of which are under the government of others. Thus, for instance, they assert concerning our mistress the Moon, that the Goddess Hecate is contained in her, and also



Diana. Thus too, in speaking of the sovereign Sun, and the Gods that are there, they celebrate Bacchus as being there,

“ ‘The Sun’s assessor, who with watchful eye  
surveys  
‘The sacred pole.’

“They likewise celebrate the Jupiter who is there, Osiris, the Pan, and others of which the books of theologians and theurgists are full; from all which it is evident that each of the planets is truly said to be the leader of many Gods, who give completion to its peculiar circulation.”

On this luminous commentary of Proclus Taylor appends an excellent note, which I have already twice partially referred to, but which I now give in full to impress the theory upon the mind of the reader.

“From this extraordinary passage, we may perceive at one view why the Sun in the Orphic hymns is called Jupiter, why Apollo is called Pan, and Bacchus the Sun; why the Moon seems to be the same with Rhea, Ceres, Proserpine, Juno, Venus, etc., and in short why any one divinity is celebrated with the names and epithets of so many of the rest.

For from this sublime theory it follows that every sphere contains a Jupiter, Neptune, Vulcan, Vesta, Minerva, Mars, Ceres, Juno, Diana, Mercury, Venus, Apollo, and in short every deity, each sphere at the same time conferring on these Gods the peculiar characteristic of its nature; so that for instance in the Sun they all possess a solar property, in the Moon a lunar one, and so of the rest. From this theory too we may perceive the truth of that divine saying of the ancients, that all things are full of Gods; for more particular orders proceed from such as are more general, the mundane from the super-mundane, and the sublunary from the celestial: while earth becomes the general receptacle of the illuminations of all the Gods. 'Hence,' as Proclus shortly after observes, 'there is a terrestrial Ceres, Vesta, and Isis, as likewise a terrestrial Jupiter and a terrestrial Hermes, established about the one divinity of the Earth; just as a multitude of celestial Gods proceeds about the divinity of the heavens. For there are progressions of all the celestial Gods into the Earth; and Earth contains all things, in an earthly manner, which Heaven

comprehends celestially. Hence we speak of a terrestrial Bacchus and a terrestrial Apollo, who bestows the all-various streams of water [psychic influence] with which the earth abounds, and openings prophetic of futurity.' And if to all this we only add, that all the other mundane Gods subsist in the twelve above-mentioned, and that the first triad of these is *demiurgic* or *fabricative*, viz., Jupiter, Neptune, Vulcan; the second, Vesta, Minerva, Mars, *defensive*; the third, Ceres, Juno, Diana, *vivific*; and the fourth, Mercury, Venus, Apollo, *elevating* and *harmonic*:—I say, if we unite this with the preceding theory, there is nothing in the ancient theology that will not appear admirably sublime and beautifully connected, accurate in all its parts, scientific and divine."

#### THE GODS AND THEIR SHAKTIS.

Another important point to remember is the androgynous nature of the Powers, symbolized as male-female. This was probably the subject of the Orphic work which I have called, in the list of works, *Twin-Natures*. It represents the polarity or polarizing force

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of the Powers, and corresponds to the Shaktis (Powers or female aspects) of Hindu mythology. These twin aspects correspond to Mind and Soul, and are explained by Taylor in a note on Hymn IX. addressed to the Moon (*Myst. Hymns*, pp. 26, 27):

“Ficinus, *On the Theology of Plato* (iv. 128), has the following remarkable passage, most probably derived from some MS. Commentary of Proclus, or some other of the latter Platonists; for unfortunately he does not acquaint us with the source of his information. [It was evidently the same as that from which Cornelius Agrippa drew his information; see Chap. III., ‘The Opinions of the Kabalists.’] ‘The professors (says he) of the Orphic theology consider a twofold power in souls, and in the celestial orbs; the one consisting in knowledge, the other in vivifying and governing the orb with which that power is connected. Thus in the orb of the earth, they call the gnostic power Pluto, but the other Proserpine. In water they denominate the former power Ocean, and the latter Tethys. In air, that thundering Jove, and this Juno. In fire, that Phanes, and this

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## COSMOGONICAL DETAILS. 139

Aurora. In the soul of the lunar sphere, they call the gnostic power Liknitan Bacchus, the other Thalia. In the sphere of Mercury, that Bacchus Silenus, this Euterpe. In the orb of Venus, that Lysius Bacchus, this Erato. In the sphere of the Sun, that Trietericus Bacchus, this Melpomene. In the orb of Mars, that Bassareus Bacchus, this Clio. In the sphere of Jupiter, that Sebazius, this Terpsichore. In the orb of Saturn, that Amphietus, this Polymnia. In the eighth sphere, that Pericionius, this Urania. But in the soul of the world they call the gnostic power Bacchus Eribromius, but the animating power Calliope. From all which the Orphic theologians infer, that the particular epithets of Bacchus are compared with those of the Muses, for the purpose of informing us that the powers of the Muses are, as it were, intoxicated with the nectar of divine knowledge; and in order that we may consider the nine Muses, and nine Bacchuses, revolving round one Apollo, that is about the splendour of one invisible Sun.' The greater part of this passage is preserved by Gyraldus in his *Syntagma de*

*Musis*, and by Natales Comes in his *Mythology*, but without mentioning the original author. As in each of the celestial spheres, therefore, the soul of the ruling deity is of the female, and the intellect is of the male characteristic, it is by no means wonderful that the Moon is called in this hymn 'female and male.' "

The above information is of exceeding great interest as will be seen by casting the eye over the appended table.

Now, who were the Muses? Their numbers are given variously as three, seven, and nine. They are generally said to be the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, Remembrance, or Memory (Hes., *Theog.*, 52, etc., 915; Hom. *Il.*, ii. 491, *Od.*, i. 10; Apollod. i. 3. § 1); whereas others call them the daughters of Uranus, Heaven, and Gæa, Earth (*Schol. ad Pind. Nem.*, iii. 16; Paus. ix. 29. § 2; Diod. iv. 7; Arnob. *Adv. Gent.*, iii. 37). That is to say, that the Muses were the powers of remembrance or reminiscence of knowledge previously enjoyed by the soul in past births. Thus they were called Mneiaë, Remembrances (Plat. *Sympos.*, ix. 14). They were also said to be daughters of

# TABLE OF THE ELEMENTS AND SPHERES WITH THEIR GODS AND SHAKTIS.

APOLLO.

THE SPLENDOUR OF THE ONE INVISIBLE SUN.

ELEMENTS	SPHERES	BACCHI	MUSES	
Sublunary	Inerratic Sphere [Reflection of Empyrean]	{ Soul of the World Eighth Sphere	Eribromius Pericionius	Calliope Urania
	Planetary Spheres [Reflection of Ethereal]	{ Saturnine Jovian Martial Solar Venereal Mercurial Lunar	Amphietus Sebasius Bassareus Trietericus Lysius Silenus Liknites	Polymnia Terpsichore Clio Melpomene Erato Euterpe Thalia
	Fiery		Phanes	Aurora
	Aëry		Jove	Juno
	Watery		Ocean	Tethys
Earthy		Pluto	Proserpine	





Uranus and Gæa, for such knowledge or experience can only be obtained by Heaven and Earth "kissing each other," that is by reincarnation. They are always connected with Apollo, the God of inspiration, who holds in his hand the seven-stringed lyre over each of the strings of which one of the Muses presides. Thus Apollo is called the Leader of the Choir of the Muses—*Μουσαγέτης* (Diod. i. 18).

The rôles commonly assigned to these are as follows: 1. Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry; 2. Clio, the Muse of history; 3. Euterpe, the Muse of lyric poetry; 4. Melpomene, the Muse of tragedy; 5. Terpsichore, the Muse of choral dance and song; 6. Erato, the Muse of amatory poetry; 7. Polymnia or Polyhymnia, the Muse of the sublime hymn; 8. Urania, the Muse of astronomy; 9. Thalia, the Muse of comedy.

It is curious to remark the legend which tells us that the Sirens, having ventured upon a contest of song with the nine sisters, were deprived of the feathers of their wings, which the Muses subsequently wore as an ornament (Eustath. *ad Hom.*, p. 85; Hirt, *Mythol. Bilderb.*, p. 203 *et seq.*). This reminds us of the

contest of the Devas and Asuras over the senses, in the Upanishads. The Asuras "pierced" each of the senses with "imperfection," so that a man when he sees, sees both pleasant and unpleasant things, etc. The Seirens are the allurements of the opened psychic senses, the Muses are the beneficent and healthy use of the same powers. It is, therefore, not surprising to hear that Orpheus was son of Calliope, for Calliope is the Shakti of the World-Soul, and Orpheus was, therefore, fully illumined by the greatest of the Muses.

The name Muse (μοῦσα; μάουσα from μάειν, to "strive after," etc., is "referred to the emotion or passion, the 'fine frenzy,' implied in the verb in the usual sense 'strive after' (μεμαώς, excited), and in its derivatives, among which are counted μαίνεσθαι, be in a frenzy, μανία, frenzy, madness, μάντις, a seer, prophet, etc." (*The Century Dictionary, sub voc.*) We prefer the word "inspiration" instead of "frenzy" and "madness"; the seers, prophets, poets, sages, and philosophers, and great geniuses of the world, are not "mad" except for such materialists and "degenerates" as Max Nordau.

Nor should it surprise the reader to find Phanes located among the material Orbs or Spheres. This Phanes is the manifested material light, which has Aurora, the Dawn, for spouse, and not the invisible Phanes, noëtic or "intelligible" Light, which has Night for consort.

#### THE TWO CREATIONS.

Another idea to bear in mind, in studying Orphic cosmogony, is that there are two creations, one intellectual or ideal, and the other sensible or material. This idea is common to almost all the great religions, and is especially worked out in the Hindu Purânas. These creations are, in Platonic language, called: (*a*) the creation of wholes, and (*b*) the creation of parts. The first Fathers of wholes subsist in the Noëtic Order, where is placed the ideal Paternal Cause; this proceeds through the Noëric Order to the Demiurgus, the last of the Order, Zeus, Jupiter, the "Father of Gods and men"; whereas those Powers superior to Jupiter are "Gods of Gods." The King of the first creation, "according to Orpheus, is called by the blessed immortals

who dwell on lofty Olympus, Phanes Protonogonus [the First-born]." (See the Scholia of Proclus on the *Cratylus* of Plato; Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, p. 166.) Olympus is the Celestial Arch in the Noëtic-noëric Order (see Chart), and is the same as the Mount Meru of the Hindus.

And so, in his turn, "the demiurgic Zeus establishes two Diacosms, one the celestial, and the other the sub-celestial; for which cause the theologist [Orpheus] says that his sceptre is four and twenty measures, since he rules over two dodecads." (Proclus in *Crat.*, p. 57; quoted by Lobeck, *op. cit.*, p. 517.) And so also in his commentary on the *Timæus* (ii. 137), he says: "Phanes establishes two triads, and Zeus two dodecads."

And Kircher (*Prodrom. Copt.*, pp. 173 and 275) shows plainly the idea with regard to the Egyptians in the words: "Heaven above, heaven below; stars above, stars below; all that is above, thus also below; understand this and be blessed." (Οὐρανὸς ἄνω, οὐρανὸς κάτω, ἄστρα ἄνω, ἄστρα κάτω, πᾶν ὃ ἄνω τοῦτο κάτω.)

The distinction between the Sensible and Supersensible World, and between the material

and intellectual creations, must never be absent from the mind in studying Grecian Theosophy.

The subject of the Triads is also one of great interest, for it has to do with

#### THE TRINITY.

A glance at the Chart of the Powers will show how this idea runs through the whole system. It is sufficient here, however, to point out the correspondences between the Trinity of (*a*) Being, (*b*) Life, and (*c*) Intellect, with (*a*) the Purusha, or Âtman proper, or Self, (*b*) the Shânta Âtman, or Self of Peace, and (*c*) the Mahân Âtman or Great Self, of the *Kathopanishad* (Vallî iii., Adhyâya i.); he who is at one with the Mahân Âtman being called Mahâtmâ, or Great Soul. Proclus, moreover, in his Commentary on the First Alcibiades of Plato, tells us, that in the Noëtic Order the three hypostases are The Good, The Wise, The Beautiful. And that in the Noëtic-noëric Order, the three are Faith, Truth and Love. "Love supernally descends from intelligibles to mundane concerns, calling all things upward to divine Beauty. Truth, also, proceeds through all things, illuminating all things .

with knowledge. And lastly, Faith proceeds through the universe, establishing all things with transcendent union in Good. Hence the [Chaldæan] Oracles assert, 'that all things are governed by and abide in these.' And, on this account, they order Theurgists [Yogîs] to conjoin themselves to Divinity through this triad." (See Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, p. 118.) It is curious to remark that the three requisites for the student of Brahma-vidyâ or Yoga-vidyâ (Union with the Divine, in the Upanishads), are Shraddhâ (Faith), Tapas (Purification or Contemplation on Truth) and Brahma-charya (Service of the Supreme or Action for Love of Deity); or, in other words, Faith, Practice and Discipline.

The above will give the reader some insight into the ethical side of this great system. Now there are pre-eminently three Fathers or Kings in the system (see Proclus on the *Cratylus* of Plato) viz., (a) Uranus who is of the connective (preservative) order, (b) Saturn who is of the Titanic (destructive) order, and (c) Jupiter who is of the demiurgic (creative) order. Above all is the Great Forefather Phanes (the Intellectual Prajâpati). But the

subject can be worked out infinitely, and so we must hurry on to

#### THE QUATERNARY.

Hermias writes (in *Phædr.*, p. 137). "Phanes is a tetrad, as Orpheus says, 'with four eyes gazing on every side.'" Proclus (in *Tim.*, v. 291), gives the Holy Four as Phanes, Nox, Uranus and Saturn; and in the same book (v. 303) he quotes the strange phrase, from some ancient source, "Phanes whom the blessed ones called the First-born" (ὄν τε Φάνητα πρῶτόγονον μάκαρες κάλειον). The "blessed ones" must surely mean the ancient Sages or Masters; but this is by the way. This is the Quaternary in the Super-sensible World, the primary creation; but in the secondary, in the Sensible World, Proclus also tells us (Comment. on *Crat.*; Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, p. 171): "The Demiurgus simply imparts to all things life (*a*) divine, (*b*) intellectual, (*c*) psychical, and (*d*) that which is divisible about bodies." And then he adds most wisely: "No one, however, should think that the Gods in their generations of secondary natures, are diminished; or that they sustain a division of

their proper essence in giving subsistence to things subordinate; or that they expose their progeny to the view, externally to themselves, in the same manner as the causes of mortal offspring. . . . Nay, but abiding in themselves, they produce by their very essence posterior natures, comprehend on all sides their progeny, and supernally perfect the productions and energies of their offspring."

Their essence is no more diminished than the flame of a lamp, from which innumerable lamps may be lighted.

Proclus (*ibid.*, p. 175) also speaks of four intellects or minds: (*a*) intelligible and occult intellect (*νοῦς νοητός*), (*b*) that which unfolds into light (*ἐκφαντορικὸς νοῦς*), (*c*) that which connectedly contains (*συνεκτικὸς νοῦς*), (*d*) that which imparts perfection (*τελεσιουργὸς νοῦς*); or in other words, (*a*) Phanes; (*b*) Uranus, Heaven; (*c*) Celestial Earth, or Prime Matter; and (*d*) the Sub-Celestial Arch.

So also Rhea, Intelligent Life, is the Mother of the fourfold Life, divine, intellectual, psychical and mundane. The consideration of the Trinity and Quaternary naturally brings us to the Septenary. Of this, however, we



have little to say in the present place, as the subject has to be taken up at greater length when treating of Apollo's Seven-stringed Lyre. The hebdomads link on to the triads and tetrads as follows: "Heaven produces twofold monads, and triads and hebdomads equal in number to the monads," the "twice-seven" of the Stanzas of Dzyan. And thus the forty-nine Powers of the Noëric Order are generated.

#### ON NATURE AND EMANATION.

In completing our sketch of some of the principal characteristics of Orphic Cosmogony, we must not forget to say a word on Nature, a word which bears a meaning of a very distinct character, differing widely from the loose and empty term in our modern vocabularies. Proclus (in *Tim.*, p. 4), informs us that Nature is the last of the demiurgic causes of the Sensible World; that is to say, he speaks of invisible Nature, or the subtle or psychic body of the gross envelope of the World. This Body is full of productive forms and forces, through which all mundane existences are governed. She proceeds from the vivific Goddess Rhea. Through her "the *most*

*inanimate beings* participate of a certain soul." Thus in the Xth Hymn, Orpheus speaks of her "turning the swift traces of her feet with a swift whirling." She depends on Rhea through Minerva, the intellectual power of the zoogonic triad. Hence we learn that, according to the Orphic theology, Minerva "fashioned the variegated veil of Nature from that wisdom and virtue of which she is the presiding deity." Thus it is that Simplicius tells us (*Comment. Arist. Phys.*, ii.): "That one of the conceptions which we form of Nature is, that it is *the character of everything*, and that in consequence of this, we employ the name of it in all things, and do not refuse to say the *nature* of souls, of intellect, and even of deity itself." All of which is excellently explained by Taylor (*Myst. Hymns*, pp. 29-31), who in this connection lucidly describes the nature of emanation as follows: "All the Gods, according to this theology, though they proceed by an ἀόρατος ἑκφανσις or *ineffable unfolding into light* from the first principle of things, yet at the same time are αὐτοτελείς ὑποστάσεις, or self-perfect, and self-produced essences."

## CYCLIC PERIODS AND PRALAYA.

To conclude this Chapter, it is necessary to refer to the idea of Cycles in the Orphic system. The doctrine of alternate manifestations and re-absorptions (Manvantaras and Pralayas) of the Universe is plainly set forth, as may be seen from Le Grand (*Dissert. Crit. et Phil.*, p. 103): "To more clearly explain that septenary referred to by Picus of Mirandula in his conclusion on the Orphic doctrine of the world, you should be informed that 'the world-engine will come to an end at the termination of the sixth age.' At the end of the last two thousand years cycle, and in the seventh, the world will come to an end.

. . . Orpheus calls these cycles Ages, in a prophecy which Plato refers to, 'After the sixth age, the immaterial cosmos will be burnt up.'

And Eusebius (*Præp. Ev.*, XIII. xii. 688) has preserved the following verses of Linus: "When the seventh light comes, the omnipotent Father begins to dissolve all things, but for the good there is a seventh light also. For there is a sevenfold origin for all things," etc.

And Proclus (ad *Hes. Opp.*, 156), speaking of the ages or races, says: "The third race perished by the flood; and then arose a sacred race of demigods that lasted for seven or even eight races." (τὸ τρίτον γένος ἐξέλιπε διὰ τοῦ κατακλυσμοῦ· μετὰ δὲ παρήλθε ἱερὸν τὸ τῶν ἡμιθέων ἀρκέσαν ἐπὶ ἑπτὰ ἢ καὶ ὀκτὼ γενεάς.) Here we have clear evidence of the widespread tradition of the alternate destruction of the world by water and fire; also the destruction of the "Atlanteans" by the great flood, and the salvation of the "divine race" which "lasted" and will last till the end of the Cycle. But it is time to bring this Chapter to a conclusion.

## VII.—THE ORPHIC PANTHEON.

### UNAGING TIME.

ORPHEUS designated the Supreme Cause, although it is in reality ineffable, Chronus (Time). This Time, and with it other ineffable Powers, was prior to Heaven, Uranus (Procl. in *Crat.*, p. 71. Boiss.). The name Chronus closely resembles the name Cronus (Saturn), remarks Proclus (*loc. cit.*, p. 64) suggestively; and in the same passage he says that “‘God-inspired’ words [Oracles] characterize this divinity [Cronus] as Once Beyond.” This may mean that Chronus is ideal Unending Duration, and Cronus Time manifested; though this leaves unexplained the strange term “Once Beyond,” which is found in the Chaldæan system. The same statements are found elsewhere in Proclus’ works (*Tim.*, i. 86; *Theol.*, i. 28, 68; *Parm.*, vii. 230).

And Philo (*Quod Mund. Incorr.*, p. 952, b.) says: “There was once a Time when Cosmos

was not." This is called "Unborn Time, The Æon," by Timæus of Locris (p. 97). It is the "First One, the Supersubstantial, the Ineffable Principle." It may be compared to the Zervan of the Avesta, the En Suph and Hidden of the Hidden of the Kabalah, the Bythos of the Gnostics, the Unknown Darkness of the Egyptians, and the Parabrahman of the Vedântins.

#### ÆTHER, CHAOS AND NIGHT.

Next come Æther and Chaos, Spirit-Matter, the Bound (πέρας) and Infinity (ἀπειρία) of Plato (Proc., *Tim.*, ii. 117), the Purusha-Prakriti of the Sânkhya. Orpheus calls this Æther the Mighty Whirlpool—πελώριον χάσμα (Simplicius, *Ausc.*, iv. 123); called Magna Vorago by Syrianus (*Metaph.*, ii. 33. a). And Proclus (*Tim.*, ii. 117), speaking of Chaos, says: "The last Infinity, by which also Matter (ἕλη) is circumscribed—is the Container, the field and plane of ideas. About her is 'neither limit, nor foundation, nor seat, but excessive darkness.'" This is the Mûlaprakriti or Root-Matter of the Vedântins, and Æther is the so-called first Logos, Æther-Chaos being the

second. "And dusky Night comprehended and hid all below the Æther; [Orpheus thus] signifying that Night came first." (Malela, iv. 31; Cedrenus, i. 57, 84.)

