

THE DIONYSIAN  
ARTIFICERS

By

Hippolyto Joseph da Costa

With an Introductory Essay  
on the Myth of Dionysius

by

MANLY P. HALL



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# PREFACE

The *Sketch for the History of the Dionysian Artificers* by Hippolyto Joseph da Costa is probably the rarest of all Masonic monographs. The author, of whom comparatively little is known, evidently planned the preparation of a considerable volume, but the larger work, if actually written, never saw print. The monograph was published in London in 1820 and copies of it have become so scarce that not one has appeared upon the market for the last twenty years. This reprint is made possible through the courtesy of the Masonic Grand Lodge Library at Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The theme behind da Costa's work is an attempt to prove that modern Freemasonry derives its origin from the philosophical and religious associations of the ancient Greeks. The Dionysian Artificers were a corporation of men practicing the science of architectonics, at the same time practicing certain secret rites and rituals, and divided into grades and communities under officers of varying ranks.

The early landmarks of Freemasonry are so few and scattered that Masonic historians have great difficulty in tracing their order earlier than the European Guilds. Da Costa felt that the Dionysian Architects of Greece and the Near East were the rightful and lawful progenitors of the modern Craft. His work, though brief, is so thoroughly annotated as to be

an extremely valuable and comprehensive outline of the opinions of ancient authors on this important subject.

As an introduction to Da Costa's book, I have prepared an interpretation of the central myth of the Dionysian Mysteries, the purpose being to supplement Da Costa's *Sketch* with some explanation of the secret metaphysical doctrines peculiar to this cult. I have not failed to distinguish the difference between the Dionysian Mysteries of the Greeks and the Dionysian Artificers of later centuries. It seems to me, however, that nothing short of an extraordinary philosophy could have inspired the Dionysian artisans in the worship of the Great Architect of the Universe through the medium of architecture.

The Dionysian cult must be regarded as the most important factor in the development of Western religion. So high and noble a doctrine would certainly have inspired a group of earnest and initiated persons to attempt, through the geometrical symbolism of architecture, to perpetuate those esoteric secrets which had descended to them from the long line of initiates who had gone before.

The two most important symbols in the Dionysian cult were the bunch of grapes and the theatre. Young Dionysius appears with bunches of grapes hanging in his hair and the Bacchanti wave wands bound round with leaves and tendrils of the vine. The theatre of Dionysius was the beginning of drama. Sacred pageantries enacted for the initiated, first in groves, then in specially prepared buildings, gave rise to all the diversity of the modern stage which has long forgotten its kinship with the sacred arts.

The explanation of this symbolism lies in one important fact—the keynote of the Dionysian cult. Dionysius was the



god of Ecstasy. He taught an inward spiritual experience. His rituals were devised to lift man from the commonplace into a divine state where he was completely detached from the bondage of mortal thought and action. The ecstasy of the Dionysians was similar to that described in the stories of the Christian saints like St. Francis of Assisi who lived only for those moments of union with the mystical eternal within. The grape was the symbol of ecstasy. It produced what to the ancients seemed to be a release from temporal conditions. They called it the vine of ecstasy and used it with the same religious significance that the Christian uses the Communion Cup. The grape was the symbol of universal consciousness. As it says in the Bible: he who drinks it remembers his troubles no more. The grape therefore was accepted as the negative symbol of a spiritual transformation occurring within the individual himself. The true wine of the Dionysians was not from the vine that grows in the ground but it was Dionysius himself, the living vine whose life in them was the soul of ecstasy.

The Dervishes and Sufis of Islam talk of their cups and their winebibbing and Omar, who probably never drank a drop in his life, constantly writes of the forgetfulness that rests in the vine. Dionysius was the Vine of God, and Jesus uses the same analogy, referring to himself as a vine. Ecstasy is described by the Sufis as being intoxicated with God. Some of the old mystics have written of the overwhelming experience that comes in meditation and prayer. Religious ecstasy is realizing the universal—the individual momentarily partaking of the whole life of the world. This was the strange experience of the Dionysian rites. It was the human soul's approach to the divine which resulted in the individual being completely overwhelmed by the divine as it flowed through

him. The cup of ecstasy was the Dionysian chalice of initiation.