Then comes the Dawn of the First Creation. In the Unaging Time, Chaos, impregnated by the whirling of Æther, formed itself into

#### THE COSMIC EGG.

Proclus (*Parm.*, vii. 168) calls this Chaos the "Mist of the Darkness." It is the first break of the Dawn of Creation, and may be compared to the "fire-mist" stage in the sensible universe. Thus the author of the *Recognitions* (X. vii. 316) tells us: "They who had greater wisdom among the nations proclaim that Chaos was first of all things; in course of the eternity its outer parts became denser and so sides and ends were made, and it assumed the fashion and form of a gigantic egg." For before this stage, the same writer tells us (*c.* xxx.): "Orpheus declares that Chaos first existed, eternal, vast, uncreate—it was neither darkness, nor light, nor moist, nor dry, nor hot, nor cold, but all things intermingled."

Apion (*Clement. Homil.*, VI. iv. 671) writes that: "Orpheus likened Chaos to an egg, in which the primal 'elements' were all mingled together. . . This egg was generated from the infinitude of primal matter as follows. [The first two principles were] primal matter innate with life, and a certain vortex in perpetual flux and unordered motion—from these there arose an orderly flux and interblending of essences, and thus from each, that which was most suitable to the production of life flowed to the centre of the universe, while the surrounding spirit was drawn within, as a bubble in water. Thus a spherical receptacle was formed. Then, impregnated in itself by the divine spirit which seized upon it, it revolved itself into manifestation—with the appearance of the periphery of an egg."

Proclus (*Crat.*, p. 79) mentions this circular motion as follows: "Orpheus refers to the occult diacosm [primary or intellectual creation] in the words, 'the boundless unweariedly revolved in a circle.'" He also refers to it elsewhere (in *Euclid*, ii. 43; *Parm.*, vii. 153), and in his Commentary on the *Timæus* (iii. 160), he writes: "The spherical is most



closely allied to the all. . . This shape, therefore, is the paternal type of the universe, and reveals itself in the occult diacosm itself."

And Simplicius (*Aus.*, i. 31. b.) writes: "If he [Plato in *Parmenides*,] says that Being closely resembles the circling mass of the sphere, you should not be surprised, for there is a correspondence between it and the formation of the first plasm of the mythologist [Orpheus]. For how does this differ from speaking, as Orpheus does, of the 'Silver-shining Egg'?"

And so Proclus (*Tim.*, i. 138) sums up the question of the Egg by reminding us that: "The Egg was produced by Æther and Chaos, the former establishing it according to limit, and the latter according to infinity. For the former is the rootage of all, whereas the latter has no bounds."

It would be too long to point to the same idea in other religions, whether Phœnician, Babylonian, Syrian, Persian, or Egyptian (*cf. Vishnu Purâna*, Wilson, i. 39; and Gail's *Recherches sur la Nature du Culte de Bacchus en Grèce*, pp. 117, 118); it is sufficient to refer readers to the Hiranyagarbha of the Hindus, the Resplendent

Egg or Germ, which is set forth at length in the Upanishads and Purânas.

It is a most magnificent idea, this Germ of the Universe, and puts the doctrine of the ancients as to cosmogony on a more rigidly scientific basis than even the most advanced scientists of our day have arrived at. And if this shape and this motion are the "paternal types of the universe" and all therein, how is it possible to imagine that the learned of the ancients were not acquainted with the proper shape and motion of the earth?

But as the subject is of great interest not only from a cosmogonical standpoint, but also from an anthropogonical point of view, some further information may with advantage be added. This Egg of the Universe, besides having its analogy in the germ-cell whence the human and every other kind of embryo develops, has also its correspondence in the "auric egg" of man, of which much has been written and little revealed. The colour of this aura in its purest form is opalescent. Therefore we find Damascius (*Quæst.*, 147) quoting a verse of Orpheus in which the Egg is called "silver-white" (*ἀργύφειον*), that is to say, silver-

shining or mother o' pearl; he also calls it, again quoting Orpheus (*op. cit.*, p. 380), the "Brilliant Vesture" or the "Cloud" (*τον ἀργῆτα χιτῶνα ἢ τὴν νεφέλην*).

Leucippus and Democritus (Plutarch, *Placitt.*, II. vi. 396) also "stretch a circular vesture and membrane round the cosmos." It is interesting to compare this idea of a membrane or chorion with a passage in the *Vishnu Purāna* (I. ii.; Wilson's Trans., i. 40). Parāshara is describing the Vast Egg, "which gradually expanded like a bubble of water" (the very simile used by Apion), and referring to the contents of the Jagad-yoni or World-matrix, he says "Meru was its amnion, and the other mountains were its chorion"—(*Merurulbamabhūttasya jarāyushcha mahidharāh*—see Fitzedward Hall's note, *loc cit.*). These two membranes, which play such an important part in embryology, are easily explained in the world-process, when we remember that Meru is the Olympus of the Greeks, the Celestial Arch, whereas the "other mountains" are the circular ranges, or spheres, which separate the "oceans" of space from each other.

In this connection also we should remember that the Egg contains the "Triple God," the "Dragon-formed." Without the spermatozoon the ovum would remain unfertilized. But the Dragon-formed will be referred to again later on. In connection with this graphic symbol of an Egg, we must briefly mention the Mixing-Bowl or

#### THE CRATER.

This is so called from the Goblet which the Deity orders to be given to the souls to drink from, in order that they may imbibe the intelligence of all things. Proclus (*Tim.*, v. 316) speaks of several of these Crateres: "Plato in the *Philebus* hands on the tradition of the Vulcanic Crater [the Cup of Fire]. . . and Orpheus is acquainted with the Cup of Dionysus, and ranges many other such Cups round the Solar Table." That is to say, that the various spheres were each in their turn Cups containing the essence of the Spheres or Eggs. We may compare this with the Cup of Anacreon and of the Sûfi mystics. For the same idea, and the same term, in the Chaldæan Oracles and the Books of Hermes, see my

*Simon Magus* (p. 56). Proclus (*Tim.*, v. 291) identifies this Crater with the Egg and Night, the mother and wife of Phanes. And Plato, in his psychogony, speaks of two mixtures or Crateres; in the one the Deity mixed the All-Soul of Universal Nature, and from the other he ladled out the minds of men (*Lobeck, op. cit.*, 786). And Macrobius (*Somn.*, XI. ii. 66) says that: "Plato speaks of this in the *Phædo*, and says that the soul is dragged back into a body, hurried on by new intoxication, desiring to taste a fresh draught of the overflow of matter, whereby it is weighed down and brought back [to earth]. The sidereal Crater of Father Liber [Dionysus, Bacchus] is a symbol of this mystery; and this is what the ancients called the River of Lethe; the Orphics saying that Father Liber was the Material Mind [*νοῦς ἰλικός*, Indra, Lord of the Senses]."

This shows us that we must continually bear in mind the aphorism "as above so below," if we would understand the intricacies of the system. There is the Supernal Crater of the Super-sensible World, and the Material Crater of the Sensible World—and

others also. The following passages from Proclus' *Theology of Plato*, however, will throw further light on this interesting subject. Thus the Demiurgus is said to "constitute the psychical essences in conjunction with the Crater" (V. xxxi.)—this in the Sensible World. Again, "the Crater is the peculiar cause of souls, and is co-arranged with the Demiurgus and filled from him, but fills souls." Thus the Crater is called the "fountain of souls," the "cause of souls" (c. xxxi.). But we must pass on to the God born from the Egg and his associate deities.

#### PHANES, ERICAPÆUS AND METIS.

The Triple God born from the Egg was called Phanes, and also Metis and Ericapæus, the three being aspects of one Power.

As Clemens Alexandrinus (Lobeck, p. 478, gives his authority as "Clemens, p. 672"—an absolutely useless reference) writes: "The Egg of Life, having been brought forth from boundless Mother Substance, and kept in motion by this subjective and ever-moving Mother Substance, manifests endless changes. For from within its periphery a male-female

living Power [the absolute 'Animal'] is ideated (*εἰδοποιεῖται*), by the foreknowledge of the divine [Father] Spirit [*Æther*], which is in it [the Egg], which Power Orpheus calls Phanes (*Φάνητα*), for on its shining forth (*αὐτοῦ φανέντος*), the whole universe shone forth by the light of Fire—the most glorious of the elements—brought to perfection in the Moist [Principle—Chaos]. And so the Egg, the first and last [of all things], heated by the living creature within it, breaks; and the enformed [Power] comes forth, as Orpheus says, 'when the swollen wide-capacious Egg brake in twain'; and thus the outer membrane [skin, shell, or chorion] contains the diacosmic evolution [*διακόσμησιν*; that is to say, the two diacosms, or in other words, the upper half of the membrane is the container of the intellectual cosmos, and the lower of the sensible cosmos]; but he [Phanes] presides over the Heaven [which lies between], as it were seated on the heights of a mountain range, and in secret shines over the boundless æon."

In Hindu mythology this mountain range is figured as circular.

Malela and Cedrenus, in the passage

referred to under "Night," add that Orpheus tells us that: "Light [Phanes, 'Bright Space Son of Dark Space'] having burst through the Æther [the Âkâshic Egg] illuminated the Earth [the First Earth—or Cosmos]; meaning that this Light was the Light which burst through the highest Æther of all—[and not the sensible light that we see]. And the names of it Orpheus heard in prophetic vision, and declares them to be Metis, Phanes and Ericapæus, which by interpretation are Will, Light and Light-giver [or Consciousness, Light, and Life]; adding that these three divine powers of names are the one power and one might of the One God, whom no man sees—and from his power all things are created, both incorporeal principles, and the sun and moon and all the stars."

This deity is also called Protogonus, the First-born (Lactantius, *Inst.*, I. v. 28), and Proclus (*Tim.*, ii. 132) quotes a verse of Orpheus in which he is named Sweet Love (*Ἄβρὸς Ἔρως*), son of most beautiful Æther; and the same mystic philosopher (*Theol. Plat.*, III. xx. 161) tells us that: "He is the most brilliant of the Noëtic Powers, the Noëtic



Mind, and Radiant Light, which amazes the Noëric Powers and causes even Father [Zeus, the Demiurge] to wonder." And Hermias (in *Phædr.*, p. 141) quotes the lines of Orpheus which describe the brilliancy of the First-born: "And none could gaze on Phanes with their eyes, save holy Night alone. The others, all, amazed beheld the sudden Light in Space (*ἐν αἰθέρι*). Such was the light which streamed from Phanes' deathless fame."


As Metis (the Mahat of the Vedântins), Phanes is said to bear the "far-famed seed of the Gods" (Proc. in *Crat.*, pp. 36, 52; in *Tim.*, v. 303, ii. 137; Damascius, p. 346).

Of the three aspects, Phanes is said to be the "father," Ericapæus the "power," and Metis the "intellect," in Platonic terms (see Damascius, *Quæst.*, p. 380). Damascius (p. 381) further describes this Power as being symbolized by Orpheus as "a God without a body, with golden wings on his shoulders, and having on his sides the heads of bulls, and on his head a monstrous dragon with the likeness of every kind of wild beast." This symbolism is more simply given in the same passage as "a dragon with the heads of a bull and lion

and in the midst the face of a God, with wings on the shoulders." This was the symbol of Pan, the All-Father, the Universal Creative Power or absolute "Animal"—the source of all living creatures. And Proclus (in *Tim.*, iii. 130) writes of the same symbol: "The first God, with Orpheus, bears the heads of many animals, of the ram, the bull, the snake, and bright-eyed lion; he came forth from the Primal Egg, in which the Animal is contained in germ." And later on (p. 131) he adds: "And first of all he was winged."

I would venture to suggest that this graphic symbol, in one of its meanings, traces evolution from reptile to bird, animal and man. But there are other meanings. For Hermias (*op. cit.*, p. 137) quotes a verse of Orpheus which speaks of Phanes "gazing in every direction with his four eyes," and "being carried in every direction by his golden wings;" he also rides upon various "steeds." This has most probably some connection with soul-powers.

Éliphas Lévi, the French Kabalist, in his *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie* (p. 333)

gives a most interesting drawing, which may with advantage be compared with the symbol of Phanes. It is a pantacle made out of the two interlaced triangles composed of wings; in the centre is the head of a man, on the left the head of a bull, on the right that of a lion, and above the head of an eagle. Beneath are two other pantacles called respectively the Wheel of Pythagoras and the Wheel of Ezekiel. The figure is also called the "four-headed sphinx," and is symbolised in India by the Svastika  contained in a circle. These four "beasts" are said to typify the four elementary kingdoms—earth, air, fire, and water—and much else. They are given by Christian mystics as the symbols of the four Gospels. In brief, they signify the four great creative forces of the cosmos.

But with regard to Phanes, in the Orphic Theogony, these forces are noëtic, and not sensible. For Phanes is the creator of the Gods, and the great-grandfather of Zeus, the creator of the sensible universe. As Lactantius (*Inst.*, I. v. 28) says: "Orpheus tells us that Phanes is the father of all the Gods, for their sake he created the heaven [the in-

tellectual universe] with forethought for his children, in order that they might have a habitation and a common seat—‘ he founded for the immortals an imperishable mansion.’”

Now Phanes, as we have already remarked, was also called Love (Erôs). This is that Primal Love or Desire (Kâma-Deva) which arose in the All; in the words of the *Rig Veda*, the “primal germ of Mind—that which divides entity from non-entity,” and which also unites entity with non-entity. This Love is admirably explained by Proclus, in his Commentary on the *First Alcibiades* of Plato (see Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 117-120, and also his notes on the speech of Diotima in the *Banquet* of Plato, *Works*, vol. iv.), where he writes as follows: “The [Chaldæan] Oracles, therefore, speak of Love as binding and residing in all things; and hence, if it connects all things, it also couples us with the governments of dæmons [cosmic and nature powers]. But Diotima calls Love a ‘Great Dæmon,’ because it everywhere fills up the medium between desiring and desirable natures. . . . But among the intelligible and occult Gods [the Noëtic Order], it unites

intelligible intellect to the first and secret Beauty, by a certain life [the 'higher life'] better than Intelligence. Hence [Orpheus] the theologist of the Greeks calls this Love 'blind,' for he says of intelligible intellect [Phanes], 'in his breast feeding eyeless, rapid Love.' But in instances posterior to intelligibles, it imparts by *illumination* an indissoluble bond to all things perfected by itself; for a bond is a certain union, but accompanied by much separation. On this account the Oracles are accustomed to call the fire of love a 'coupler'; for proceeding from intelligible intellect, it binds all following natures with each other, and with itself [the 'love for all that lives and breathes']. Hence it conjoins all the gods with intelligible Beauty, and dæmons with gods; and conjoins us with both gods and dæmons. In the gods indeed it has a primary subsistence; in dæmons a secondary one; and in partial souls a subsistence through a certain third procession from principles. Again, in the gods it subsists above essence: for every genus of gods is super-essential. But in dæmons it subsists according to essence; and in souls according to illuminations."

Phanes is also called the Limit or Boundary, since "that God who closes the paternal order is said by the wise to be the only deity among the intelligible Gods that has a name; and theurgy ascends as far as this order" (Procl., in *Crat.*, Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 183). It is curious to notice that the same term, Limit or Boundary, is used in the Gnostic Valentinian System, and in precisely the same sense: "It is called the Boundary because it shuts off (bounds) the Hysterêma [Sensible World] without from the Plerôma [Super-sensible World]" (Hippolytus, *Philosophumena*, IV. xxx.; see my translation of *Pistis-Sophia*, in *Lucifer*, vi., 233).

#### NIGHT.

Closely associated with Phanes (intelligible "Light"), as mother or wife, or daughter, is Night (intelligible "Darkness"), which may be compared with the Mâyâ or Avidyâ (root-objectivity), of the Vedântins.

Just as there are three aspects of Phanes, so there are three Nights. Thus Proclus (*Tim.*, ii. 137): "Phanes comes forth alone, the same is sung of as male and generator, and he leads with him the [three] Nights, and the Father

mingles [noëticly] with the middle one." And so Patricius (*Discuss. Perip.*, III. i. 293): "For we know from Olympiodorus that Orpheus evolved all the Gods from one Egg, from which [proceeded] first Phanes, then Night, and then the rest."

And again Proclus (*op. cit.*, v. 291) tells us that Phanes and Night "preside over the Noëtic Orders, for they are eternally established in the Adytum [the Vestibule of the Good in the Noëtic Order], as says Orpheus, for he calls their occult Order the Adytum."

Night, then, is the Mother of the Gods, or, as Orpheus says, "the Nurse of the Gods is immortal Night" (*Proc.*, in *Crat.*, p. 57). Just as Mâyâ is the consort and power of Mâyî, or Îshvara (the Logos, or ideal Creative Cause) of the Upanishads, and thus all Gods and all men are under her sway, so Phanes hands over his sceptre to his consort Night. As Proclus tells us (*ibid.*): "Night receives the sceptre from the willing hands of Phanes—'he placed his far-famed sceptre in the hands of Goddess Night, that she might have queenly honour.'"

To her was given the highest art of divina-

tion, for Mâyâ is the creative power of the Deity, the means whereby he "imagines" the universe, or thinks it into being. Thus she, his spouse, is in the secret of his thoughts, and thus presides over the highest divination. So Hermias (*Phædr.*, p. 145): "Orpheus, speaking of Night, tells us that 'he [Phanes] gave her the mantic art that never fails, to have and hold in every way.'" And further back the same writer (p. 144), tells us that of the three Nights, Orpheus "ascribes to the first the gift of prophecy, but the middle [Night] he calls humility, and the third, he says, gave birth to righteousness." These are said to be referred to by Plato when he discourses of Prudence, Understanding (for true understanding is always humble or modest), and Righteousness.

And so in prudence, and understanding, and righteousness, Night (the occult power of Deity) gives birth to the noumenal and phenomenal universes; in the words of Orpheus (Hermias, *ibid.*): "And so she brought forth Earth [the phenomenal universe] and wide Heaven [the noumenal], so as to manifest visible from invisible."

This is most graphically set forth by Proclus



in his Commentary on the *Timæus* (pp. 63, 96; as given by Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 78, 79): "The artificer of the universe [Zeus, the creative aspect of Phanes], prior to his whole fabrication [says Orpheus], is said to have betaken himself to the Oracle of Night, to have been there filled with divine conceptions, to have received the principles of fabrication, and, if it is lawful so to speak, to have solved all his doubts. Night, too, calls upon the father Zeus to undertake the fabrication of the universe; and Zeus is said by the theologist [Orpheus] to have thus addressed Night :

"O Nurse supreme of all the powers divine,  
Immortal Night! how with unconquer'd  
mind

Must I the source of the Immortals fix?  
And how will all things but as one subsist,  
Yet each its nature separate preserve?'

"To which interrogation the Goddess thus replies :

"All things receive enclos'd on ev'ry side,  
In Æther's wide, ineffable embrace;  
Then in the midst of Æther place the Heav'n,

In which let Earth [visible Cosmos] of *infinite extent*,  
 The Sea [the Ocean of Space], and Stars  
 the crown of Heav'n be fixt.' ”

It is curious to notice that the original for “Nurse” is Maia (Maîa). In Sanskrit *i* before another vowel changes into *y*. The Greek Maia, therefore, bears a most suspicious resemblance to the Sanskrit Maya. But this is philology, the most fallacious of all “sciences,” while Maia, the Nurse of the Gods, is the queen of the mantic art that “never fails.”

#### HEAVEN.

Chief of the children of Night was Heaven (Uranus), the Lord of the Noëtic-noëric Triad in Platonic terminology. As Hermias (*op. cit.*, p. 141) says: “After the order of the Nights [triple Night] are three orders of divine Powers, Heaven, the Cyclopes, and the Hundred-handed. For first came forth from him [Phanes] Heaven and Earth.” This Earth is the first Sphere of the Sensible World, the *true* Earth, for we read of “another earth,” our globe. And Heaven has the characteristic of his parent, for we learn from Achilles Tatius

(*Arat.*, p. 85): "The Heaven of Orpheus is meant to be the Boundary and Guard of all." Taylor (*Myst. Hymns*, p. 16, n.) quotes the same sentence from Damascius, on *First Principles*, but gives no reference. And between this divine Earth and divine Heaven there is the first "marriage." For as Proclus (in *Tim.*, v. 293) remarks: "'Marriage' is peculiar to this order. For he [Orpheus] calls Earth the first bride, and the first marriage, her union with Heaven. For between Phanes and Night there is no 'marriage,' they being at-oned in a noëtic union."

#### THE CHILDREN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

From their union arises a strange and curious progeny, the Fates (*Parcæ*), Hundred-handed (*Centimani*), and They-who-see-all-round (*Cyclopes*). As Athenagoras (xviii. 18, Gall.) writes: "Heaven uniting with Earth begets the female [powers] *Clotho*, *Lachesis* and *Atropos*; and the males, the Hundred-handed, *Cottus*, *Gyges*, *Briareus*; and the *Cyclopes*, *Brontes*, and *Steropes* and *Argos*; whom he bound and cast into *Tartarus*, learning that he would be driven from his kingdom by his children."