The theatre was devised for almost an identical purpose. It became the basis of the universal experience. The person viewing the play forgot himself and became part of what he saw. The way of self-forgetfulness is essentially Dionysian. Man, perceiving divine dramas portrayed before him, became himself for a time a resident of Olympus. When he beheld the wise, the noble and the true, dramatically presented to his senses, he partook of these virtues temporarily at least and departed from the theatre feeling as though he was part of the spiritual world that had been portrayed there. This inner experience of the individual becoming something else besides himself was a psychological experience which led to ultimate universalization. The Dionysian doctrine taught escape from the little by outgrowing it, by rising above it. By realizing the gods within, man becomes filled with his realization. The realization is so noble, so beautiful, so transcendent in every way, that the realization itself leads finally to ecstasy.

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*MANLY P. HALL*



*Dionysius the Divine Self*

# THE MYTH OF DIONYSIUS



IN the beginning, according to Damascius, was Unaging Time, the First Principle of the universe. This Ineffable Cause manifested two qualities within the ample profundity of its own nature. These qualities are denominated by the Orphics Æ-

ther and Chaos. Æther is the mighty whirlpool of cosmic energy, described as a serpentine force in the Chaldean Oracles. Chaos is primordial undifferentiated substance. Together Æther and Chaos are spirit and matter and by their strivings the Cosmic Egg was formed.

The Orphic Egg was Being itself, the first-born of unpassing Time. From the great misty whirling Egg of the world came forth luminous, winged Phanes—Universal Mind. Phanes is described by Orpheus as “a God without 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." Phanes, the first-born of Space, differentiates from his own essence great Mother Night, the darkness that comes into being by the manifestation of light. Upon immortal Night, Phanes the Protogonus bestows the rulership of the world. Uranus, or heaven, is the child of Night and succeeds his mother as the Lord of the Cosmic Order. Uranus unites with the spiritual body of the earth and a strange progeny results from this union. Earth is the mother of the Titans, the chief of whom is Chronos or Saturn. The Titans revolt against Uranus, dismember him, Saturn seizing the Olympian throne. Saturn devours his own sons but his consort, the goddess Rhea, by a subterfuge, saves the life of the infant Zeus or Jupiter. Later Zeus ascends the universal throne by destroying the power of his own father Saturn. Thus the royal line of the divinities begins with Phanes, the offspring of Space, and descends through Night, Uranus, Saturn and Jupiter, to finally end with Dionysius, the beloved son of Jupiter and the Messianic deity of the Greeks.

Athenagoras writes that Zeus, having dethroned Saturn, desired to marry his own mother. She, to escape his overtures, changed her form into that of a snake. Zeus also assumed a serpent form and bound Rhea with the noose of Hercules. From the union of Zeus and Rhea was born the goddess Persephone or Kore who is described as horned, with two heads, and four eyes. The caduceus of Hermes represents the union of Zeus and Rhea in the form of two serpents. Later Zeus, again assuming a serpentine form, consorts with his own daughter Persephone in a cavern of Sicily, and his son by this union was horned Zagreus or Dionysius.



Zeus centered all of his affections upon his divine son. Even as an infant Dionysius was seated on his father's throne and in his tiny hand was placed the great sceptre that ruled the world. Zeus even permitted his little son to cast the great thunderbolts and hurl the lightnings.

Hera or Juno, the sister-wife of Zeus and mistress of the laws of the mundane sphere, fearful and jealous of the power of Dionysius, early conspired for his destruction. With the aid of the Titans, who were envious of the Jupiterian power, she cunningly contrived the death of the infant god. The playground of Dionysius was the broad field of space filled with worlds and softly blowing clouds. Here with the toys given to him by Zeus the child god spent his early years in constant joy. The playthings of Dionysius are described in the Orphic traditions as a dice, winged wheels, a spinning top, a ball, the apples from the Hesperides, and a fleece.