The Fates are the Karmic Powers, which adjust all things according to the causes of prior Universes; while the Centimani and Cyclopes are the Builders, or rather the Overseers or Noëtic Architects, who supervise the Builders of the Sensible Universe. Thus Hermias (p. 141), calls the Cyclopes, the "Builder-handed" (Τεκτονόχειρας—τέκτων meaning a "builder"). And so these first Builders are fabled by Orpheus (Proc., *Tim.*, ii. 100), to be they who "devised the thunder for Zeus, and fashioned the lightning [the Svastika]; and they it was who taught Vulcan and Minerva all the cunning tasks which Heaven works within"—that is to say, which Heaven works noëtically; whereas Vulcan and Minerva are Builders in the Sensible World.

These were the first progeny of Heaven and Earth, and were cast down to Tartarus, for they worked within all things, and so, as evolution proceeded, permeated every kingdom of nature. But then, without the knowledge of Heaven, Earth brought forth, says Orpheus (Proc., *Tim.*, iii. 137), "seven fair daughters, bright-eyed, pure, and seven princely sons, covered with hair"; and these are called the

“avengers of their brethren.” And the names of the daughters are Themis and Tethys, Mnemosyne and Thea, Dione and Phœbe, and Rhea; and of the sons, Cœus and Crius, Phorcys and Cronus, Oceanus and Hyperion, and Iapetus (*Proc., op. cit.*, v. 295). And these are the Titans.

It is difficult to thread one's way through the legends of the Builders and Titans, and their correspondences, the Curetes and Corybantes, or to find any clear distinctions between Heaven and Saturn and Zeus, in the “battles fought for space”—dim legends of primary creation and nature-workings, and much else. Let us, however, take the Titans first.

#### THE TITANS.

So “Our Lady” Earth, enraged at the banishment of her first-born, “brought forth virgin youths (*κούρους*) descended from Heaven (*Οὐρανίωνας*), to whom, indeed, they give the title of Titans [the Retributors], because they exacted retribution from starry Heaven” (Orpheus, quoted by Athenagoras, *loc. cit.*). But Hesiod (*Theog.*, v. 207) says that the name means “Stretchers” or “Strivers” (from *τῆταινω*).

But of all the Titans, Night, their mother's mother, the nurse of the Gods, loved Cronus (Saturn) most, for, by her gift of prophecy, she knew he was destined for the kingship of the world, and thus she nursed and tended him, so that he became of all the most sublimed (*ἀγκυλο-μήτης*). And so, led on by their mother, the Titans revolt against Heaven, with the exception of Ocean. That is to say, the spiritual forces break the bonds of their restrainer Heaven, and descend into matter—all except Ocean, who remained as the Ocean of Space within his father's kingdom (Proc., *loc. cit.*, p. 295). And Cronus becomes their leader. Thus Porphyry (*De Ant. Nymph.*, xv.) writes: "The first of those who set themselves against Heaven is Cronus, and so Cronus receives the powers that descend from Heaven, and Zeus receives those that descend from Cronus." And so they dismember their father; and from his blood the Giants are born (*Etym. M., sub voc.*).

And thus Saturn establishes his kingdom. "Orpheus tells us that Cronus seized on celestial Olympus, and there enthroned reigned over the Titans—but Ocean dwelt

in the ineffable waters" (Proc., *loc. cit.*, p. 295).

In the Sensible World, the Giants play the same rôle with regard to Zeus as the Titans with regard to Heaven, as we learn from Proclus in the fragments of his Commentary on the *Republic* of Plato; who also, after giving a full philosophical explanation of the operations of the Divine Powers, says: "Is it, therefore, any longer wonderful, if the authors of fables, perceiving such contrariety in the Gods themselves and the first of beings, obscurely signified this to their pupils through battles?" And again, "hence fables, concealing the truth, assert that such powers fight and war with each other" (see Taylor's *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 71, 74). And Proclus (*Tim.*, v. 292, Taylor) writes: "Of the divine Titanic hebdomads, Ocean both abides and proceeds, uniting himself to his father [Heaven], and not departing from his kingdom. But all the rest of the Titans, *rejoicing in progression*, are said to have given completion to the will of Earth, but to have assaulted their father, dividing themselves from his kingdom, and proceeding unto another order. Or rather, of

all the celestial genera, some alone abide in their principles, as the first two triads."

Thus far the legend of the Titans with regard to the Gods, or the macrocosm; next follows the fable with regard to the human soul, or the microcosm. The Sacred Rites of Dionysus, restored by Orpheus, depended on the following "arcane narration" (Taylor's *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* [Wilder's edition], pp. 126, 127): "Dionysus, or Bacchus [Zagreus, the human Soul], while he was yet a boy, was engaged by the Titans, through the stratagems of Juno, in a variety of sports, with which that period of life is so vehemently allured; and among the rest, he was particularly captivated with beholding his image in a mirror [the Astral Light which allures the young soul]; during his admiration of which he was miserably torn in pieces by the Titans [cosmic and elemental powers, which absorb the energy of the soul through its desires for things of sense]; who, not content with this cruelty, first boiled his members [powers] in water [the psychic sphere], and after roasted them by the fire [the spiritual sphere]. But while they were tasting his



flesh, thus dressed, Jupiter [the parent-soul], roused by the odour, and perceiving the cruelty of the deed, hurled his thunder at the Titans—[the human soul as it grows in stature turns to its father-soul, and the divine fire (thunder) ‘converts the Titans to its own essence’]—but committed the members of Bacchus to Apollo, his brother [the solar part of the soul, or ‘Higher Ego’; Bacchus being the lunar part, or ‘Lower Ego,’] that they might be properly interred [converted by the alchemy of spiritual nature]. And this being performed, Dionysus (whose ‘heart’ during his laceration was snatched away by Pallas [Athena, Minerva]), by a new regeneration [through a series of reincarnations] again emerged, and being restored to his pristine life and integrity, he afterwards filled up the number of the Gods. [The soul reaches liberation and the man becomes a Jîvan-mukta.] But in the meantime, from the exhalation arising from the ashes of the burning bodies of the Titans, mankind was produced. [This refers to the ‘transmigration of life-atoms’ composing the bodies of men.]”

On this passage Taylor (*Myst. Hymns*, p. 88)

summarizes the Commentary of Olympiodorus on the *Phædo* of Plato, as follows: "We are composed from *fragments*, because through falling into generation, *i.e.*, into the sublunary region, our life has proceeded into the most distant and extreme division; but from *Titannic fragments*, because the Titans are the ultimate artificers of things, and the most proximate to their fabrications. Of these Titans, Bacchus, or the *mundane intellect*, is the monad, or proximately exempt producing cause." Bacchus is said to be the "spiritual part of the mundane soul" in one aspect, and also the highest of the "mundane gods" in another, this both macrocosmically and microcosmically.

Now Ficinus (L. IX. Enn. i. 83, 89), says that: "Because men were generated from the Titans, who had been nourished with the body of Dionysus, he [Orpheus], therefore, calls them Dionysiacal, as though some of their members were from the Titans [and came from Dionysus], so that the human body is partly of a Dionysiacal [psychic], and partly of a mundane [physical] nature." For the smoke from the ashes of the Titans "became

matter," we are told (Mustoxides and Schinas, *Anecd.*, iv. 4).

The Platonists called Dionysus "Our Master" (τὸν δεσπότην ἡμῶν) for "the mind in us is Dionysiacal and the image of Dionysus [the Mundane Soul]" (Proc., *Crat.*, 59, 114, 82).

Dio Chrysostom (*Or.*, xxx. 550) has a curious sentence on this point, when he writes: "I will tell you something which is neither pleasant nor agreeable. We men are of the blood of the Titans [Asuras]; and since they are hostile to the Gods [Devas], we also are not friends with the latter, but are ever being punished by them and ever on the watch for punishment to fall on our heads."

And not only are our animal bodies thus generated, but also the bodies of animals themselves (Ther. v. 7; Acusilaus, *Fragm.* p. 227; Fabric. ad Sext. c. Gramm., I. xii. 272).

The legend therefore, can be interpreted from the macrocosmic and microcosmic standpoint. From the former we see the symbolical drama of the World-Soul being differentiated into individual souls; from the latter the mystical spectacle of the individual soul,

divided into many personalities, in the long series of rebirths or palingeneses, through which it threads its path on earth.

As Macrobius says (*Somn.*, I. xii. 67): "By Father Liber [Dionysus] the Orphics seem to understand the Hylic Mind [Mundane Soul, or human soul], which is born from the Impartible [Mind] and is separated into individual minds [or personalities]. And so in their Sacred Rites, [Dionysus] is represented to have been torn into separate members, and the pieces buried [in matter], and then again he is resurrected intact." This Proclus (*Tim.*, i. 53) explains as "a partible progression from the impartible creation." And Hermias (in *Phædr.*, p. 87) says: "This God is the cause of reincarnation (*παλιγγενεσίας*)."

Proclus (*Parm.*, iii. 33, Cousin) further tells us that: "The theologians say the mind [the higher mind, called the 'heart' of Bacchus in the fable], in this Dionysiacal dismemberment, was preserved intact by the wisdom of Athena; it was the soul [lower mind] that was first divided, and it was divided sevenfold."

And Plutarch (*On the E. at Delphi*, ix.; see King's *Plutarch's Morals*, p. 183), referring to

the same legend, writes: "The wiser sort, cloaking their meaning from the vulgar, call the change into fire, 'Apollo,' on account of the reduction to one state (*ἄ* 'not,' and *πολλοί*, 'many'), and also 'Phœbus' on account of its freedom from defilement and its purity, but the condition and change of his turning and subdivision into airs and water and earth, and the production of animals and plants, they enigmatically term 'Exile' and 'Dismemberment.' They name him 'Dionysos' and 'Zagreus' and 'Nycteleos' and 'Isodi'; they also tell of certain destructions and disappearances and deceases and new births, which are riddles and fables pertaining to the aforesaid transformations; and they sing the dithyrambic song, filled with sufferings, and allusions to some change of state that brought with it wandering about and dispersion."

Thus the story of Dionysus and the Titans is a dramatic history of the wanderings of the "Pilgrim-Soul." And curiously enough we find the story of the resurrection of Dionysus, after his dismemberment by the Titans, compared by the most learned of the Christian Fathers with the resurrection of the Christ.

Thus Origen (*Contra Celsum.*, iv. 171, Spenc.), after making the comparison, remarks apologetically and somewhat bitterly: "Or, forsooth, are the Greeks to be allowed to use such words with regard to the *soul and speak in allegorical fashion* (τροπολογεῖν), and we forbidden to do so?"—thus clearly declaring that the "resurrection" was an *allegory of the soul*, and *not historical*. And so Damascius (*Vit. Isodori*, Phot. ccxlii. 526), speaking of the dismemberment and resurrection of Osiris, remarks, "this should be a mingling with God (θεοκρασία), an all-perfect at-one-ment (ἔνωσις παντελής), a return upwards of our souls to the divine (ἐπάνοδος τῶν ἡμετέρων ψυχῶν πρὸς τὸ θεῖον)."

But let us return to the elder children of Heaven and Earth, and first give our attention for a brief space to

#### CRONUS-SATURN.

Proclus, in his Commentaries on the *Cratylus* of Plato (Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 172-178), tells us many things about Cronus. There are six kings, or rulers holding the sceptre of the Gods, *viz.*, Phanes, Night, Heaven, Saturn, Jupiter and Bacchus. In this series

there is an orderly succession as far as Heaven, and from Saturn to Bacchus; "but Saturn alone perfectly deprives Heaven of the kingdom, and concedes dominion to Jupiter, cutting and being cut off, as the fable says." And, therefore, Saturn is said to have taken the kingdom by violence or insolently, and he is therefore called the Insolent (*ὕβριστικός*—corresponding to the Sanskrit Râjasa in this connection). He is also called by Plato the Great Dianoëtic Power of the Intellectual Universe, and thus rules over the dianoëtic part of the soul, "for he produces united intellection into multitude, and fills himself wholly with excited intelligibles, whence also he is said to be the leader of the Titanic race, and the source of all-various separation and diversifying power . . . . the division and separation of wholes into parts receives its beginning from the Titans."

And yet Saturn is an intellectual power and not a builder of sensibles: "for King Saturn is intellect, and the supplier of all intellectual life; but he is an intelligible exempt from co-ordination with sensibles, immaterial and separate, and converted to himself. He like-

wise converts his progeny, and after producing them into light, again embosoms and firmly establishes them in himself. For the demiurgus of the universe [Zeus], though he [also] is a divine intellect, yet he orderly arranges sensibles, and provides for subordinate natures. But the mighty Saturn is essentialised in separate intellections, which transcend wholes. 'For the fire which is beyond the first [Creative Fire—of the Sensible World],' says the Chaldean Oracle, 'does not incline its power downwards.'

Now the Noëric Order of the Powers consists of Saturn, Rhea, Jupiter, the three Curetes and the separating monad Ocean. But Saturn is the chief of the seven, and, as such, is the Noëtic Power of the Noëric Order. And "this impartible and imparticipable transcendancy of Saturn" is characterised as "Purity." Thus it is that Saturn is Lord of the Curetes (the Virgin Youths or Kumâras); and as the Oracle says: "The intellect of the Father [Saturn] riding on these rulers [Curetes], they become refulgent with the furrows of inflexible and implacable fire." They are the powers of the Fire-Self or



Intellectual Creative Power of the Universe ; they are the Flames and the Fires.

So, as the same Oracles tell us, "from him leap forth the implacable Lightning-bolts, and the comet-nursing Breasts of the all-fiery might of father-born Hecate [Rhea] . . . and the Mighty Breath beyond the Fiery Poles."

And with regard to the three Minds, Proclus writes: "Again, every intellect (*νοῦς*) either abides, and is then intelligible [noëtic], as being better than motion ; or it is moved, and is then intellectual [noëric] ; or it is both, and is then intelligible and at the same time intellectual [noëtic-noëric]. The first of these is Phanes ; the second, which is alone moved, is Saturn ; and the third, which is both moved and permanent, is Heaven." So far for Saturn among the Gods, but Saturn is also among men ; and certain of the early races of mankind, which follow an orderly progression, like to the genera of the Gods, are said in their turn to be appropriately ruled over by Saturn. Thus Lactantius (I. xiii. 11) : "Orpheus tells us that Saturn also reigned on earth and among men—'Saturn ruled first over men on

earth.'” And Proclus (Scholium ad Hesiod. Opp. 126): “Orpheus says that Cronus ruled over the silver race, meaning that, according to the pure [esoteric] sense of the word (κατὰ τὸν καθαρὸν λόγον), those who lived a ‘silver life’; just as those who lived according to the [pure] mind are golden.” And again, commenting on v. 113, “Orpheus says that the hair of Cronus was ever black; and Plato (*Philebus*, 270. D), that men in the Age of Cronus cast aside old age and were ever young.” This explains why the seven Titans are said above to be “covered with hair.” And also in his *Theology of Plato* (V. x. 264): “Freedom from old age is peculiar to this order, as the barbarians [non-Greeks] and Orpheus say. For the latter says mystically that the hair on Saturn’s face was ever black, and never whitened . . . . ‘they lived eternal years, with pure cheeks, and lovely fresh locks, nor were they mingled with the white flower of infirmity.’”

And thus that blessed race lived in the happy days of Father Saturn, in Elysian Fields, and peaceful Paradise, “and all who had the heart to keep their soul from every

Fennell says these lines imply metaphysics  
✓ the number three - probably Pythagorean

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of Plato  
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sin, essayed the Path of Zeus, to Saturn's Tower" (Pindar, *Ol.*, ii. 123)<sup>x</sup>, that is to say, they became perfect and ascending to the Gods by the Path, "which Zeus commands the pious to tread," sat them down in Saturn's Tower (Olympus, Meru) secure from sorrow and ignorance.

And Plutarch (*Symp.*, VIII. iv. 2) says: "The plane-tree [phoenix] is the longest lived of all trees, as Orpheus somewhere bears witness—'a living being like to the leafy branches of plane trees.'" These were the "trees" in the "garden." In the Purânas and Upanishads, in the books of the Chaldæans and Jews, of the Egyptians and Gnostics, "trees" were the glyphs of men, and especially of men perfected.

THE FOUR AGES.

But with regard to these various ages and races, let us pause a moment to add a few remarks. Nigidius (*De Diis*, iv) writes: "Certain divide the Gods and their orders into periods and ages, and among these Orpheus; and these ages are first of Saturn, then of Jupiter, next of Neptune, then of Pluto, and some also, for instance the Magi, speak of

ὅσοι δ' ἐτόλμασαν ἐστρὶς  
ἐκατέρωθεν μείναντες ἀπὸ πάντων  
ἀδίκων ἔχειν

the reign of Apollo." And Servius (on *Ecl.*, iv. 4) says: "The Cumæan Sibyl divides the ages according to the metals; she also tells us which is to be ascribed to each metal, the last being that of the Sun, meaning by that the tenth. . . . She said also that when these ages had all run their course they were again renewed." This period was called the Great Year (Magnus Annus, or Mahâ-Manvantara in Sanskrit). And Censorinus (xviii) says: "The mid-winter of this Great Year is a destruction by water, but the mid-summer a destruction by fire." (*Hujus [magni] anni hiems summa est κατακλισμός, æstas autem ἐκπύρωσις.*)

This period was said to be marked by the stars apparently returning to the starting points of their respective courses. And Proclus cites an opinion based on Orpheus that the end of the Great Year is marked by "Cronus squaring the account of the Gods and taking his kingdom again; or in other words, he assumes dominion of that most primæval darkness, the zodiacal cycles that control the stars" (Lobeck, *op. cit.*, p. 793). And Pliny (VI. xxi) calls it "that eternal and final night that impends over the world."

The account of Hesiod (*Opp. et Dies*, 109-120, 127-142) differs considerably from that of Orpheus, but there are some interesting details that may with advantage be set down here from Decharme's *Mythologie de la Grèce Antique* (pp. 288-290).

The men of the Golden Age lived exempt from suffering and care, the earth fed them spontaneously; they never grew old, and when death finally came upon them, they fell peacefully asleep. After their death they became the guardians, who "wrapped in clouds" (Nirmânakâyas) winged their flight over the earth and watched over its inhabitants.

The men of the Silver Age are far inferior to the former. They die in youth, are impious and revilers of the Gods. After death they too become Genii, but evil instead of beneficent, and so they are plunged in subterranean abodes. They are the "race of sorcerers," they of the Black Path.

The men of the Age of Bronze are strong and violent; their heart has the "hardness of steel."

The fourth period is the Age of Iron; its men are, or rather will be, "virtuous and

just," for the Age of Iron is still in progress. But we must leave this interesting subject and return to Cronus and his wife

#### RHEA.

According to Orphic and Platonic theology, Rhea holds the middle rank between Cronus and Zeus in the Noëric Order. "She is filled from Saturn with an intelligible and prolific power which she imparts to Jupiter, the Demiurgus of the universe: filling his essence with a vivific abundance." (See Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 41-45.)

Plato in *Cratylus* mystically connects her name (Rhea) with the idea of "flowing" (from ῥέω—"to flow"), meaning thereby simply "that fontal power by which she contains in transcendent union the divisible rivers of life." Rhea, is, therefore, the "mother of lives," the mystical Eve, the "mother of all living."

Proclus (*Theol. Plat.*, Taylor's ed., i. 267) says that according to Orpheus, "This Goddess, when considered as united to Saturn by the most exalted part of her essence, is called Rhea; but considered as producing Jupiter, and together with Jupiter unfolding the total and

partial orders of the Gods [*i.e.*, the powers of the Sensible World], she is called Ceres." This is a very important distinction to bear in mind.

Now Rhea, as Ceres, in Hymn XIV., is called "brass-sounding" and "drum-beating." This has reference to the mystical results of certain sounds and rhythms, part and parcel of what the Hindus call Mantravidyâ. I remember reading a curious old French book in the Bibliothèque de la Ville of Clermont-Ferrand, one of the books confiscated from the Minime Monastery of the same town, at the time of the Revolution. This work dealt with the magical properties of music, and described for what especial purposes the various instruments of music were used in the Temple-service of the Jews. Now Iamblichus (*De Mysteriis*, III. ix) goes into the matter of the so-called Corybantic and Bacchic "frenzies" produced by musical instruments in the Mysteries of Ceres and Bacchus; and in his *Life of Pythagoras* (xxv) he, further, tells us that: "The whole Pythagoric school went through a course of musical training, both in harmony and touch (τὴν λεγομένην ἐξάρτυσιν καὶ συναρμογὰν καὶ ἐπαφὰν), whereby, by means of appropriate chants, they

beneficially converted the dispositions of the soul to contrary emotions. For, before they retired to rest, they purified their minds (τὰς διανοίας) of the [mental, says Quintilian] confusion and noises of the day, by certain songs and peculiar chants, and so prepared for themselves peaceful repose with either few or pleasant dreams. And again, when they rose from sleep, they freed themselves from drowsiness by songs of another character. And sometimes by means of melodies without words they cured certain affections and diseases, and this they said was the real means of 'charming.' And it is most probable that the word 'charm' (*epode*) came into general use from them. It was thus, then, that Pythagoras established a most salutary system of regenerating the morals by means of 'music' [διὰ τῆς μουσικῆς—Mantravidyâ]." (*Op. cit.*, Kiessling's text, pp. 245, 246; see also Taylor, *Jamblichus on the Mysteries*, 2nd ed., pp. 130, 131, n.)

Music and Mantras, therefore, were used by the Orphics to attract, or call down, the influence of the Mother of the Gods, who at the same time was the "Store-house of Life,"



of Divine Nature. Thus Proclus in his *Commentary on Euclid* (ii) tells us that "the Pole of the World is called by the Pythagoreans the Seal of Rhea" (*Myst. Hymns.*, p. 63). Now the pole is the conductor of the vital and magnetic forces of the earth-envelope, and is, therefore, appropriately called by this name, as being the seal and signature of the vital forces of Divine Nature, whereby all diseases can be healed and all states of the soul vitalized.

Rhea was also called Brimô by the Phrygians, and her son (Zeus) was called Brimos. This in the macrocosm; in the microcosm Rhea was the Spiritual Soul (Buddhi) which gave birth to the Human Soul (Manas). Thus Hippolytus, in the *Philosophumena* (v. 6): "The Phrygians also (he [the writer of the book from which the Church Father took his information] says) called it [the Human Soul] the 'Plucked Green Wheat-ear.' And after the Phrygians the Athenians, in their Eleusinian Mysteries, show those who are initiated in silence into the great and marvellous and most perfect mystery of the Epopts [those who 'see face to

face'], a plucked wheat-ear. Now this wheat-ear is also with the Athenians the Illuminator from the Undelineable [Spiritual Soul, Great Mother, the Soul of Peace (Shânta Âtman) of the *Kathopanishad*], perfect and great, just as the hierophant also—not emasculated like Attis, but made eunuch with hemlock-juice [soma-juice] and divorced from all fleshly generating—in the night, at Eleusis, from beneath many a cloud of fire [doubtless some psychic phenomenon], accomplishing the great and ineffable mysteries, shouts and cries aloud, saying: 'Our Lady hath borne a sacred son, Brimô [hath given birth to] Brimos'—that is to say, the strong to the strong. Our Lady (he says) is the spiritual generation, the celestial, the above; and the 'strong' he who is born." That is, the new "Twice-born," or Initiate who is born from the "Fountain of Life." (But see my translation in *Lucifer*, xiii. 47.) We next pass to Rhea's royal son and husband, Zeus.

#### ZEUS-JUPITER.

The sacred fable tells us that "when Jupiter was born, his mother Rhea, in order to

deceive Saturn, gave him a stone wrapped in swaddling bands, in the place of Jupiter, at the same time informing Saturn that what she gave him was her offspring. Saturn immediately devoured the stone; and Jupiter who was *secretly* educated, at length obtained the government of the world." (Phornutus, see *Opusc. Mythol.*, p. 147; see also Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 44, 45.) This "stone" has been a stumbling-block to all the scholars. Whatever is the meaning of the "perfect cube" and "corner-stone," the same is the meaning of Jupiter's substitute. Thus Damascius, *On First Principles*, writes: "The ogdoad pertains to Rhea, as being set in motion [remember the idea of 'flowing' contained in the name] towards everything according to its differentiation, and yet nevertheless remaining firmly and *cubically* established."

Taylor explains this by saying (*loc. cit.*): "Damascius uses the word 'cubically,' because eight is a cubic number. Rhea, therefore, considered as firmly establishing her offspring Jupiter in Saturn, who exists in unproceeding union, is fabulously said to have given Saturn a stone instead of Jupiter, the stone indicating

the *firm* establishment of Jupiter in Saturn. For all divine progeny, at the same time that they proceed from, abide in their causes. And the 'secret' education of Jupiter indicates his being nurtured in the intelligible [noëtic] order, for this order is denominated by ancient theologians 'occult.'"

All this is very obscure. I can only suggest that, as Rhea is the third of the three Supernal Mothers, Night and Earth being the first and second, and that, as the mothers all correspond to duads, according to the numeration of Pythagoras, that, therefore, the cube naturally pertains to Rhea ( $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$ ). The solid figure the cube is figured by the square in plane geometry, and the square is the symbol of the lower or sensible world, and therefore of its ruler Jupiter, just as the triangle is the glyph of the supersensible world.

Another interesting explanation of this famous "stone" is that it means the "discus," that is to say, the Svastika, which is the glyph of the fourfold creative forces of the universe. "By Zeus he means the discus, on account of the stone swallowed by Cronus instead of Zeus, as Hesiod says in his *Theogony*, which he stole

without acknowledgment and disfigured from the *Theogony* of Orpheus" (*Schol. ad Lyc.*, 399).

Now Zeus being the creative power of the sensible world, and, therefore, corresponding with the creative soul or mind in man, is said to be closely associated in his creation with Karma, for he builds the universe according to the karmic causes set going by preceding universes, for "there are many Words on the tongue of the Ineffable," according to one of the gnostic philosophers. Thus Proclus writes (*Tim.*, v. 323): "The Demiurgus [Zeus], as Orpheus says, is nursed by Adrastia [her 'from whom none can escape,' from ἀ 'not' and διδράσκω, 'to run']; but he marries Necessity, and begets [a daughter] Fate." For "Adrastia is the one goddess that remains with Night [the most supernal Mother, the great Grandmother of all], and her sister is Form . . . for Adrastia is said [mystically] to clash her cymbals before the Cavern of Night. [That is to say, she directs the sound, that sound which 'goes out into all worlds,' and by the sound all forms are created.] For back in the Inner Chamber [Adytum] of the Cavern of

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Night sits Light (Phanes), and in the midst Night, who delivers prophetic judgment to the gods, and at the mouth is Adrastia. Nor is she the same as Justice, for Justice, who is there, is said to be the daughter of Law and Devotion. . . . And these are said to be the nurses of Zeus in the Cavern of Night." (*Schol. in Plat.*, p. 64; Hermias, *Phædr.*, p. 148.)

And so Proclus (*Theol. Plat.*, IV. xvi. 206): "Adrastia is said by Orpheus to guard the Demiurgus; 'with brazen cymbals and sounding drums in her hands' she sends forth sounds so that all the gods may turn to her."

In the sensible universe, the "language of the gods" is said to consist of "sound and colour." Sounds and colours attract certain "elementals" which immediately and mechanically respond to the call.

There is some confusion as to the nurses or guardians of Zeus. For sometimes they are said to be Adrastia, and Eîdê (Form) and Dicê (Justice), and then again they are said to be the three Curetes. Thus Proclus (*Theol. Plat.*, VI. xiii. 382): "The life-producing goddess placed the Curetes first of all as a sure guard,

who are said to surround the Demiurgus of wholes, and dance round him, brought into manifestation by Rhea." And again (*op. cit.*, V. iii. 253): "Orpheus places the Curetes as guards to Zeus, being three in number; and the religious institutions of the Cretans and the whole Grecian theology refer the pure and undefiled life to this order; for *coron* [whence Curetes and Corybantes] means nothing else than 'pure.'" The nurses and guards are, therefore, apparently six, three male and three female. But we will return to this subject later.

And so Zeus having reached his full stature, Orpheus tells us (Porphyry, *Ant. Nymph.*, xvi), uses honey to ensnare his parent Cronus. And thus Cronus "fills himself full of the honey and loses his senses, and becoming drunk as though from wine, falls asleep. . . . And so he is captured and dismembered, like Heaven (Uranus) was."

That is to say, that the delights of the sensible world enslave the soul, and so the lord of the senses rules in its stead.

And so Zeus attaining the sovereignty constructs the universe with the help of the

powers of Saturn and Night, for Night is the great providence of the gods, and dispenser of divine foresight. For "the gods beneath Zeus are not said to be united with Phanes [the Ideal Cause], but only Zeus, and he by means of the midmost Night [the spouse of Phanes]" (Hermias, *op. cit.*, p. 141).

It is because of this union that Zeus is said to "swallow" Phanes. For the creative deity and architect of the sensible world must first imbibe the ideal and eternal types of things before he can fashion them forth into sensible shape. Thus Proclus (*Tim.*, iv. 267): "Orpheus called God the Manifestor (Φάνητα —Phanes) as manifesting (ἐκφαίνοντα) the noëtic monads, and stored within him the types of all living creatures [calling him the Absolute Creature or 'Animal Itself'], as being the first container of noëtic ideas. And he called him the 'Key of the Mind.' . . . And the Demiurgus [Zeus] is made dependent upon him [Phanes]; and thus Plato said that the latter 'looked toward' the Absolute Animal (αὐτόζωον); and Orpheus that he 'leaped upon him and swallowed him' at the instance of Night."



And thus the noëtic creation comes in contact with the sensible world; and the Above is embosomed in the Below. And so Proclus (*Tim.*, ii. 137), again writes: And “therefore, Zeus is also called Metis and Absolute Daimon — ‘One might, one Daimon’ was he, great cause of all.” And again (*op. cit.*, iii. 156): “The Demiurgus contains himself in himself the cause of Love; for Metis is ‘First Progenitor and All-pleasing Love’: and Pherecydes said that Zeus when he began to create was changed into Love.”

And also again (*Parm.*, iii. 22): “Orpheus says that after swallowing Phanes, all things were generated in Zeus; for all things were manifested primally and unitedly in the former, but secondarily and partibly in the Demiurgus, the cause of the Mundane Order. For in him are the sun and the moon, and the heaven itself and the elements, and ‘All-pleasing Love,’ and all things being simply one, ‘were massed in the belly of Zeus.’”

And thus Plato (*Legg.*, iv. 715, D) writes of Zeus: “God, as the ancient Scripture [of Orpheus] tells us, possessing the beginning and end and middle of all things, with direct

course accomplishes his path, cycling round according to natural law ; and Justice ever is with him to seek retribution from those who leave the path of divine law."

The special idea connected with creation was that of Law, in substantiation of which many passages could be brought forward. The following, however, from Proclus (*Tim.*, ii. 96), is sufficient for the purpose: "Following the advice of Night he [Zeus] takes to himself an assistant and makes Law sit by his side, as Orpheus also says."

And thus it is that the visible world is created—this creation being summed up by Proclus (*Crat.*, p. 53) as follows: "Orpheus hands down the tradition that he [Zeus] created the whole of the celestial creation, and made the sun and moon and all the starry gods, and created the elements below the moon." And in the same place (p. 52) the great commentator sums up the two creations, intellectual and sensible, in the words: "The noëric emanation (*διακοσμήσεως*) of the Gods being bounded by the king of the divine orders of wholes [Phanes], but proceeding by the three Nights and celestial hypostases [the

aspects of Uranus] into the Titanic order [of supernal Architects or Builders], which first separated itself from the Fathers [Phanes and Uranus, when Cronus rebelled against Uranus], and then it was that there arose the whole demiurgic order of Gods. . . . And Zeus before all the other creative powers came into the united power of the whole demiurgic line . . . and was filled with all the powers above himself [referring to the swallowing of Phanes]."

We next pass to the wives of Zeus. The record is imperfect; but they were most probably three and seven in number. The chief of these is Ceres, mother of Proserpine.

#### VESTA, CERES, JUNO.

Now Ceres is the same as Rhea, or in other words both are aspects of one and the same power. Thus Proclus (*Crat.*, p. 96): "When Orpheus says that Demeter [Ceres] is the same as Rhea, he means that when she is above with Cronus she is Rhea, and it is contrary to her nature to proceed into evolution (*ἀνεκφοίτητος*), but when she evolves . . . she is Demeter." And again (*op. cit.*, p. 85):

“Orpheus says that in one aspect Demeter is the same as the *whole* life-production, and in another aspect she is not the same [that is, she belongs to the *partible* life-production]: for above she is Rhea, but below with Zeus, Demeter.”

It is exceedingly difficult to distinguish clearly one power from another, when we reach this plane of secondary differentiation. Of the other wives of Zeus, Metis and Themis, Eurynome and Leto, and Hestia (Vesta), it is sufficient to merely mention the names of the first four. Nor can much here be said of Hera, or Juno, and Vesta, for it is necessary to keep this essay within reasonable limits. Proclus (*Tim.*, ii. 137), however, tells us that: “great Zeus was united with Hera; wherefore also she is called [by Orpheus] the sharer in his privileges (*ἰσοτελής*).” And again (*op. cit.*, v. 315) he speaks of the emanation of a goddess “vivifying the whole cosmos, whom Orpheus calls the sharer of equal privileges with the Demiurgus, and joins her to him. The Barbarians [Chaldæans, etc.] call this life-endowing source the Soul, which is manifested together with the sources of virtue from

the reins of the universal life-giving divinity. But the theologist of the Greeks [Orpheus] calls her Hera."

And again Proclus (*Theol. Plat.*, i. 483, Taylor) tells us that "Juno is the source of the procreation of the soul [of man]." From the same writer's Commentary on the *Cratylus*, however, we are enabled to pick out the three chief syzygies of Zeus, as the Gnostics would have called them, for he writes that *The Theology* of Hesiod [based on Orpheus] from the monad Rhea produces, according to things that are more excellent in the co-ordination, Vesta [Hestia]; but according to those that are subordinate, Juno; and according to those that subsist between, Ceres" (*Myst. Hymns*, Taylor, p. 185). That is to say, that the Triad proceeding from Rhea, and conjoined with Zeus, is

$$\text{Rhea} \left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{Vesta} \\ \text{Ceres} \\ \text{Juno.} \end{array} \right.$$

Therefore Vesta and Juno are distinguished as follows by Proclus (*Crat.*, p. 83): "Vesta imparts from herself to the Gods an uninclining permanency and seat in themselves, and

an indissoluble essence. But Juno imparts progression, and a multiplication into things secondary. . . . She [Juno] generates maternally such things as Jupiter generates paternally. But Vesta abides in herself, possessing an undefiled virginity, and being the cause of sameness to all things. . . . The orbs of the planets, likewise, possess the sameness of their revolutions from her; and the poles and centres are always allotted from her their permanent rest."

Now "in her mundane allotment," that is on this physical plane, Vesta is the Goddess of the Earth. Thus it is that Philolaus (apud Stobæum, *Eclog. Phys.*, p. 51) says: "That there is a fire in the middle at the centre, which is the Vesta [Hearth] of the Universe, the House of Jupiter, the Mother of the Gods, and the basis, coherence, and measure of nature." All of which puts us in mind of gravity, the god of modern science. And Simplicius in his Commentary on Aristotle's *De Cælo* (ii) says: "But those who more genuinely participate of the Pythagorean doctrines say that the fire in the middle is a demiurgic power, nourishing the whole earth

from the middle, and exciting whatever it contains of a frigid nature. Hence some call it the Tower of Jupiter, as he [*i.e.*, Aristotle] narrates in his Pythagorics. But others denominate it Guardian of Jupiter, as Aristotle relates in the present treatise. And according to others it is the Throne of Jupiter. *They called, however, the earth a star, as being itself an instrument of time; for it is the cause of day and night.*" (For the above see Taylor's *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 155-157.) All of which proves that the Pythagoreans knew of the sphericity of the earth and its revolution on its own axis, and further the real cause of gravity; for if we recollect what has been said above of Rhea, the primal source of life and magnetism, and the pole, the seat of Rhea, it will be easy to understand why Vesta, her eldest daughter, is described by the above mystical names. Microcosmically, again, Vesta is the "ether in the heart" of the Upanishads, the "flame" of life; and he who knows the mysteries of Tapas, that practice which calls to its aid the creative, preservative, and regenerative powers of the universe, as Shankarâchârya explains in his Bhâshya on the *Mundakopanishad* (i),

will easily comprehend the importance of Vesta both macrocosmically and microcosmically.

Now Proclus (*Crat.*, see *Myst. Hymns*, pp. 195-197) tells us that Ceres "comprehends Vesta and Juno; in her right hand parts Juno, who pours forth the whole order of souls; but in her left hand parts Vesta, who leads forth all the light of virtue. . . . For Ceres, our sovereign mistress, not only generates life, but that which gives perfection to life; and this from supernal natures to such as are last; for *virtue* is the perfection of *souls*. . . . Again, the conjunction of the demiurgic intellect with the vivific causes is triple [Rhea-Ceres, Juno and Proserpine]; for it is conjoined with the fountains prior to itself [Rhea]; is present with its kindred co-ordinate natures [Juno]; and co-energizes with the orders posterior to itself [Proserpine, daughter of Ceres and Jupiter]. For it is present with the mother prior to itself *convertively* (*ἐπιστρεπτικῶς*); with Proserpine posterior to itself *providentially* (*προνοητικῶς*); and with Juno co-ordinate to itself with *amatory energy* (*ἔρασμίως*). Hence Jupiter is said to be enamoured of Juno. . . . And this love indeed is legal, but the other



two appear to be illegal. This Goddess [Juno] therefore produces from herself, in conjunction with the demiurgus and father, all the genera of souls, the supermundane [supercosmic] and mundane [cosmic], the celestial and sublunary, the divine, angelic, dæmoniacal, and partial [? human]. . . . Through this ineffable union therefore of these divinities, the world participates of intellectual souls. They also give subsistence to intellects who are carried in souls [the soul being the psychic and substantial envelope of the monad, and the intellect the mind], and who together with them give completion to the whole fabrication of things. The series of our sovereign mistress, Juno, beginning from on high, pervades to the last of things; and her allotment in the sublunary region [on the elemental plane] is the air. For *air* is a symbol of *soul*, according to which also soul is called a *spirit* (πνεῦμα); just as *fire* is an image of *intellect*, but *water of nature*, by which the world is nourished (τῆς κοσμοτρόφου φύσεως), through which all nutriment and increase are produced. But *earth* is the image of *body*, through its gross and material nature."

From which we get the following interesting correspondences with the Vedântic koshas or envelopes.

Fire	(Animal) Mind	Manomayakosha
Air	(Vital) Soul	Prânamayakosha
Water	Nature	Annarasamayakosha
Earth	Body	Annamayakosha

These correspond to the Kâma Rûpa, Prâna, Linga Sharîra and Sthûla Sharîra of the Esoteric Philosophy; this being all in the Sublunary Region. (For the meaning of "Nature" see Chap. VI. "On Nature and Emanation.")

But let us now leave the Noëric Order and pass on to the Supercosmic.

#### PROSERPINE.

Of the three syzygies of Zeus (Ceres, Juno and Proserpine) Proserpine is in the Supercosmic Order, and following the usual correspondence and analogy, as Proclus says (*ibid.*), "possesses triple powers, and impartibly and uniformly comprehends three monads of Gods. But she is called Core (κόρη) through the purity of her essence, and her undefiled transcendency in her generations. She also possesses a first,

middle, and last empire. And according to her summit, indeed, she is called Diana by Orpheus; but according to her middle Proserpine; and according to the extremity of the order Minerva."

From the union of Core with Zeus in the Supercosmic Order, Bacchus is born. But this Zeus is the Celestial Jupiter who is the invisible ruler over the Inerratic Sphere of the Visible Cosmos, and Core is then said to be the "connective unity of the three vivific principles," *viz.*, the "zoogonic triad," Diana-Proserpine-Minerva. Whereas the Core that is conjoined with Pluto or Hades is Core, as Proserpine, her middle aspect.

Now Pluto is "Subterranean Jupiter," the invisible ruler over the Sublunary Region of the Visible Cosmos. And it is in this connection and aspect that she begets the Furies, for she "imparts vivification to the last of things," and the Furies are only the elemental correspondences of the supernal Karmic Deities, Adrastia, Necessity and Fate.

"Hence in the Proserpine conjoined with Pluto [*i.e.*, the lower Core], you will find the peculiarities of Hecate and Minerva; but

these extremes subsist in her occultly, while the peculiarity of the middle [Proserpine] shines forth, and that which is characteristic of ruling soul, which in the supermundane Core was of a *ruling* nature, but here subsists according to a mundane peculiarity."

And Proserpine is said to derive her name mystically "through separating souls perfectly from bodies, through a conversion to things on high, which is the most fortunate slaughter and death, to such as are worthy of it" (*ibid*).

Now the King of the Dead in the ordinary sense is Hades or Pluto. But there was another death—"a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness." It was by Core, the pure, the spouse of the "king of terrors," that the bright side of death was revealed, and so she was pre-eminent in the Mysteries, and the "Rape of Proserpine" was enacted for the instruction of all neophytes, in a mystical drama (*δρᾶμα μυστικόν*—Clemens Alexandrinus, *Cohort.*, I. ii. 12). In the drama she was symbolically represented as having "two ordinary eyes, and two in her forehead, with her face at the back of her neck, and horned" (Athenagoras, xx. 292)—this signifying spiri-

tual sight, or the possession of the so-called "third eye," and other spiritual powers. It is interesting to read in the same passage of Athenagoras, that Zeus after dismembering his father and taking the kingdom, pursued his mother Rhea who refused his nuptials. "But she having assumed a serpent form, he also assumed the same form, and having bound her, with what is called the 'Noose of Hercules' (τῷ καλουμένῳ Ἡρακλειωτικῷ ἄμματι), was joined with her. And the symbol of this transformation is the Rod of Hermes [the Caduceus]. And afterward he violated his daughter Proserpine [who was born from the above-mentioned union], she too, assuming a serpentine form."