The Titans, gathering the substances of space, formed them into a great mirror, so perfectly burnished by Hephaestos that it reflected the whole world. The Titans, who had smeared their faces with gypsum that they might not be recognized, contrived to introduce the mirror of illusion among the playthings of Dionysius. Looking into the mirror, the young god, being in the sixth year of his life, beheld his own likeness for the first time. Beholding a radiant and beautiful child in the reflection, Dionysius desired him for a playmate and tried to reach through the mirror to grasp his own reflection. The Titans, perceiving that their artifice had succeeded, kept moving the mirror away until they had lured Dionysius to the furthest extremity of the mundane diffusion, and then they fell upon the young god and slew him. Too late Dionysius became aware of their evil motive. Vainly he sought



to escape them by his magic powers. First he turned himself into the form of the youthful Zeus, then he changed into an aged Chronos. Quickly his appearance altered. He was a baby, then a youth, a lion, a horse, a horned snake, a tiger, and lastly a bull. It was in the form of the bull that he finally died.

Hera, perceiving that her plot was succeeding, enticed Zeus from his great tower of vigilance that his all-seeing eye might not behold the crime. After they had destroyed the body of Dionysius the Titans sought a device to conceal their crime. As there was no way in which they could dispose of the body, they resolved to devour it that none might ever discover their evil deed. The Titans therefore dismembered the bull form body of Dionysius, first boiling the parts in water, and then broiling them over a fire. On high Olympus, Zeus became aware of the odor of cooking flesh and his great eye sought out the cause. Looking down he beheld the Titans devouring the body of his son. He immediately dispatched Athena or Minerva who, swooping down from the heavens, caught up the heart of Dionysius before it had been consumed and brought it to the feet of Zeus. High Heaven then hurled his thunders at the giants, great bolts of lightning brought death to the Titanic conspirators. As the tempest of the wrath of Zeus at last subsided only the charred bodies of the murderers remained.

It was from the ashes of the Titans that the race of man was formed, their bodies molded from the burned remains of the giants. With these ashes were also mingled the blood and body of Dionysius, so that all men contain within their fabric the substance of the Titans and the essence of the divine child. Zeus took the heart of Dionysius back to himself again, re-

storing the Dionysian principle to his own essence, to await the time when he could devise a way to send it forth again for the perfection of mankind.

A great time passes and the scene changes from heaven to earth. Zeus, assuming the form of a bull<sup>1</sup>, abducted Europa. Agenor, her father, dispatched his son Cadmus in search of the lost maiden. Agenor told Cadmus not to return without Europa on pain of death. As no mortal could outwit celestial Zeus, Cadmus failed in his search and, fearing to return to his own country, consulted an oracle as to the proper course of his future action. The oracle bade the young man "be observant and when he should see a cow to follow the animal and wherever it stopped to rest to build a city and name it Thebes." Following the instructions exactly, Cadmus blessed the ground where the cow rested and prepared a libation to his patron goddess Minerva. It was on the site of the proposed city that he slew the great serpent sacred to the god Ares (Mars). After he had killed the monster Cadmus, obeying the instructions of Minerva his patron deity, sowed the teeth of the dragon in the earth and there grew up immediately an army of soldiers. At first these sons of Mars appeared as though they were about to attack Cadmus, but, obeying divine instruction, he hurled a rock among them and they fell upon one another in civil strife. At the end of the battle but five of the warriors remained alive and these survivors of the army of the serpent's teeth united with Cadmus to build the sacred city of Thebes with its seven gates.

Cadmus is a mysterious person believed by some of the earlier mythologists to be identical with the Egyptian Hermes and by others with the patriarch Noah. His name is from the Phœnician *Cadm* which means East and he may be in-

terpreted to represent not a person at all, but the Eastern Wisdom Teaching itself which came out of Asia and established the Grecian civilization, represented by a city with seven gates.

According to the continuation of the myth, Cadmus married Harmonia, a maiden of great beauty and virtue, that is, wisdom is united to all that is harmonious, peaceful and virtuous in the world. Five children resulted from this union, representing the five elements, the five senses, and the five rational powers of the soul. The first and most fortunate of these children was Semele, a personification of the Great Mother, devoted to the service of the gods, and like the immaculate mothers of all Messiahs, a virgin of the temple. Zeus, beholding her, resolved that she should be the mother of the reborn Dionysius.