Now Hercules is a transformation of the "Dragon of Wisdom," Phanes, for the "god is a twisted dragon (δράκων ἐλικτὸς)"—a certain spiral force, called Kundalinî (the "serpentine") among the Hindu mystics, which lies coiled in three and a half coils in man; it is a fiery energy which must be roused before the "third eye" will open. The Caduceus of Hermes is a symbolical wand, consisting of a male and female serpent twisted round a

central wand, which is sometimes also represented as a serpent. In treatises on Yoga, the male force is called the Pingalâ (the sun force), and the female Idâ (the moon force) and the centre tract is denominated Sushumnâ, whose locus in man is said to be the spinal cord, for the symbolism applies to man as well as to the universe. Here we have another clear proof that the Greater Mysteries dealt with practical psychological instruction, and that their inner secrets pertained to Theurgy and the Yoga-art. These spiral creative, vital and magnetic currents are, in the psychic envelope of man, what the serpentine Phanes is in the World-Egg, which symbol has been already explained.

Now the work that Core performs is that of weaving; she plies her shuttle in "the roaring loom of time," and weaves out the universe. Thus we read in Proclus (*Theol. Plat.*, VI. ii. 371): "The story of the theologians who handed on to us the tradition of the most holy Mysteries at Eleusis, is that she [Core-Proserpine] remains above in the house of her mother [Ceres], which her mother with her own hands prepared in the inaccessible

regions." And so when she proceeds from her own habitation, she is said (Proclus, *Tim.*, v. 307) "to have left her webs unfinished, and to have been carried off [by Pluto] and married." And the same writer (*Crat.*, p. 24) tells us that "she is said to weave the diacosm of life." And Claudianus (*Rapt.*, i. 254) speaks of a goddess weaving a web for her mother, "and in it she marks out the procession of the elements and the paternal seats with her needle, according to the laws whereby her mother Nature has decreed."

And Diodorus (v. 3) tells us that when Proserpine dwelt with her sisters Diana and Minerva, she "weaved a robe for Zeus." And we are also told by Sidonius (*Carm.*, xv. 354) that Minerva also worked a mantle marvelously interwoven with pictures of the sky and sea, like the robe which Plutarch describes (*Vit. Demetrii*, xli.) as "the image of the cosmos and heavenly phenomena." All of which plainly shows us the part played by Core macrocosmically, and also the part enacted by this power in weaving the vital vesture of man.

Now Proclus (*Crat.*, see Taylor, *Myst.*

*Hymns*, p. 201) quotes a verse of Orpheus which says that Core bore to Zeus "nine azure-eyed flower-weaving daughters." These are most probably the Muses, for whom I must refer the reader to Chap. VI., "The Gods and their Shaktis." It is interesting to remark that there was a feast in honour of Core-Proserpine, the Anthesphoria, for Proserpine was carried off while "plucking flowers," that is to say was distracted from her work by the attraction of the senses. Thus the Muses, her daughters, are said to be flower-weaving, for, as shown above, they are the higher side of psychic sensation and emotion, whereas the Sirens are the lower. Perhaps this may with advantage be compared with a phrase of the Fragment from the *Book of the Golden Precepts*, called "The Voice of the Silence," rendered into English by H. P. Blavatsky, who in referring to these realms graphically portrays this "pleasure-ground of sense" as filled with blossoms and "under every flower a serpent coiled."

#### DIANA AND MINERVA.

Diana is the Chaldæan Hecate, but her three aspects so closely resemble those of Core



that it would take too long to explain the niceties of distinction in this place. Of Minerva, again, much could be said, but it is only necessary here to refer to two of her characteristics, the "defensive" and "perfective," thus explaining why she is armed and a warrior goddess, and why she is also the goddess of wisdom. "For the former characteristic preserves the order of wholes undefiled, and unvanquished by matter, and the latter fills all things with intellectual delight" (Proc., *Crat.*, *loc. cit.*).

Thus Plato in *Timæus* calls her both "philo-polemic" and "philo-sophic." And of the three aspects of Minerva the highest is noëric, the second supercosmic, and the third liberated. In the first she is with Zeus, in the second with Core, and in the third "she perfects and guards the whole world, and circularly invests it with her powers, as with a veil" (*ibid.*). In her guardian capacity she is called Pallas, but in her perfective Minerva.

Now "Orpheus says that Zeus brought her forth from his head—'shining forth in full panoply, a brazen flower to see'" (Proc., *Tim.*, i. 51).

And in so far as she "circularly invests the world with her powers," Minerva is the revealer of the "rhythmical dance" of the celestial bodies (Proc., *Crat.*, p. 118). Moreover "while she remains with the demiurgus [Zeus] she is wisdom, but when she is with the 'leading' Gods [the supercosmic demiurgic powers], she reveals the power of virtue" (Proc., *Tim.*, i. 52).

#### NEPTUNE AND PLUTO.

The "Marine Jupiter" (see Chart) is the reflection of Ocean, the "separating deity" who remained behind with Father Heaven when Saturn and the others revolted. As already explained so often these gods have their aspects on every plane. Thus in the sublunary sphere we are told that "Heaven terminates, Earth corroborates, and Ocean moves all generation" (Proc., *Tim.*, v. 298). Here we see the reason why Neptune is between Zeus and Pluto, a middle and not an extreme. The kingdom of Neptune extends as far as the sublunary regions, all below that properly belonging to Hades or Pluto. But there is yet another reflection of Ocean and his consort Tethys

("who imparts permanency to the natures which are moved by Ocean") in the sublunary regions themselves, so that "their last processions are their divisible allotments about the earth : both those which are apparent on its surface, and those which under the earth separate the kingdom of Hades from the dominion of Neptune" (Proc., *Crat.*; Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, p. 189)—a mysterious depth that I must leave to the reader to fathom.

It may be of advantage, however, to point out that the Earth was imagined as surrounded on all sides by Ocean, that Heaven was above and Tartarus below. Now of the three, Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, "Jupiter subsists according to *being*; but Neptune according to *power*; and Pluto according to *intellect*. And though all these divinities are the causes of the life of all things, yet one is so *essentially*, another *vitally*, and another *intellectually*. . . . Neptune is an intellectual demiurgic God, who receives souls descending into generation [reincarnation]; but Hades is an intellectual demiurgic God, who frees souls from generation.

"For as our whole period receives a triple division, into a life prior to generation [beyond

the sphere of reincarnation] which is Jovian, into a life in generation, which is Neptunian, and into a life posterior to generation which is Plutonian; Pluto, who is characterized by intellect, very properly converts [this being the characteristic of intellect] ends to beginnings, effecting a circle without a beginning and without an end, not only in souls, but also in every fabrication of bodies, and in short of all periods; which circle also he perpetually convolves. Thus for instance, he converts the ends to the beginnings of the souls of the stars, and the convolution of souls about generation and the like. [He is Lord of the Cycle of Generation and the Cycle of Necessity, and the Guardian of the 'Ring Pass Not,' on every plane.] Whereas Jupiter is the guardian of the life of souls prior to generation" (*loc. cit., ibid.*, pp. 190-192).

Socrates in the *Cratylus* denies that Pluto has anything to do with the wealth of the earth or that Hades is "invisible, dark and dreadful." He refers the name of Pluto, as intellect, to the wealth of prudence, and that of Hades to an intellect knowing all things. "For this God is a sophist [in a good sense], who, purifying

souls after death, frees them from generation. For Hades is not, as some improperly explain it, evil: for neither is death evil; though Hades to some appears to be attended with perturbations [*ἐμπαθῶς*—of a passional nature, a state of emotion]; but it is invisible [Hades meaning the Unseen] and better than the apparent; such as is everything intelligible. Intellect, therefore, in every triad of beings, convolves itself to being and the paternal cause, imitating in its energy the circle" (*ibid.*).

But indeed the kâmalokic aspect of this Unseen is dreadful for the evil; still Socrates preferred to insist more on the devachanic aspect, and, therefore, Proclus continues: "Men who are lovers of body badly [erroneously] refer to themselves the passions of the animated nature, and on this account consider death to be dreadful, as being the cause of corruption. The truth, however, is, that it is much better for man to die and live in Hades a life according to nature, since a life in conjunction with body is contrary to nature, and is an impediment to intellectual energy. Hence it is necessary to divest ourselves of the fleshly garments with which we are clothed, as Ulysses did of his

ragged vestments, and no longer like a wretched mendicant, together with the indigence of body, put on our rags. For, as the Chaldæan Oracle says, ' Things divine cannot be obtained by those whose intellectual eye is directed to body ; but those only can arrive at the possession of them who stript of their garments hasten to the summit ' " (*ibid.*, p. 193).

And so we are finally told that : " Neptune, *when compared with Jupiter* [the one], is said to know *many* things ; but Hades, *compared with souls to whom he imparts knowledge*, is said to know *all* things ; though [in fact] Neptune is more total than Hades " (*ibid.*).

And thus we bid farewell to the demiurgic triad of the Super-cosmic Order, or Jupiter, Neptune and Pluto, the Creator, Preserver and Regenerator, or Celestial Jove, Marine Jove and Subterranean Jove.

#### APOLLO.

We next pass to Apollo, who is said, conformably to Orpheus, to be in the Supercosmic Order what Jupiter is in the Noëric Order (Taylor, *Myst. Hymns*, p. 83, n.). This is Apollo as a monad. But just as Jupiter has

three reflections in the Order immediately below him (see Chart of Orphic Theogony), so Apollo has also his triple reflection in the Liberated Order. (Compare also Chart of Chaldæan Theogony.)

In Hymn XXXIV, Apollo is said to "fix his roots beyond the starry-eyed darkness." Now Apollo, the Sun, is something vastly different from the visible orb of day, according to this theology. For this "starry-eyed darkness" is the sphere of the fixed stars, the region immediately beyond which consists of the ethereal worlds, which according to the Chaldæans are three. "For they assert that there are seven corporeal worlds, one empyrean and the first; after this, three ethereal, and then three material worlds, which last consist of the inerratic sphere, the seven planetary spheres and the sublunary regions." (Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 78; see also Chart of Chaldæan Theogony, and also Chart of the Muses, *supra*.)

It is somewhat difficult to make out precisely what these Ethereal Worlds are. The worlds, however, are apparently in triads, just as the Powers are. Thus there seem to

be three triads. Heaven, Earth and Sea, each reflecting the other, with an all-containing Æther encompassing all, and thus we get the scale :

ÆTHER.

Empyrean	{	Heaven	Uranus	
		Earth	Gæa	
		Sea	Oceanus	
Ethereal	{	Heaven	{ Triple	
		Earth		Upper Solar
		Sea		World
Material	{	Heaven	Inerratic Sphere	
		Earth	Planetary Worlds	
		Sea	Sublunary Regions	

Thus we read in Orpheus, quoted by Proclus (*Tim.*, i. 96), that the Demiurgus was counselled by Night to “surround all things with Æther; and in its midst to place the Heaven; and in that, the boundless Earth [Earth Proper, Prima Materia, that which Eugenius Philalethes assures us, on his honour, no man has seen]; and in that, the Sea [Astral Envelope]; and in that all the Stars where-with Heaven crowns his head.”

“We also learn from Psellus, that according to the Chaldæans there are two Solar Worlds;



*one of which is subservient to the ethereal profundity*; the other zonaic, being one of the seven [planetary] spheres" (Taylor, *ibid.*). From which I deduce that this Upper Solar World belongs to the Azonic or Liberated Order.

And Proclus (*Tim.*, i. 264) informs us further, that "the most mystical of the logia have handed on that the wholeness [monadic essence] of the Sun is in the supercosmic order; for there is the [true] Solar World, and the totality of light, as the Chaldæan Oracles say." From which I further deduce that the Sun is a monad, and a triad, and a hebdomad, respectively on the supercosmic, liberated and cosmic planes. For by "wholeness" Proclus means "the sphere in which the visible orb of the sun is fixed, and which is called a 'wholeness,' because it has a perpetual subsistence, and comprehends in itself all the multitude of which it is the cause" (Taylor, *ibid.*). That is to say, that sphere which gives the solar power to all the stars, which are equally suns with our own sun.

And thus it is that Julian, the Emperor

(*Orat.*, v.), says : "The orb of the [true] Sun revolves in the starless [spheres, which transcend the visible stars], much above the inerratic sphere. Hence it is not the middle of the planets, but of the three [ethereal] worlds, according to the telestic hypothesis."

And so we can understand the meaning of Apollo being "rooted beyond the starry-eyed darkness." For in symbology these "roots" signify his divine origin. The "heavenly trees" have all their roots upward, and branches below; compare this with the Ashvattha Tree in the Upanishads and Gîtâ. And Proclus (*Parmen.*, vi) finely explains the symbology by writing :

"As trees by their extremities are firmly established in the earth, and all that pertains to them is through this earthly; after the same manner are divine natures by their extremities *rooted in the one*, and each of them is a unity and one, through an unconfused union with the one itself."

But we must leave this interesting subject, and put off the symbology of Apollo's Lyre till a later chapter. With Apollo is closely associated Hermes (Mercury) who is also said to

have invented the lyre. But, indeed, we must hasten to bring our Orphic Pantheon to a conclusion, for it has already run into greater length than was intended. Many other names could be introduced, and many interesting side-paths of mythology entered into, but these must be reserved for another occasion. Of Venus, Mars, and Vulcan, however, we must say a few words.

#### VULCAN, VENUS, MARS.

There are three main aspects of Venus, one connected with Uranus, the second with Saturn, and the third with Jupiter. The name of the middle Venus is Dione. Venus is said to be produced from sea-foam, the creative energy of the father being cast into the sea. And the highest and lowest Venus are said to be "united with each other through a similitude of subsistence: for they both proceed from generative powers; one from that of the connectedly containing power of Heaven, and the other from Jupiter, the Demiurgus. But the sea signifies an expanded and circumscribed life; its profundity, the universally extended progression of such life; and its foam, the greatest

purity of nature, that which is full of prolific light and power, and that which swims upon all life, and is as it were its highest flower" (Proc., *Crat.*, Taylor, *Myst.*, *Hymns*, p. 194).

And Venus is married to Vulcan, who, the theologians say, "forges everything" (Proc., *Tim.*, ii. 101), that is to say, Vulcan is the formative power, and Venus the vivific.

"Venus, according to her first subsistence, ranks among the supermundane divinities. She is the cause of all the harmony and analogy in the universe, and of the union of form and matter, connecting and comprehending the powers of all the mundane elements" (Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 113, n.).

As to Mars, Proclus (*Plat. Rep.*, p. 388) tells us that he "is the source of division and motion, separating the contrarities of the universe, which he also perpetually excites, and immutably preserves in order that the world may be perfect and filled with forms of every kind. . . . But he requires the assistance of Venus that he may insert order and harmony into things contrary and discordant."

Thus we see that, in the Sensible World

Vulcan is the Creator, Venus the Preserver, and Mars the Regenerator. And so the myth exhibits Vulcan as the legitimate husband, but Mars as the lover of Venus.

As to Mars, the God of War, this is a vulgar conception; in reality, as says Hermias (*Phædr.*), "the 'slaughter' which is ascribed to Mars signifies a divulsion from matter through rapidly turning from it, and no longer energizing physically, but intellectually. For slaughter, when applied to the Gods, may be said to be an apostasy from secondary natures, just as slaughter in this terrestrial region signifies a privation of the present life."

And finally Taylor tells us (*op. cit.*, p. 129 n.) that: "Vulcan is that divine power which presides over the spermatic and physical productive powers which the universe contains; for whatever Nature [the psycho-physical forces] accomplishes by verging to bodies, that Vulcan effects in a divine and exempt manner, by moving Nature, and using her as an instrument in his own proper fabrication."

In order finally to complete the subject, we must add a few more notes on the Constructive and Preservative Powers.

## THE CYCLOPES AND CENTIMANI.

In this connection I would refer the reader to what has been already said of the Titans, and especially of the Cyclopes and Centimani, the Primal Architects and Guardian Powers. Now Hermias (*Phædr.*, Taylor, *op. cit.*, pp. 12-14) tells us that :

“Theology says that figure is first unfolded into light in these, and that the divinities, the Cyclopes, are the first principles and causes of the figures which subsist everywhere. Hence theology says that they are ‘manual artificers.’ For this triad [Cyclopes] is perfective of figures, ‘And in their forehead one round eye was fix’d’ (Hesiod., *Theog.*, v. 145). [This has reference to the ‘third eye’ and the creative force of the power which energizes thereby.]

“In the *Parmenides*, likewise, Plato, when he speaks of the straight, the circular, and that which is mixed [from both these], obscurely indicates this order. [The ‘straight’ (I), or diameter, or ‘bound,’ is the paternal creative power; the ‘circular’ (o), or circumference, or ‘infinity,’ is the maternal vitalizing power;

and the 'mixed' (all numbers) is the resulting universe, or the son.]

"But these Cyclopes, as being the *first causes* of figures, taught Minerva and Vulcan the various species of figures. . . . For (1) Vulcan is the cause of *corporal* figures, and of every *mundane* figure; but (2) Minerva of the *psychical* and *intellectual* figure; and (3) the [triple] Cyclopes of *divine*, and the *everywhere existing* figure."

This is the line of the Architects and Builders. But closely united with them is the triad of the Centimani, both triads being in the Noëtic-noëric Order, for as Hermias tells us (*ibid.*), "the triad of the Centimani is a guardian nature."

#### CURETES AND CORYBANTES.

The reflection of this Guardian Triad is found on both the noëric and supercosmic planes, in the triads (and also hebdomads) respectively of the Curetes and Corybantes.

The Curetes and Corybantes are frequently confused; they are the Guardians of the Creative Power, while it is yet too weak to defend itself. Therefore they watch over Zeus

when a child. Now as the Guardians are closely associated with the Formative Powers, we naturally find the appropriate Minervas associated with both the Curetes and Corybantes, they being armed as she is armed (Proc., *Polit.*, p. 387). These Guardian Powers are also given the dragon-form (Nonnus, vi. 123).

So much for the Orphic Pantheon, an apparent chaos of unmeaning verbiage, but on closer inspection, a marvellous procession and return of divine and nature powers, ever revealing similar characteristics in orderly sequence, and affording an example of permutation and combination according to law, that it will be difficult to find paralleled elsewhere. But the most stupendous thought of all is, that all this multiplicity is, after all, One Deity; emanating, evolving, converting and reabsorbing itself; creating and preserving, destroying and regenerating itself; the Self, by itself, knowing itself, and separating from itself, and transcending itself.



## VIII. ON THE MYSTERIES AND SYMBOLISM.

I HAVE no intention in this Chapter to do anything more than touch in a most superficial manner on the general subject of the Mysteries, of which Orpheus is said, traditionally, to have been the founder. The distinction between the various kinds of Mysteries, their history and development, and the nature of their rites and observances, pertain to the very heart of the Grecian theology; but the treatment of this grandiose and marvellously interesting subject must be reserved for greater leisure and opportunity for research than are mine at present. The Eleusinian, Orphic, Bacchic, Samothracian, Phrygian, Egyptian, Chaldæan and other Mysteries all came from a common source. In Greece these rites became in time mostly identified with the name of Bacchus, who was the son of Zeus

and Core in the Supercosmic Order. (See Chap. VII., "Vesta-Ceres-Juno.")

"INDIA IN GREECE"?

In later times it was believed that the Cult of Bacchus was introduced into Greece from India. This was owing to the fact that the Greeks in the army of Alexander the Great, having observed similar rites among the Indians, came to the erroneous conclusion that the Bacchic Mysteries were introduced directly from India, and this view was all the more insisted on by the writers of the time in order to flatter Alexander who was said to have been worshipped as Bacchus himself by the oriental nations whom he reduced to his sway.

The truth of the matter is that the Mystic Rites of both the Greeks and Indians, as has been shown above, came from the same archaic source.

The theory that the legend of the conquests of Bacchus in India was nothing more than a bastard mythical adulation of Alexander was first brought forward by Fréret (*Mém. de l'Acad.*, xxiii. 255). But Bacchus was far

older in Greece than the time of Alexander; for as Gail says (*Rech. sur la Nat. du Culte de Bacchus*, p. 14); "Bacchus was recognized as a god *before the Hellenes had driven out the Pelasgi.*" In the same passage the writer proves that the date of the Bacchic rites in Greece must be pushed back at least as far as 1,500 B.C.

The general consensus of opinion among the later mythological writers, therefore, that Bacchus was born in India, must be received with the greatest possible caution. The wild comparative Grecian and Hindu mythology and Greek and Sanskrit philology, attempted by such writers as Wilford, Sir William Jones, and Pococke, must also be received with the greatest possible caution; for they all went on the theory of *direct* borrowing, instead of tracing both lines of descent up to a common source.

Apollodorus (I. iii. 2) tells us that "Orpheus discovered (εὑρε) the Mysteries of Dionysus." That is to say, that he found them elsewhere and introduced them into Greece; in other words, these Mysteries came from a remote antiquity. And so Lactantius (*Instit.*, i. 22): "Orpheus was the first to bring the Mysteries

of Dionysus into Greece . . . and these Mysteries are called Orphic to our day." And so also Diodorus (iii. 64) and Herodotus (ii).

#### THE PERFECTIONS OF VIRTUE.

These Mysteries were looked upon as the Perfections of Virtue, the blossoming of the flower and promise of manhood. Thus Charondas (Stob., xliv. 289) speaks of "initiation into the greatest and most perfect rite, meaning thereby the flower of perfect manhood" (τελείσθαι τὴν μεγίστην καὶ τελεωτάτην τελετὴν, ἀνδραγαθίαν μνούμενος. And thus also they were called "the efflorescence of virtue" (τὰ ὄργια τῆς ἀρετῆς) —*orgia* signifying "burstings forth" or "efflorescence."

These Mystic Rites were guarded in the greatest secrecy and had nothing to do directly with the public worship and sacrifices. The punishment for revealing their secrets was death.

It is interesting to set down here one of the oaths taken by neophytes. It is attributed to Orpheus and cited by Justin (*Cohort.*, xv. 78), and Cyril (i. 33, A): "So help me Heaven, work of God, great and wise; so help me the

Word (*αὐδὴν*) of the Father which he first spake, when he established the whole universe in his wisdom." (See also *Chron. Alex.*, p. 47, D, where the same oath is attributed to Hermes Trismegistus.)

That these rites were designed for the welfare of mankind and the perfection of the highest virtue is borne out by the note of Taylor (*Myst. Hymns*, p. 131), who tells us that: "In the hymn to Apollo, Orpheus, or, as he wrote those hymns for the Mysteries, the initiating priest, *prays for the welfare of all mankind.*"

#### THE FANTASIES OF SCHOLARSHIP.

The perfection of the highest virtue and the opening of the real spiritual senses constituted the highest degree of the Mysteries; another and most important part of the discipline was the training in the interpretation of myth, symbol, and allegory, the letters of the mystical language in which the secrets of nature and the soul were written, so plainly for the initiated, so obscurely for the general. Without this instruction the mythical recitals and legends were unintelligible. They were and are still unintelligible. Every interpre-

tation has been attempted, the favourite rendering being the "sun-myth theory"—interpretations that are more fantastic than the mythical tales themselves. Of these perhaps the most naïvely grotesque are Faber's Noachian theory, as set forth in his *Cabiri*, and the strange conceit of Goropius Becanus who, in his *Thaumatoscopion Symbolicum*, says: "I therefore assert and proclaim that the Grecian fables contain neither Indian theosophy, nor Hermetic philosophy, nor physics, nor metaphysics, but simply the art of cookery!" All of which he proceeds to demonstrate at great length with a wealth of learned lunacy.

The symbols of the Mysteries and the mythical narrations summed up and explained the workings of occult nature and the powers, faculties and nature of the human soul. Mere rationalistic speculation, warped theological prejudice, and the grotesque perversions of diseased philology, are, therefore, all absolutely incompetent even to understand the nature of the problem they fondly imagine they have solved.

Let us, therefore, take a few more instances of this symbolical and mythological method.

## THE LION'S CUB.

Alcman, the famous lyric poet of Sparta, tells us (Welcher, *Frag.* xxv.), that Dionysus was fed on lion's milk. Further, Herodotus (v. 92) mentions an oracle which declares, "an eagle lays her egg on the rocks and gives birth to a lion," and Aristophanes, who frequently ventured to jest concerning the Mysteries, says (*Egg.*, 1037), "There is a woman who shall give birth to a lion in Holy Athens." Compare this with what has been said above concerning the mystical birth at Eleusis, and the Egg and triple-formed God, with the heads of a lion, etc. Dionysus was the perfected candidate, he was fed on lion's milk, the spiritual influx of the higher mind, born from the Egg of the Great Bird, the Cosmic Mother.

## THE FAWN SKIN.

In the Mysteries, the Mystæ were clad in a fawn skin (*νεβρίς*), as we are told by Aristophanes (*Ran.*, 1242). Euripides (*Bacch.*, 138) calls this skin "the sacred vesture" (*ἱερὸν ὑδυτὸν νεβρίδα*). The legend runs that when

Bacchus came forth from the thigh of Jupiter, Mercury received him on a fawn skin (*Mus. Pio Clem.*, tom. iv. pl. 19). In Hymn LII. Orpheus sings of Bacchus as clothed with fawn skins. Bacchus as conqueror in India is represented with a fawn skin spangled with stars (Nonn., xiv. 239). Diodorus (I. ii) calls it an emblem of the heavenly vault. Arrows could not pierce this "skin," and Nonnus (p. 1252, 8vo. ed.) tells us that "the hills burst asunder touched by the magic skin of Lyæus" (Comp. Gail, *Recherches*, pp. 111, 203, and 205). We sometimes also find mention of a leopard or tiger skin. In the *Mahâbhârata*, the great religious epic of India, directions are given for the practice of Yoga or Theurgy, and among other receipts the aspirant is instructed to lay a deer skin or tiger skin on kusha grass as a seat upon which to practise mystic meditation. From all of which it appears that the fawn skin was not only a symbol, but also of physical service. It appears to have been a symbol of that starry or "astral" vesture or envelope which is the storehouse of all forces and substances in each man's universe, and which must not be



confounded with the so-called "astral body." Its physical use was for the purpose of assisting in the concentration of the magnetic aura. It was only apparently when the candidate had reached the first degree of outer initiation that he was clothed with this skin, the verb *νεβρίζειν*, the technical term for the investiture with the skin, being explained by Photius (*Lex., sub voc.*) as *ὡς τοῦ τελούντος τοὺς τελουμένους τούτῳ καταζώννυτος*, where the technical word for initiation is twice employed.

#### THE THYRSUS.

The candidates also carried in their hands thyrsi or wands, headed with pine-cones, which were generally covered with ivy. This explains the phrase "many thyrsus-bearers there are, but few Bacchi." The symbology of the thyrsus must be taken together with that of the Caduceus, the "Rod of Hermes."

Clemens Alexandrinus (*Cohort.*, I. ii. 12) quotes the mystic sentence, "bull is father of dragon, and dragon of bull; on the height the hidden goad, that gathers the herd together"

(ταῦρος δράκοντος καὶ δράκων ταύρου πατήρ, ἐν ὄρει τὸ κρύφιον βουκόλος τὸ κέντρον.) The hidden or mystic goad is this same thyrsus, the staff of which was made out of the light, pithy stalk of an umbelliferous plant, which was fabled to have contained the "fire" that Prometheus brought down from heaven (Hes., *op.* 52, *Theog.*, 567; and also in Æsch., *Prom. Vinc.*, ἐν νάρθηκι κεκρυμένον.) Many writers assume that the narthex (fennel stalk) or ferule, and the thyrsus or wand, were two different things, but it seems more probable that the one was part of the other. Moser in his notes on Nonnus (p. 241) tells us that the narthex or ferule was a hollow rod, in which fire could be carried.

Bacchus is said to have used this narthex for the taming of lions, for combat, and for splitting in two the rocks (Nonnus, 1086, 884, 1118).

Now these thyrsi were covered with ivy or vine tendrils. Bacchus, "god of wine," is covered with vine tendrils and grape bunches, and so are his worshippers. All these symbols have considerably puzzled the commentators, who have wandered off after their vintage festivals and got drunk on the wine of gross

materiality. The Sûfîs at least could have told them what wine meant, and the Christ, too, in his wonder-working at Cana.

The thyrsus in which the sacred fire is hidden, is in every man, the Sushumnâ Nâdi of the Indian mystic. The narthex is physically the spinal-cord, and the pine-cone at its head is the pineal gland. The ivy and vine leaves and fruits are the Nâdis and Chakras, the nerve ganglia and ramifications. Prometheus has indeed hidden the sacred fire in "a fennel stalk." Why do certain Sannyâsîs in India carry a seven-knotted bamboo-cane? But this subject has been sufficiently dealt with elsewhere in modern theosophical literature.

#### MYSTICA VANNUS IACCHI.

Another of the symbolical instruments was the so-called winnowing-fan, which Virgil (*Georg.*, i. 166) names the "mystic fan of Iacchus." Servius, in his notes on this passage, and also on *Æn.*, vi. 741, tells us that there were three symbolical purifications, *viz.*, by (a) fire, (b) water, and (c) air. These purifications of the soul (*Liberi Patris sacra ad*

*purgationem animæ pertinebant et sic homines ejus mysteriis purgabantur*) were physically symbolized by (a) the burning of resinous gums and sulphur, (b) by ablutions or baptisms, and (c) by fanning (*ventilatio*).

It is curious to notice that in the earlier days of the Church two fans or flabella were used at the celebration of the Eucharist—a custom which is still in vogue in the Greek and Armenian Churches. This flabellum is called by Cyril of Scythopolis in his *Life of St. Euthymius* (§ 70; c. A.D. 550) the “mystic fan” (μετὰ τῆς μυστικῆς ῥιπίδος); while the *Euchologion*, the most comprehensive Service Book of the Eastern Church, based on the liturgies of Chrysostom and Basil, calls it the “holy fan” (ἅγιον ῥιπίδιον).

The flabellum in ordinary use in the Greek Church represents the head of a Cherub or Seraph surrounded with six wings, and is explained mystically by references to *Isaiah* vi. 2, and *Revelation* iv. 6, 8. Flabella were also made of a single disc of silver and brass surrounded with little bells, recalling somewhat the sistrum of Egypt. So much for the *Mystica Vannus Iacchi*, the physical symbol

of the spiritual (*spiritus=ventus divinus*) purification.

#### THE PLAYTHINGS OF BACCHUS.

The Bacchic legend tells us that the young god was seized upon by the Titans while intent on his playthings, and torn in pieces as narrated above. The symbols of this particular mystery are given by Clemens (*Admon.*, p. 11) as a die (*ἀσπράγαλος*), a spinning top (*σπρόβιλος*), a ball (*σφαίρα*), apples (*μῆλα*), a magic wheel (*ρόμβος*), a mirror (*ἕσοπτρον*) and a fleece (*πόκος*). Arnobius (V. xix.) gives them from Orpheus as dice (*talos*), a mirror (*speculum*), tops (*turbines*), winged or flying wheels (*volatiles rotulas*), and the apples taken from the Hesperides (*sumta ab Hesperidibus mala*).

The sport (*līlā*) of Vishnu is the building of the universe; the sport of young Bacchus, as a cosmic force, is also the building of the universe; and, as the young soul, is the evolution of vehicles, forms or bodies, in which to reside. Such bodies are built according to the types and designs in the Great Mind, upon which the Builder contemplates.

Proclus (*Tim.*, iii. 163) tells us that the

R

theologists understood the mirror as signifying the means whereby all things were fitly arranged here below according to the noëtic types. They say that it was Vulcan who fabricated this mirror for Bacchus, and that Bacchus seeing his own image in its surface, went forth after it. And so he sought his image in matter and went forth with desire, and was confined in matter, and became a partible soul, or many personalities, and thus was torn in pieces by the Titans.

Plotinus (*Enn.*, IV. iii.), referring to this mirror of Dionysus, says that the souls of men, when they have once seen the image of their true selves, hasten above. That is to say that the soul having become partible must retrace its path to return to its pristine state. And just as it saw its reflection in the sensible world, and went forth after it, so must it now contemplate its type or idea in the super-sensible, noëtic or spiritual world, and be joined thereto.

Bastius (ad Gregor., p. 241) explains that the spinning-top has the same symbology as the pine-cone, and that the flying-wheel is the same as the discus or thunder-bolt. Both

words mean also a vortex or spiral whorl. Mystics say that the forces playing round the pineal gland are of this nature, and are reflections of the great creative forces which fashion "wheels" or globes in space.

Bastius further tells us (Lobeck, *op. cit.*, p. 700), that in the Mysteries the "cone" was a small piece of wood of that shape, round which a cord was wound, so that it might be made to spin and give out a "humming noise." As the Upanishad has it "The sun as he moves chants Ôm." This "cone" was also called the "Heart of Bacchus."

With regard to dice it is interesting to bear in mind the "city set four-square" and the "sacred four" in all its variations, and also to recall the fact that the four great cycles or Yugas of the Hindus are named from the faces of a die (see also concerning the square and cube under "The Orphic Lyre," *infra*).

Lydus (*De Mensibus*, p. 82) says that the mirror symbolized the sky, and the ball the earth, but the mirror is rather that part of the world-envelope which is sometimes called the "astral light."

The golden apples of the Hesperides may very

well represent the heart-shaped atom described by seers, and the golden fleece probably symbolized the higher robe of initiation, just as the fawn-skin typified the lower.

Many other symbols could be described, but for the present it will be sufficient to conclude with some remarks on

#### THE ORPHIC LYRE.

The Orphic Lyre was the seven-stringed lute of Apollo. Among the Greeks the favourite instruments of music were the tetrachord and heptachord, or the four and seven-stringed lyres. Of their making there are many legends and myths. The greater antiquity is given to the tetrachord, and Gesner (*Orph.*, 226, n.) refers to a picture found in the ruins of Herculaneum which represents the original shape of the lyre as a triangle.

The seven-stringed lyre is said to have been invented by Orpheus or Pythagoras.

The tetrachord was said by the Pythagoreans to have been built on the type of the four elements, and the heptachord on that of the seven planetary spheres.



Nicomachus the Pythagorean (*Theol. Arith.*, vii. 51) says: "There are four elements, and three intervals between them, wherefore Linus the theologer says mystically, 'four sources hold all with triple bonds.' For fire and earth are to one another in a geometrical proportion: as earth is to air, so is water to fire, and as fire to air so water to earth."

These are admirably arranged by Proclus as follows:

<i>Fire.</i>	<i>Air.</i>
Subtle, Acute, Movable.	Subtle, Blunt, Movable.
<i>Water.</i>	<i>Earth.</i>
Dense, Blunt, Movable.	Dense, Blunt, Immovable.

The tetrachord then reproduced the harmonical proportions of the elements, and was used for certain so-called magical purposes.

The heptachord represented the harmony of the planetary spheres. Pythagoras is said to have had actual knowledge of this harmony while out of the body. As Simplicius writes (on Aristotle, *De Cælo.*, ii.): "If any one, like Pythagoras, who is reported to have heard this harmony, should have his terrestrial body

exempt from him, and his luminous and celestial vehicle, and the senses which it contains, purified, either through a good allotment [favourable karma, *i.e.*, training in a previous life], or through a perfection arising from sacred operations [theurgy or yoga], such a one will perceive things invisible to others, and will hear things inaudible to others."

Taylor (*Theor. Arith.*, p. 244, n.; see also *Myst. Hymns*, p. 82, n.) tells us that according to this psychology "the soul has three vehicles, one ethereal, another aërial, and the third this terrestrial body. The first, which is luminous and celestial, is connate with the essence of the soul, and in which alone it resides in a state of bliss in the stars [the Kârana Sharîra]. In the second it suffers the punishment of its sins after death [Sûkshma Sharîra]. And from the third it becomes an inhabitant of earth [Sthûla Sharîra]."

Further in his Introduction to the "Timæus" (*Plat. Works*, ii. 452), he writes: "The soul is conjoined with this gross body through two vehicles as mediums, one of which is ethereal and the other aërial, and of these the ethereal

vehicle is simple and immaterial, but the ærial simple and material; and this dense earthly body is composite and material."

The "soul" here is the monadic sphere of individuality.

As then the tetrachord was attuned to the elemental or sublunary sphere and awoke the corresponding forces and brought them into relation with the gross body, so the heptachord was attuned to the harmony of the planetary spheres and brought the subtle or ærial body into sensible contact with their powers. Now Pythagoras, in his doctrine of the harmony of the spheres, called the interval between the Moon and Earth a tone, between the Moon and Mercury half a tone, between Mercury and Venus also half a tone, from Venus to the Sun a tone and a half, from the Sun to Mars a tone, from Mars to Jupiter half a tone; from Jupiter to Saturn half a tone, from Saturn to the Zodiac or Inerratic Sphere a tone.

Plato, in the *Timæus*, following Pythagoras, divides the Soul of the World according to numbers, binds it by analogies and harmonic ratios, inserts in it the primary principles of geometrical figures, the right and circular line,

which in motion generate the spirals, and "intellectually moves the circles which it contains" (Taylor, *Theor. Arith.*, xiv.). The motion of the planetary spheres is spiral and appropriately so, says Taylor (Introd. "Timæus," *Plat. Works*, ii. 446), "as it is a medium between the right-lined motion of the elements and the circular motion of the inerratic sphere; for a spiral is mixed from the right line and circle."

Further the seven "boundaries" of all numbers pre-exist in this Soul, and these are 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 27, or 1, 2, 3, 2<sup>2</sup>, 2<sup>3</sup>, 3<sup>2</sup>, 3<sup>3</sup>.

Of these numbers, 1, 2, 3, are apportioned to the World-Soul itself in its intellectual or spiritual aspect, and signify its abiding in, proceeding from and returning to itself; this with regard to primary natures. But in addition, intermediate or subtle natures are providentially directed in their evolution and involution by the World-Soul, they proceed according to the power of the fourth term (4), "which possesses generative powers," and return according to that of the fifth (9), "which reduces them to one." Finally also solid or gross natures are also providentially directed

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in their procession according to 8, and in their conversion by 27 (see Taylor, *loc. cit.*, p. 442).

Hence we get the following table :

	↓	I	↑	
Ethereal	2 <sup>1</sup>		3 <sup>1</sup>	Spiritual
Planetary	2 <sup>2</sup>		3 <sup>2</sup>	Psychic
Sublunary	2 <sup>3</sup>		3 <sup>3</sup>	Physical

The central point of stability and abiding is 1; 2 is the number of division and differentiation, of proceeding or evolution; 3 the number of unification, integration, of returning or converting and involution. The above arrangement throws light on what has been pitch darkness to every commentator, and will at once be grasped by any student of the Esoteric Philosophy. The powers or indices of the numbers represent planes, and the numbers themselves the direction of forces. The key to the mysterious Pythagorean numbers lies this way. We should further recollect that as  $x^0 = 1$ , therefore  $2^0 = 1$  and  $3^0 = 1$ . The 1 therefore represents the plane of non-

differentiation. The 2-column represents the evolution of vehicle, and the 3-column the development of consciousness.

Further, "as the first numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 8, 27, represented those powers of the soul by which she abides in, proceeds from, and returns to, herself, and causes the progression and conversion of the parts of universe—so, in the second numbers, the sesquitercian, sesquialter, and other ratios constitute the more particular ornament of the world; and, while they subsist as wholes themselves, adorn the parts of its parts" (Taylor, *ibid.*, p. 443.)

These secondary numbers are given (p. 440) as :

	6	
8		9
9		12
12		18
16		27
18		36
24		54
32		81
36		108
48		162

Resolving these numbers into their prime factors, and placing 6 at the head of each column, we get the following interesting result:

$2^1 \times 3^1$	$3^1 \times 2^1$
$2^2 \times 3^2$	$3^2 \times 2^2$
$2^3 \times 3^3$	$3^3 \times 2^3$
$2^4 \times 3^4$	$3^4 \times 2^4$
$2^5 \times 3^5$	$3^5 \times 2^5$
$2^6 \times 3^6$	$3^6 \times 2^6$
$2^7 \times 3^7$	$3^7 \times 2^7$
$2^8 \times 3^8$	$3^8 \times 2^8$
$2^9 \times 3^9$	$3^9 \times 2^9$
$2^{10} \times 3^{10}$	$3^{10} \times 2^{10}$

These series can of course be continued indefinitely; but Taylor gives only two sets of five terms each. In music these embrace what were called the five symphonies, *viz.*, (1) the diatessaron, or sesquitercian proportion, composed of two tones and a semi-tone; (2) the diapente or sesquialter proportion, composed from three tones and a semi-tone; (3) the diapason or duple proportion, consisting of six tones; (4) the diapason diapente, consisting of nine tones and a semi-tone; and (5) the disdiapason or quadruple proportion, which contains twelve tones. This, in music, pertained to what was called the "greater system," containing two octaves, the range of the human voice.

Sesquialter proportion, or ratio, is when one number contains another and the half of it

besides, or 3 : 2; sesquitercian proportion when a number contains another and a third of it besides as 4 : 3; sesquioctave proportion when a number contains another and an eighth of it besides, as 9 : 8.

From an inspection of the above table we find that all the ratios are formed in a perfectly orderly manner, being generated from the seven "boundaries," as shown in the numeration of the World-Soul given above. These numbers, 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9 and 27, contain two tetractydes, as follows :

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{cccc} \text{I.} & 2. & 4. & 8. \\ \text{I.} & 3. & 9. & 27. \end{array} \right\}$$

These are the even and the odd tetractydes, for the monad is considered as both odd and even. Now Theon of Smyrna (*Math.*, p. 147, quoted by Taylor, *Theor. Arith.*, p. 186) tells us that : "The tetractys was not only principally honoured by the Pythagoreans, because all symphonies are found to exist within it, but also because it appears to contain the nature of all things." And thus the famous oath of the Pythagoreans was "By him who delivered to our soul the tetractys, which contains the fountain and root of everlasting nature."