There are several accounts of the myth by which the divine child was conceived. One of the most unusual describes how Zeus sent to Semele the heart of his son powdered in wine. Thus by an immaculate conception the light of the world was born again of a virgin mother. But Juno was not finished with her conspiring. She took the form of old Beroe, Semele's Epidaurian nurse, and in this guise succeeded in implanting doubts in Semele's mind concerning the father of her unborn child. Juno, as Beroe, explained to Semele that if she were indeed the bride of Zeus she should demand as proof that the god appear to her in all his Olympian splendor. Semele listened to the evil advice and when Zeus next came to her in mortal form she demanded of him a favor. Zeus promised to grant her any wish and she bound him to his word by the great oath of the river Styx. Semele then demanded that the father of the gods should come to her in all his heavenly

glory. Zeus implored her not to demand this of him but she insisted and the given oath could not be broken. Bowed with sorrow, Zeus then returned to the Olympian Mount and vested himself in the mildest of his splendors. He did not don the great vestments of his terrors with which he shattered the giants, but only the simpler robes known among his attendant gods as the lesser panoply of power.

Zeus thus arrayed descended from the heights in a chariot of luminous flame surrounded by vast circles of fire and blazing with the splendor of the Æons. The vibrant glory of Zeus destroyed the house of Semele, the walls of the city were shaken, tongues of flame darted in every direction, and Semele was entirely consumed by the heavenly fire. The flames would have accomplished a still greater damage had not a miracle occurred. The pillars of the fallen house were suddenly covered by grape and ivy leaves and the whole ruin was immediately hidden by a thick, fire-resisting foliage.

Zeus, perceiving the disaster, immediately changed his form and gently sought among the ruins for the body of Semele. Having discovered it he rescued therefrom his still living, unborn son. Zeus then made for the child an artificial womb in his own thigh wherein Sabazius fastened the infant with golden clasps. Dionysius remained in the thigh of Zeus for two months to complete the period of gestation. During this period Zeus is said to have walked with a limp because he was pricked by the child's horns.

Having completed the prenatal period, Dionysius was delivered upon a fawnskin and bears the epithet Bimater because he was twice born. Zeus then entrusted the education of his child to Hermes or Mercury who carried Dionysius far from



the plotting of the Olympian court to the mysterious garden of Nysa in Arabia the happy. In the midst of this garden was a great hill or mountain called Meros. Here the infant Dionysius fed upon lion's milk and grew up to manhood, cared for and tutored by the Nysæan nymphs and other mysterious creatures of the elements. Among his companions were the dryads and satyrs and he taught them the divine songs and dances. Among the preceptors of young Dionysius there were none more doting and indulgent than old Silenus, the most aged of the satyrs and the rotund deity of pleasure. In Roman art obese, jovial Silenus, riding tipsily upon an ass's back, is often confused with Bacchus. Zeus variously rewarded the guardians and tutors of his son. The Nysæan nymphs were placed by Zeus among the constellations and are called the Hyades by modern astronomy. Silenus received worship suitable to a demigod.

Juno continued her efforts to destroy Dionysius. He journeyed from place to place to escape her plottings. On one occasion she sent an Amphisbaena, a two-headed serpent, to destroy him in sleep. Awaking in time he killed the reptile with a vine twig. Juno then struck the young god with madness. Deprived of his reason Dionysius wandered about the world for years. At last his sanity was restored by initiation into the Phrygian Rites of Cybele the Great Mother.

The greatest among the exploits of Dionysius was his expedition to India. This journey required three years. Silenus and other superphysical creatures accompanied him, and as he travelled gods and heroes, priests and worshippers joined him until a great procession moved across the surface of the earth. In terms of modern geography, his expedition started in Egypt and his course was first Northwest through what is now Spain



*Silenus and the Infant Dionysius*



and Portugal. He then turned back through North Africa to Ethiopia, crossed the Red Sea, traversed the Near East, and finally came to Asia proper where the journey continued until he reached the source of the Ganges river. Here he caused two great pillars to be erected bearing upon them the record that the expedition had reached the extremity of the habitable world. For the most part, the journey made by Dionysius was a peaceful one, but on one occasion he was opposed by an Indian army mounted upon elephants. On this occasion Silenus saved the expedition, for it is said that the braying of his ass stampeded the elephants. In honor of this the animal was raised to heaven and became a constellation after its death. Having conquered the world with his cult, Dionysius returned to his own city, seven-gated Thebes.