In these numbers the more perfect ratios of symphonies are found, and in them a "tone is comprehended." The "tones" of difference between the "planets" and "spheres" mentioned above have here their place.

Taylor further tells us (*ibid.*, p. 187) with regard to the tetractys: "The monad (1) contains the productive principle of a point, but the second numbers 2 and 3 the principle of a side, since they are incomposite, and first are measured by the monad, and naturally measure a right line. The third terms are 4 and 9, which are in power a square superficies, since they are equally equal. And the fourth terms 8 and 27 being equally equal, are in power a cube. Hence from these numbers, and this tetractys, the increase takes place from a point to a solid. For a side follows after a point, a superficies after a side, and a solid after a superficies. In these numbers also, Plato in the *Timæus* constitutes the soul. But the last of these seven numbers, *i.e.*, 27, is equal to all the numbers that precede it; for  $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 8 + 9 = 27$ . There are, therefore, two tetractydes of numbers, one of which subsists by addition, but the other by

multiplication, and they comprehend musical, geometrical, and arithmetical ratios, from which also the harmony of the universe consists."

From all of which it is plainly evident that the Lyre of Apollo is something vastly different from a mere musical instrument, although indeed the tetrachord and heptachord of the Pythagoreans and Orphics were based on a really scientific knowledge of the harmonies of nature; and that the myths connected with it had nothing to do with an imaginary "primitive man" producing barbarous music from a few strings and a tortoise-shell.

On the contrary the Lyre of Apollo is the balanced harmony of the spheres of evolving nature, and pertains to the mysteries of divine creation. Further, that as man is the mirror of the universe, he can tune his own nature to that of divine nature, and by such means can become a creator in his turn and a master of the cosmic powers, that mysterious "Army of the Voice" which in the Stanzas of Dzyan, are called the "Spheres, Triangles, Cubes, Lines and Modellers." But in order to do so, he must follow the Path of Purification and live that Orphic Life of which some details will now be given in the following Chapter.

## IX. ORPHIC DISCIPLINE AND PSYCHOLOGY.

### MORALS.

IN order to have some slight idea of Orphic morals, we may with advantage set down here one or two details of the Pythagorean discipline, which was of the same nature as that of the Orphic communities. The information is taken to some extent from Maury's *Histoire des Religions de la Grèce* (iii. 367 et sq.).

We must first give ourselves up entirely to God. When a man prays he should never ask for any particular benefit, fully convinced that that will be given which is right and proper, and according to the wisdom of God and not the subject of his own selfish desires (Diod. Sic., ix. 41). By virtue alone does man arrive at blessedness, and this is the exclusive privilege of a rational being (Hippodamus, *De Felicitate*, ii., Orelli, *Opusc. Græcor. Sent. et*

*Moral.*, ii. 284). In himself, of his own nature, man is neither good nor happy, but he may become so by the teaching of the true doctrine (*μαθήσιος καὶ προνοίας ποτιδέεται*—Hippo., *ibid.*). The most sacred duty is filial piety. "God showers his blessings on him who honours and reveres the author of his days"—says Pampelus (*De Parentibus*, Orelli, *op. cit.*, ii. 345). Ingratitude towards one's parents is the blackest of all crimes, writes Perictione (*ibid.*, p. 350), who is supposed to have been the mother of Plato.

The cleanliness and delicacy of all Pythagorean writings were remarkable (*Ælian, Hist. Var.*, xiv. 19). In all that concerns chastity and marriage their principles are of the utmost purity. Everywhere the great teacher recommends chastity and temperance; but at the same time he directs that the married should first become parents before living a life of absolute celibacy, in order that children might be born under favourable conditions for continuing the holy life and succession of the Sacred Science (*Jamblichus, Vit. Pythag.*, and *Hierocl.*, ap. *Stob. Serm.*, xlv. 14). This is exceedingly interesting, for

it is precisely the same regulation that is laid down in the *Mânava Dharma Shâstra*, the great Indian Code. Before a man or woman could give up family duties and devote themselves entirely to the religious life (Vânaprastha Âshrama), they had to become parents and fulfil the duties of the family life (Grihastha Âshrama). Perhaps after all the legend that Pythagoras journeyed to India is not without foundation, for the memory of the great Yavanâchârya still lingers in the land.

Adultery was most sternly condemned (Jamb., *ibid.*). Moreover the most gentle treatment of the wife by the husband was enjoined, for had he not taken her as his companion "before the Gods"? (See Lascaulx, "Zur Geschichte der Ehe bei den Griechen," in the *Mém. de l'Acad. de Bavière*, vii. 107, sq.)

Marriage was not an animal union, but a spiritual tie. Therefore, in her turn, the wife should love her husband even more than herself, and in all things be devoted and obedient. It is further interesting to remark that the finest characters among women with which ancient Greece presents us were formed in the school of Pythagoras, and the same is

true of the men. The authors of antiquity are agreed that this discipline had succeeded in producing the highest examples not only of the purest chastity and sentiment, but also a simplicity of manners, a delicacy, and a taste for serious pursuits which was unparalleled. This is admitted even by Christian writers (see Justin, xx. 4).

The ladies on entering the school cast aside their finery and dedicated their jewels to Hera, just as the postulant, on taking the veil in the Roman Catholic Church, offers her adornments to the Virgin.

Among the members of the school the idea of justice directed all their acts, while they observed the strictest tolerance and compassion in their mutual relationships. For justice is the principle of all virtue, as Polus (ap. Stob., *Serm.*, viii., ed. Schow, p. 232) teaches; 'tis justice which maintains peace and balance in the soul; she is the mother of good order in all communities, makes concord between husband and wife, love between master and servant.

The word of a Pythagorean was also his bond. And finally a man should live so as to

be ever ready for death (Hippolytus, *Philos.*, vi.).

This was the outer discipline, but for pledged disciples stricter rules were laid down, some of which have been preserved, though mixed with fantastic glosses of writers who were ignorant of what the secret discipline really was. ]

#### THE INNER DISCIPLINE.

The disciples were forbidden to frequent crowded places or to bathe in public. They were to drink no wine. In the morning their food consisted of bread and honey; in the evening the meal consisted of vegetables, and some say occasionally of a portion of the flesh of certain specified animals. Before and after each meal there were certain purificatory ceremonies, accompanied by the burning of incense and pouring out of libations. At certain hours there were readings in common. The youngest present read aloud, the oldest presided over the meeting, and in the evening he reminded all of the principal rules of the order. Before retiring to rest, each subjected himself to a searching self-examination. There

were also certain physical exercises to be performed.

On entering the school, every neophyte added his property to the common fund, but if he withdrew for any reason, he had it returned to him. The disciples wore a simple white linen robe confined by a flaxen cord, and never wore leather. To obtain entrance to the inner discipline it was necessary to be of an unblemished reputation and of a contented disposition. There was therefore a period of probation, during which certain purifications and expiations had to be undergone.

Before a complete knowledge of the innermost rules was obtained, three degrees had to be passed through. For two years the probationer had to listen without opening his mouth, endeavouring his utmost to commit to memory the teachings he received. He was thus called a Hearer (*ἀκουστικός*—compare this with the Buddhist first degree *Shrāvaka*). Thence he passed to the second degree and into the ranks of the Mathematici (*μαθηματικοί*), where the disciple learned the meaning of real geometry and music, and the nature of number, form, colour and sound. ]



Now what were mathematics originally? To this important question Proclus gives the following admirable answer: "The Pythagoreans perceived that the whole of what is called *mathesis* is reminiscence,\* not externally inserted in souls, in the same manner as phantasms from sensible objects are impressed in the imagination, nor adventitious like the knowledge resulting from opinion, *but excited indeed from things apparent, and inwardly exerted from the reasoning power converted to itself.*

. . . . Mathesis, therefore, is the reminiscence of the eternal productive principles inherent in the soul: and the mathematical science is on this account the knowledge which contributes to our recollection of these principles" (Taylor, *Theor. Arith.*, pp. xxvi. xxvii.).

Finally the student passed into the third degree, and was admitted among the Physici (*φυσικοί*), who were taught the inner nature of things, and the mysteries of cosmogony and true metaphysics. In this degree the condition of silence was no longer imposed and the

\* "That is, the recovery of lost knowledge, on the hypothesis that the soul is truly immortal, and therefore had an existence prior to that of the present life."

student could ask questions. It was only to those who had dedicated themselves to the ascetic life that Pythagoras communicated the practical details of the inner teaching; the rest were taught only such general outlines of the system as they were fitted to understand (Proclus, *Tim.*, ii. § 92, Schneider, p. 217; *Parmen.*, v. p. 310). The esoteric instruction was not written but committed to memory, and consisted of symbols, and enigmatical axioms, which were afterwards explained. The scraps of these teachings which have come down to us are said to have been written at a later date.

The full time of probation lasted five years, and women were admitted as well as men.

The life in common developed a strong feeling of real "brotherhood," and if one of the order lost his property, the others shared with him. If a dispute arose, the disputants had to find the means of reconciliation before sunset, practically carrying out the injunction, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath." This strongly reminds us of the Sangha or Order of the Buddha, and leads us all the more to credit the legend that Pythagoras actually met Gautama Shâkya Muni in India.

(Compare *Pythagoras und die Inder*, by Dr. L. v. Shroeder, Leipzig, 1884.) A word from the teacher was sufficient to settle disputed points, and hence arose the phrase *ipse dixit* (αὐτός ἔφα), "the Master has said it." (See also for the Orphic Life, Fraguier, "Sur la vie Orphique," in *Mém. Acad. Paris*, v. 117.)

#### THE MACROCOSM AND MICROCOSM.

The whole of Orphic psychology was based on the axiom that man has in him potentially the sum and substance of the universe. Everything was ensouled, there was no spot in the universe without life of some kind (πάν εἶναι σῶμα ἐμψυχον—Philoponus, *De. An.*, i.). And again, "the race of men and gods is one" (Pindar, who was a Pythagorean, quoted by Clemens, *Strom.*, v. 709). Thus the universe was an "animal" or thing "ensouled." The sun is its heart, the moon its liver, and so on (Plutarch, *De Fac. Lun.*, xv.).

Thus man was called the microcosm or little world, to distinguish him from the universe or great world. Hence we find man referred to as the "little animal" (ζῶον μικρόν—Galen, *De Usu Part.*, iii. 10); the "little world" (ἄνθρωπος

βραχὺς κόσμος—Philo, *De Vit. Mos.*, iii. 673. D), or “little heaven” (Philo, *De Mund. Opif.*, p. 18. E); the “little diacosm” (μικρὸν διάκοσμον—Porphyry, *Stob.*, *Serm.*, xxi. 185); the “lesser world” (*minorem mundum*—Solin., c. v.); and so on. And as man was the Little Universe, so the universe was the Great Man (Philo, *Quis Rer. Div. Hær.*, p. 502. c).

Thus we find Proclus (*Tim.*, i. 348) telling us that we must view man as the little universe, “for he has both a mind and a reason (*logos*), a divine body and a perishable body, like the universe; in fact his whole constitution bears an analogy with the universe. Thus it is that some assert that his noëric principle corresponds with the inerratic sphere, the contemplative aspect of his reason with Saturn, and the social aspect with Jupiter, while of his irrational principle, the passionate nature corresponds with Mars, the expressive with Mercury, the appetitive with the Sun, and the vegetative with the Moon; while his radiant vehicle corresponds with heaven and this mortal body with the elemental (or sub-lunary) sphere.”

We thus have correspondences given with

the inerratic and planetary spheres, though the Sun is a mistake for Venus, and its own characteristics are omitted; hence we get the following table :

Inerratic Sphere.	{ νοερόν, the noëric principle, νοῦς or real mind.	
Planetary Spheres.	Saturn, θεωρητικόν (contemplative)	} λόγος (rational part).
	Jupiter, πολιτικόν (social)	
	Mars, θυμοειδές (passional)	} ἄλογος (irrational part).
	Mercury, φωνητικόν (expressive)	
	Venus, ἐπιθυμητικόν (appetitive)	
	Moon, φυτικόν (vegetative)	

The three higher characteristics separate man from the animal: the passional is that part of the soul in which resides courage, spirit, anger and the like, and is superior to the appetitive, the seat of the desires and affections; the expressive is connected with the power of speech and sound, and reminds one of the *vâch* or "voice" of the Upanishads; the vegetative is that connected with the great principle of the universe called "nature"

(φύσις) which has been described above and shown to be identical with the "astral" or subtle formative forces or envelope of the world.

The various "vehicles" (ὀχήματα) will be referred to later on, meantime the following from Macrobius (*Somnium*, I. xii. 63) will throw further light on Proclus: "The soul (says he) having fallen from the sphere of 'fixed stars' and the 'Milky Way' into the planetary spheres, develops, during its passage through them, a peculiar phase of motion [or consciousness] in each, which it will acquire as a permanent possession by due exercise: [thus it develops] in the sphere of Saturn reason and intellect (*ratiocinationem et intelligentiam*); in that of Jupiter the power of organization (*vim agendi*); in that of Mars passion (*animositatem*); in that of the Sun the power of feeling and believing (*sentiendi opinandique naturam*); in that of Venus the principle of desire (*desiderii motum*); in the sphere of Mercury, the power of expressing and interpreting sensation (*pronunciandi et interpretandi quæ sentiat*); finally it is exercised in the power of sowing and developing bodies

[the powers of generation and conception] on entering the lunar globe."

Macrobius, moreover, adds the original Greek technical terms, which give us the following table of the characteristics of planetary correspondences :

Saturn: rational (λογικόν) and contemplative (θεωρητικόν).

Jupiter: energetic or practical (πρακτικόν.)

Mars: passionate or courageous (θυμικόν.)

Sun: sensational and imaginative (αίσθητικόν, φανταστικόν).

Venus: desiderative (ἐπιθυμητικόν).

Mercury: interpretive (ἐρμηνευτικόν).

Moon: conceptive and generative (φυτικόν).

(See also Taylor's "Restoration of the Platonic Theology," appended to *Proclus on Euclid*, ii. 288 n.) Macrobius is supposed to have flourished at the beginning of the fifth century A.D., and therefore belongs to the generation prior to Proclus.

This passage of the soul through the planets is sometimes called the Ladder of Mithras (*Scala Mithraica*), or the Seven-gated Stairs (κλίμαξ ἐπτάπυλος).

Many other analogies are given, as for

instance between the planets and the members of the body, the constitution of the body and the elements, etc. But the most important teaching of the ancient psychology is that relating to the Subtle Body.

#### THE SUBTLE BODY.

For the following information I am to some extent indebted to texts cited in Cudworth's *Intellectual System* (iii. 506, *seqq.*, ed. 1820). Philoponus (*Proem. in Aristot. de An.*) tells us that the rational part of the soul can be separated from every kind of body, but the irrational part, although it is separable from the physical body, has another subtle vehicle which is called the "spirituous body" (*πνευματικὸν σῶμα*). The irrational principle does not owe its existence to the physical body, for when the soul quits the physical body, the irrational part still retains the "spirituous body" as its vehicle and substratum (*ὄχημα καὶ ὑποκείμενον*), terms which closely resemble the Vedântic technical expressions Deha and Upâdhi. This "spirituous body" is composed of the "elements," but in it is a predominance of the "element" "air," just as in the physical



body there is a predominance of "earth." It is therefore often called the aërial body. This is the body which passes into the invisible world after death. Thus the same Philoponus writes: "Our soul, after its exodus from the body, is believed, or rather is known, to go into the invisible world [Kâma Loka], there to pay the penalty for the evil of its past life. For providence (*ἡ πρόνοια*) is not only concerned with our being, but also with our well-being. And therefore a soul that has lapsed into a state contrary to its [true] nature [namely, earth-life] is not neglected, but meets with fitting care. And since error arose in it on account of the desire for pleasurable sensation, of necessity it must be purified by pain. . . . But if the soul is without body it could not suffer. . . . It is absolutely necessary, therefore, that it should have a kind of body attached to it. . . . This is the spirituous body of which we speak, and in it as a ground, as it were, are rooted the passional and sensational nature of the soul."

For if the soul were freed from these, it would be freed from generation, and be "carried up aloft to the higher celestial regions" (Devachan).

Philoponus then proceeds to explain spectres, phantoms, etc., by means of this subtle body. He further adds that we should abstain from a foul and gross diet, for the ancient sages affirm that "thereby this subtle body is densified and incrassated, and the soul rendered more sensible to the passions."

Of the next passage I give Cudworth's version, so that there may be no suspicion of twisting the text to suit any preconceived views.

"They further add, that there is something of a plantal and plastic life (*τῆς φυτικῆς ζωῆς*) also, exercised by the soul, in those spirituous or airy bodies after death; they being nourished too, though not after the same manner, as these gross earthly bodies of ours are here, but by vapours; and that not by parts or organs, but throughout the whole of them (as sponges) [endosmosis and exosmosis], they imbibing everywhere those vapours. For which cause, they who are wise will in this life also take care of using a thinner and dryer diet, that so that spirituous body (which we have also at this present time within our grosser body), may not be clogged and incrassated, but attenuated. Over and above which those ancients made

use of catharms, or purgations, to the same end and purpose also: for as this earthly body is washed by water, so is that spirituous body cleansed by cathartic vapours; some of these vapours being nutritive, others purgative. [This explains the symbolical purgations and purifications in the Mysteries.] Moreover, these ancients further declared concerning this spirituous body, that it was not organized, but did the whole of it, in every part throughout, exercise all functions of sense, the soul hearing and seeing, and perceiving all sensibles, by it everywhere. For which cause Aristotle affirmeth in his *Metaphysics* that there is properly but one sense, and but one sensory; he, by this one sensory, meaning the spirit, or subtile airy body, in which the sensitive power doth all of it, though the whole, immediately apprehend all variety of sensibles. And if it be demanded, how it comes then to pass, that this spirit appears organized in sepulchres, and most commonly of human form, but sometimes in the form of some other animals? to this those ancients replied: That their appearing so frequently in human form proceedeth from their being incassated with

evil diet, and then, as it were, stamped upon with the form of the exterior ambient body in which they are, as crystal is formed and coloured like to those things which it is fashioned in, or reflects the image of them; and that their having sometimes other different forms proceedeth from the fantastic power of the soul itself, which can at pleasure transform this spirituous body into any shape: for being airy, when it is condensed and fixed, it becometh visible; and again invisible; and vanishing out of sight, when it is expanded and rarefied."

The ancients further taught that the soul does not act directly upon the muscles, etc., of the body, but upon the "animal spirits" which are the "immediate instruments of sense and fancy"; and therefore Porphyry tells us (*De Ant. Nymph.*, pp. 257, 259) that "the blood is the food and nourishment of the spirit (that is, the subtle body called the animal spirits), and that this spirit is the vehicle of the soul."

But besides the physical and subtle bodies, there is yet another kind of body or vestment of a far higher order, "peculiarly belonging to such souls, . . . as are purged and cleansed

from corporeal affections, lusts and passions.”  
This brings us to speak of

#### THE AUGOEIDES.

The augoeides is described by the same Philoponus as follows :

The soul continues in its terrestrial body or in its aërial vehicle “until it has purified itself, and then it is carried aloft and is freed from generation. Then it is that it lays aside its passional and sensuous nature together with the spirituous vehicle. For there is besides this vehicle another which is eternally united with the soul [the Kârana Deha or “causal body” of the Vedântins], a heavenly body and therefore eternal [manvantaric], which they call the radiant or star-like body (*αὐγοειδὲς ἢ ἀστροειδὲς*). For the soul being of a mundane (or cosmic) nature, must necessarily have some allotment which it manages, seeing that it is part of the cosmos. And since it is ever in motion, and must continue in activity, it must always have a body attached to it, which it ever keeps alive. And so they declare that the soul has always [as long as it is in manifestation] a luciform or radiant body.”

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And so also Proclus (*Tim.*, p. 290): "The human soul has an ethereal vehicle (ὄχημα αἰθέριον) attached to it, as Plato tells us, affirming that the creator placed it in a vehicle (or chariot, ὄχημα). For necessarily every soul before these mortal bodies, uses eternal and rapidly moving vehicles, in that its very essence is motion." And again (*ibid.*, p. 164): "While we are on high we have no need of these divided organs, which we now have when descending into generation; but the radiant vehicle alone is sufficient, for it has all the senses united together in it."

Moreover Plato himself in his *Epinomis* writes of a good man after death: "I confidently assert, both in jest and in all seriousness, that such a one (if in death he have worked out his own destiny) will no longer have many senses as we have now, but will possess a uniform body, and so having become one from many will obtain happiness."

Hierocles in his Commentary (pp. 214, 215) on the Golden Verses of Pythagoras tells us that the Oracles call this augoeides the "subtle vehicle" of the soul (ψυχῆς λεπτὸν ὄχημα). The Oracles referred to are evidently the Chaldaic, and this is borne out by the fact that one of

the Oracles still preserved refers to the two subtle vestures of the soul, in their usual enigmatical fashion, as follows: "Do not soil the spirit nor turn the plane into the solid." The "spirit" is evidently the æry body and the "plane" (*ἐπίπεδον*) the luciform, for as we have learned above from the Pythagorean mathematics, the point generated the line, the line the plane or superficies, and the plane the solid. This is also the opinion of Psellus, who in his Commentary upon the Oracles writes: "The Chaldæans clothed the soul in two vestures; the one they called the spirituous, which is woven for it (as it were) out of the sensible body; the other the radiant, subtle and impalpable, which they called the plane." And this is a very appropriate term, for it signifies that it is not subject to the laws of solid bodies. Hierocles further asserts that this luciform body is the spiritual vehicle of the rational part of the soul, whereas the æry body is the vehicle of the irrational part; he therefore calls the former the pneumatic (*πνευματικόν*) and the latter the psychic body (*σῶμα ψυχικόν*), using the same nomenclature as Paul, the Christian (*1 Cor.*, xv. 44).

Synesius (*De Insomniis*, p. 140) calls the augoeides the "divine body" (θεσπέσιον σῶμα); and Virgil in his *Æneid* (vi.) speaks of it as the "pure ethereal sensory" (*purum . . . æthereum sensum*) and a "pure fiery breath" (*aurai simplicis ignem*).

But not only does the soul possess this luciform body after death, but also during life, and thus Suidas (*sub voc.*, αὐγοειδής) writes: "The soul possesses a luciform vehicle, which is also called the 'starlike' and the 'everlasting.' Some say that this radiant body is shut in this physical body, within the head." And this agrees with Hierocles (p. 214, ed. Needham), that "the augoeides is in our mortal physical body, inspiring life into the inanimate body, and containing the harmony thereof"—that is to say, it is the "causal body" or karmic vesture of the soul, in which its destiny or rather all the seeds of past causation are stored. This is the "thread-soul" as it is sometimes called, the "body" that passes over from one incarnation to another.

And just as the aërial or subtle body could be purified and separated from the physical body, so could the luciform or augoeides.



These purgations were of a very high character, and pertained to the telestic art and theurgy, as the same Hierocles informs us (*ibid.*). By this means the purification that takes place for the many after death, is accomplished by the few here in the body on earth, and they can separate the luciform vehicle from the lower vehicle, and be conscious of heavenly things while on earth. Therefore it is that Plato (*Phædo*, p. 378) defines "philosophy" as "a continual exercise of dying"—that is to say, firstly, a moral dying to corporeal lusts and passions, and secondly, consciously and voluntarily passing through all the states of consciousness while still alive which the soul must pass through after death.

Thus there are four classes of virtues: the political or practical, pertaining to the gross body; the purifying, pertaining to the subtle body; the intellectual or spiritual, pertaining to the causal body; and the contemplative, pertaining to the supreme at-one-ment, or union with God. Thus Porphyry in his *Auxiliaries* (ii.) writes:

"He who energizes according to the practical virtues is a worthy man; but he who energizes

according to the purifying (cathartic) virtues is an angelic man, or is also a good demon. He who energizes according to the intellectual virtues alone is a god, but he who energizes according to the paradeigmatic virtues is the father of gods." (Compare *Porphyry the Philosopher to his Wife Marcella*, by Miss Alice Zimmern, pp. 40, 41; compare also the opening paragraphs of Marinus' *Life of Proclus* and Plotinus, *En.*, II. ii., "On the Virtues.")

This luciform body is the root of individuality (*individuitatis principium*) for just as the Egyptians taught that every entity consisted of an "essence" and an "envelope" (see "The Vestures of the Soul" in my collection of Essays entitled *The World Mystery*), so Hierocles (p. 120) tells us that "the rational essence, together with its cognate vehicle, came into existence from the creator, in such a fashion that it is neither itself body nor without body; and though it is incorporeal yet its whole nature (*εἶδος*) is limited by a body."

He therefore defines the real man (p. 212) as a rational soul with a cognate immortal body, or envelope (compare with this the symbology of the Orphic Egg, *supra*), and calls the enlivened

physical body the "image of the man" (εἶδωλον ἀνθρώπου). Moreover, he further asserts that the former is true of all other rational beings in the universe below Deity and above man. This then is the nature of the daimones (angels), the difference between daimones and men being that the former are "lapsable into ærial bodies only, and no further; but the latter into terrestrial also." (Porphyry, *De Abstin.*, ii. § 38.)

Finally Hierocles asserts that this was the genuine doctrine and sacred science of the Pythagoreans and Plato; and Proclus tells us that the line of teaching came originally through Orpheus. From the above I think it is abundantly apparent that those who followed the tradition of Orpheus were the sternest of moralists and the most practical of mystics, possessing a true knowledge of the sacred science of the soul, and teaching a psychology that will stand the test of the most searching experiment in our own and in all times. I speak here only of the genuine followers of the science, not of the many impostors and charlatans who preyed upon the refuse flung outside its shrines.

Further information concerning the vehicles

of the soul according to the Platonic psychology may be derived from the Commentary of Proclus on the *Timæus* (Book v., see Taylor's Trans., ii. 393, *sq.*, 416 *sq.*, and 436 *sq.*). The following (pp. 416, 417) is the most important passage.

“Souls in descending, receive from the elements different vehicles, aerial, aquatic, and terrestrial; and thus at last enter into this gross bulk. For how, without a medium, could they proceed into this body from immaterial spirits? Hence before they come into this body they possess the irrational life, and its vehicle, which is prepared from the simple elements, and from these they become invested with *tumult*, [or the genesiurgic body,] which is so called as being foreign to the con-nate vehicle of souls, and as composed of all-various vestments, and causing souls to become heavy.

“The word *adhering* likewise, manifests the external circumposition of a vehicle of such a kind as that of which he is speaking, and the colligation to the one nature contained in it; after which this last body, consisting of things dissimilar and multiform, is suspended from souls. For how is it possible, that the descent

should be [immediately] from a life which governs the whole world, to the most partial form of life? For this particular and indivisible outward man cannot be connected with the universe, but a prior descent into a medium between the two is entirely necessary; which medium is not a certain animal, but the supplier of many lives. For the descent does not directly produce the life of a certain man, but prior to this and prior to the generation of an individual, it produces the life of [universal] man. And as the lapse is from that which is incorporeal into body, and a life with body, according to which the soul lives in conjunction with its celestial vehicle; so from this the descent is into a genesiurgic body, according to which the soul is in generation; and from this into a terrestrial body, according to which it lives with the testaceous body. Hence, before it is surrounded with this last body, it is invested with a body which connects it with all generation. And on this account, it then leaves this body, when it leaves generation. But if this be the case, it then received it, when it came into generation. It came, however, into generation prior to its lapse into this

last body. Hence, prior to this last body it received that vehicle, and retains the latter after the dissolution of the former. It lives, therefore, in this vehicle through the whole of the genesiurgic period. On this account Plato calls *the adhering tumult*, the irrational form of life in this vehicle; and not that which adheres to the soul in each of its incarnations, as being that which circularly invests it from the first. The connascent vehicle [Kâraṇa Sharîra] therefore makes the soul to be mundane [cosmic]; the second vehicle [Sukshma Sharîra] causes it to be a citizen of generation; and the testaceous vehicle [Sthûla Sharîra] makes it to be terrestrial. And as the life of souls is to the whole of generation, and the whole of generation to the world, so are vehicles to each other. With respect to the circumposition also of the vehicles, one is perpetual and always mundane [cosmic]; another is prior to this outward body, and posterior to it; for it is both prior to, and subsists posterior to it, in generation; and a third is then only, when it lives a certain partial life on the earth. Plato, therefore, by using the term *adhering*, and by suspending the irrational nature from

the soul, according to all its lives, distinguishes this irrational nature from this outward body, and the peculiar life of it. But by adding the words *externally* and *afterwards*, he distinguishes it from the connascent vehicle in which the Demiurgus made it to descend. Hence, this vehicle which causes the soul to be a citizen of generation, is a medium between both."

And now it is time to bring this essay to a conclusion. It has been a labour of love undertaken out of gratitude to the ancients, and in memory of the past; and perhaps no more useful subject could be chosen to bring the task to an end than the doctrine of rebirth—a law of nature by virtue of which the ancients and their ideas once more return to leaven the materialization in modern philosophy, science and religion.

## X.—THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH.

### THE BODY IS THE PRISON OF THE SOUL.

TOGETHER with all the adherents of the Mysteries in every land the Orphics believed in reincarnation.

Now Plato in the *Cratylus* gives the following mystical word-play of the term body (σῶμα): “According to some the body is the sepulchre (σῆμα) of the soul, which they consider as buried in the present life; and also because whatever the soul signifies it signifies by the body; so that on this account it is properly called a sepulchre (σῆμα). [The word σῆμα also connotes the means whereby anything is signified. This reminds us of the Linga Sharîra of the Vedântins—Linga meaning sign, token, etc.] And indeed the followers of Orpheus seem to me to have established this name, principally because the soul suffers in body the punishment of its guilt, and is



surrounded with this enclosure that it may preserve the image of a prison." (*Plato's Works*, Taylor, v. 513.)

The Phrygians in their Mysteries called the soul imprisoned in the body the "dead." The writer of the Naasenian School of Gnosticism, quoted by Hippolytus (*Philosophumena*, v. 6), tells us: "The Phrygians also call it the 'dead,' inasmuch as it is in a tomb and sepulchre buried in the body. This, he says, is what is written: 'Ye are whited sepulchres, filled within with the bones of the dead' [*cf. Matth.*, xxiii. 27]—for the 'living man' is not in you. And again: 'The "dead" shall leap forth from the tombs' [*cf. Matth.*, xxvii. 52, 53; xi. 5; *Luke*, vii. 22]. That is to say, from their earthly bodies regenerated spiritual men, not fleshly. For this (he says) is the resurrection which takes place through the Gate of the Heavens, and they who pass not through it all remain dead."

On the above passage of Plato, Taylor adds an interesting note (*op. cit.*, *ibid.*), from which we learn that Heraclitus, speaking of unembodied souls, says: "We live their death, and we die their life." And Empedocles, speaking

of "generation," the equivalent of the Brâhmanical and Buddhist Sansâra, or the wheel of rebirth, writes: "She makes the 'living' pass into the 'dead'"; and again, lamenting his imprisonment in the corporeal world, he calls it an "unaccustomed realm."

#### THE SOUL IS PUNISHED IN THE BODY.

Again, the Pythagorean Philolaus (cited by Clemens Alex., *Strom.*, iii.) writes: "The ancient theologians and initiates also testify that the soul is united with body for the sake of suffering punishment; and that it is buried in body, as in a sepulchre." And Pythagoras himself (cited by the same Clement) assures us that: "Whatever we see when awake is death, and when asleep a dream." Real life is in neither of these states.

And so Taylor in his *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries* (Wilder's ed., pp. 8, *et seq.*) shows us that: "The ancients by Hades signified nothing more than the profound union of the soul with the present body; and consequently, that till the soul separated herself by philosophy from such a ruinous conjunction, she subsisted in Hades even in the present life; her punishment

hereafter being nothing more than a continuation of her state upon earth, and a transmigration, as it were, from sleep to sleep, and from dream to dream: and this, too, was occultly signified by the shows of the lesser mysteries."

Cicero also, referring to Orpheus and his successors, says (in Hortensio, Frag., p. 60): "The ancients, whether they were seers or interpreters of the divine mind in the tradition of the sacred initiations, seem to have known the truth, when they affirmed that we were born into the body to pay the penalty for sins committed in a former life (*vita superiore*)."

Augustine also (*De Civitate Dei*, XXII. xxviii.) writes: "Certain of the gentiles have asserted that in the rebirth of men there is what the Greeks call palingenesis [*παλιγγενεσίαν*—Sansk. Punarjanman]." He further adds that "they taught that there was a conjunction of the same soul and [? subtle] body in four hundred and forty years."

But according to Plato (*Phædo*, and *Republic*, X.) the average time that elapsed between two births was a thousand years. Virgil (*Æn.*, vi. 758) gives the same period.

Olympiodorus in his Scholion on Plato's

*Phædo* (p. 70 c; cf. Gesner, *Frag. Orph.*, p. 510) says that: "There is an archaic teaching of the Orphic and Pythagorean tradition which brings souls into bodies and takes them out of bodies, and this repeatedly and in a cycle."

#### THE PAST BIRTHS OF PYTHAGORAS.

Now Diogenes Laërtius (*Vit. Pythag.*, viii. 14) asserts that "he (Pythagoras) was reported to have been the first [of the Greeks, Orpheus not being a Greek] to teach the doctrine that the soul passing through the 'circle of necessity' (κύκλον ἀνάγκης) was bound at various times to various living bodies."

In fact the same writer tells us (viii. 4-6) that Pythagoras had given the details of some of his former births to his disciples.

That he had been (1) in Argonautic times Æthalides, the "son of Mercury," that is an initiate; that in that birth he had gained the power of retaining his memory through the intermediate state between two lives. This he obtained as a boon from Mercury (his Initiator or Master), who had offered him any power short of immortality (ἀθανασία)—the supreme initiation.

He next was almost immediately reincarnated in (2) Euphorbus. In that birth he was wounded by Menelaus at the Siege of Troy, and so died. In that life he asserted that he had previously been Æthalides, and further taught the doctrine of reincarnation, and explained the course of the "soul" after death, and, in his own case, to what species of the vegetable and animal kingdoms it had been temporarily attached—*περιεγέβετο* (or rather in contact with, as far as the alchemical transmutation of the physical body was concerned), and also the post-mortem state (*Kâma Loka*) both of his own soul and that of others.

He then incarnated in (3) Hermotimus. In this birth he went on a pilgrimage to the famous temple of Apollo at Branchidæ—on the Ionian sea-coast, a little south of Miletus—but Ovid (*Metamorph.*, xv.) says to the temple of Juno at Argos, and Tertullian (*De Anim.*) to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, and there pointed out the shield which he carried as Euphorbus, and which Menelaus had hung up in the temple as a dedicatory offering. The shield had by that time rusted to pieces, and nothing but the carved ivory face on the boss remained.

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In his next birth he was (4) Pyrrhus, a Delian fisherman, and still retained the memory of his past births. Finally he was reincarnated as Pythagoras.

Hieronimus (*Apol. ad Rufinum*), however, gives another tradition, which recites the births of the great Samian as (1) Euphorbus, (2) Callides, (3) Hermotimus, (4) Pyrrhus, (5) Pythagoras.

Porphyry (*Vit. Pythag.*) agrees with Laërtius, and Aulus Gellius (IV. xi.) adds to Porphyry's list (5) Pyrandrus, (6) Callidas, and (7) Alce, a most beautiful woman of easy virtue. Whereas the Scholiast on Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica*, i.; see Observations of Ægidius Menagius on Diogenes Laërtius, p. 349, Amsterdam ed., 1618) tells us concerning Æthalides that "the Pythagoreans assert that this Æthalides, his soul being indestructible, lived again in Trojan times as Euphorbus, son of Pantus. Subsequently he was born as Pyrrhus, the Cretan; and afterwards as a certain Elius, whose name is unknown. And finally he became Pythagoras."

Such seems to have been the mixed report that got abroad from the indiscreet revelations

of the disciples of the great teacher. They had better have said all or said nothing.

OTHER INSTANCES OF PREVIOUS LIVES OF  
"INITIATES."

In Philostratus' *Life of Apollonius* we also find a few references to the past births of several ancient sages. For instance (I. i.), Empedocles (fifth century, B.C.) declares: "I was formerly a young girl." Iarchas, the "chief of the Brâhmans," tells Apollonius that he was formerly a great monarch, named Ganga, at a time when the "Æthiopians" (? Atlanteans) occupied India, and that his body in that birth was ten cubits high. At the same time he pointed out a young Hindu who, he averred, had formerly been Palamedes in Trojan times, and who knew how to write without ever having learned the art (III. xx.-xxii.).

Iarchas (xxiii.) then proceeded to tell his Grecian guest that he saw that he (Apollonius) had been in a former birth the captain of an Egyptian vessel. Apollonius replied that that was true, and added some interesting details.

Julian the Emperor believed that he was

a reincarnation of the soul of Alexander the Great.

Finally Marinus (*Vit. Procli*) tells us that Proclus was persuaded that he had been Nichomachus, the Pythagorean, in a former birth.

#### THE WHEEL OF LIFE.

The wheel of life, referred to by Pythagoras, is called by Proclus (*Tim.*, i. 32) the "cycle of generation" (*κύκλος τῆς γενέσεως*), Orpheus himself naming it the "wheel," while Simplicius (*De Cælo*, ii. 91, c) says that it was symbolized by the wheel of Ixion, and adds, "he was bound by God to the wheel of fate and of generation." And Proclus (*Tim.*, v. 330) writes that: "There is but one way of escape for the soul from the cycle of generation, namely, to turn itself from its pilgrimage in generation, and to hasten to its spiritual prototype . . . as Orpheus says, 'to cease from the cycle and gain breathing space from evil.'"

#### OF METENSOMATOSIS.

Plotinus also (*En.*, I. xii.) makes the following emphatic declaration concerning reincarnation:



“It is a universally admitted belief that the soul commits sins, expiates them, undergoes punishment in the invisible world, and passes into new bodies.” He further states (*En.*, IV. ix.): “There are two modes of a soul entering a body; one when the soul being already in a body, undergoes metempsychosis (*μετεμψωμάτωσις*) that is to say, passes from an ærian or igneous body into a physical body . . .; the other when a soul passes from an incorporeal state into a body of a certain kind.”

#### OF THE TENET, IN THE MYSTERIES.

Now in the Mysteries, the doctrine of reincarnation was fully and scientifically expounded. Thus we find Plutarch (*De Esu Carn.*, Or. i. 7, 240, T. xiii.) declaring that the whole story of Bacchus and his being torn in pieces by the Titans, and their subsequent destruction by Jupiter, was “a sacred narrative concerning reincarnation” (*μῦθος εἰς τὴν παλιγγε- νεσίαν*).

Again the Rape of Proserpine, which was also one of the dramatic representations of the lesser mysteries, “signifies the descent of souls” (*Sallust, De Diis et Mundo*, iv.).

As to the popular superstition that it was possible for the soul to reincarnate in an animal, the true teaching of the Mysteries on this point is set forth clearly and plainly by Proclus. It refers to one aspect of the intermediate state of the irrational part of the soul between two births. Therefore we find him writing: "True reason asserts that the human soul may be lodged in brutes, *yet in such a manner, as that it may obtain its own proper life,* and that the degraded soul may, as it were, be carried above it and be bound to the baser nature by a propensity and similitude of affection. And that this is the only mode of insinuation we have proved by a multitude of arguments, in our Commentaries on the *Phædrus*." (Proclus, *Theol. Plat.*, Taylor, p. 7, Introd.) For Hermes, expounding the teaching of the Egyptian Mysteries, asserts in unmistakable terms that the human soul can never return to the body of an animal (Com. of Chalcidius on *Timæus*, ed. Fabric., p. 350; but see my *Plotinus*, pp. 32 sq.).

#### THE PSYCHOPOMP.

The presiding deity of rebirth was Hermes, the psychopomp, or leader of souls. Thus

Proclus (*Comment. on First Alcibiades*) writes : "Hermes governs the different herds of souls, and disperses the sleep and oblivion with which they are oppressed. He is likewise the supplier of recollection, the end of which is a genuine intellectual apprehension of divine natures." This is the "eternal memory" or "heart-memory"; and thus Hermes is appropriately said to have given this boon to Æthalides as narrated above.

#### OF LIBERATION.

Finally Porphyry, in his *Auxiliaries to the Perception of Intelligibles*, admirably sets forth the mode of liberation from the cycle of rebirth as follows: "That which nature binds, nature also dissolves: and that which the soul binds, the soul likewise dissolves. Nature, indeed, bound the body to the soul; but the soul binds herself to the body. Nature, therefore, liberates the body from the soul; but the soul liberates herself from the body. . . . Hence there is a twofold death; the one, indeed, universally known, in which the body is liberated from the soul; but the other peculiar to philosophers [initiates], in which

the soul is liberated from the body. Nor does the one entirely follow the other." This is further explained by Taylor (*Myst. Hymns*, p. 162, n.) who writes: "Though the body, by the death which is universally known, may be loosened from the soul, yet while material passions and affections reside in the soul, the soul will continually verge to another body, and as long as this inclination continues, remain connected with body."

Such is a very bare outline of the great doctrine of rebirth, on which many volumes could be written. I have only attempted to set down a few points, to show what were the views of the genuine philosophers and mystics of the ancient Orphic tradition, and how similar they are to the modern exposition of the tenet. Much more information could be added, but the subject would then have to be treated separately and not as merely subordinate to the general subject of Orphic theology.

#### CONCLUSION.

My task is done and my small skiff launched. That it is imperfect and unworthy of so precious a burden of ancient treasure, no one

is better aware than myself. But such as it is, I commit it to the troubled sea of modern thought, hoping that a favourable current may carry it to some few who can value the freight at its true worth. In the construction of my skiff I have mainly combined the researches of Lobeck, who was a scholar and no mystic, with the writings of Taylor, who was half scholar, half mystic, and cemented all together with some information derived from H. P. Blavatsky, who was a mystic and no scholar. I write as a man convinced that the Mysteries have not gone from the earth, but still exist and have their genuine adherents and initiators; in the fervent hope that some, at least, who read, will not be unmindful of the past, and with the certain knowledge that a few actually possess a full memory of that past which the many have, for a time, forgotten.



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