*The Bacchi* of Euripides describes the fate of Pentheus, king of Thebes and grandson of Cadmus by his daughter Agave. Cadmus, though still alive, being of great age and philosophic mind, and having no male heir, had given the kingdom to his daughter's son. When Dionysius reached Thebes he discovered that his mother's memory had been hardly used. The divine origin of her son was denied and she was regarded as the victim of some ardent but dishonorable suitor. When the people of Thebes learned of the approach of Dionysius and his company of Bacchi, they went forth joyfully to meet him, despite the remonstrances of Pentheus who was determined that the new cult should find no place in his kingdom. The king became more and more violent in his antipathy. He demanded that Dionysius be brought to him in chains and despatched soldiers and attendants to effect his capture. Dionysius at first evaded them but one of his followers was taken and brought bound before the king. Pentheus threatened him

with all forms of punishment and demanded of the captive the story of his life and the reason why he was addicted to the Dionysian orgies. The prisoner, who had preserved a dignified poise, explained that he was Acetes of Mæonia, a pilot by profession. One day his ship stopped at the island of Dia for a supply of fresh water. The sailors, returning to the vessel, brought with them a noble and beautiful youth, whom they had found sleeping on the shore. The seamen decided first to hold the young man for ransom but afterwards changed their minds and determined to sell him into slavery in Egypt. Acetes was suspicious of the whole transaction. He felt a mysterious power about the youth and remonstrated with the deity in disguise. "Naxos is my home," explained the beautiful prisoner. "Take me there and you shall be rewarded." The sailors agreed but headed the ship in the opposite direction. Just before they reached Egypt a miracle occurred. The vessel suddenly stopped in mid-ocean and neither sail nor oars could move it. Then wine began pouring out of the hold of the ship and vines began to twine themselves about the mast. Grape and ivy tendrils soon spread over the entire deck. Music filled the air. The young prisoner was suddenly transformed into the god Dionysius himself. On his brow was a chaplet of vine leaves, his spear was wreathed with ivy, tigers and panthers played at his feet. The sailors fell on their knees in terror before the sight. Suddenly he was transformed into a raging lion. To escape the sailors jumped into the sea and were changed into dolphins. Only Acetes the pilot was spared because he alone had recognized the presence of the divine power.

Pentheus in anger ordered the execution of the pilot but Dionysius came to his assistance. Acetes, rendered invisible by the Bacchic power, walked unseen through the palace and

escaped. Later Dionysius himself was captured and brought before Pentheus, but the god could not be harmed by any mortal power. His prison was destroyed by lightnings and the god, surrounded by an aureole of glory, returned to his worshippers among the hills. Pentheus, disguising himself in woman's clothing, went to the mountains to spy upon the Bacchic rites but was discovered and torn to pieces by the infuriated Bacchanales.

It was on the island of Naxos that Dionysius discovered Ariadne, daughter of Minos, king of the Cretans, who had been deserted there by her unfaithful lover Theseus. Dionysius crowned her with a magnificent coronet of gold and jewels and when she died soon after, giving birth to the son of Theseus, Dionysius lifted the crown to heaven and placed it among the constellations.

From this point on the legend of Dionysius is very fragmentary. According to most accounts he devoted the rest of his earthly existence to the perfecting of the Theban state. There is an account of his descent into the underworld to rescue the soul of his mother from the abode of the dead. Having released Semele from the obscurations of Hades, he escorted her to Olympus where she became one of the immortals. Dionysius continued the dissemination of his teachings, and having established his priests and shrines and revealed his secret doctrine, he ascended at last to the throne of his father with whom he is eternally reunited. In the words of the ancient poet: "One Zeus, one Dionysius."

# Interpretation of the Diony- sius Myth

According to the Greek historians, the elements of the Orphic tradition were derived from the metaphysical speculations of the Brahmins. Oriental doctrines, in the course of time, were carried Westward into Egypt. It is explicitly stated that Osiris, in the form of the sacred bull Apis, was brought from India to become the god of the Egyptians. By Osiris we are in this instance to understand the Western migration of the mystical philosophies of Asia. Having taken up its abode in the double empire of the Nile, Himalayan occultism drew to itself the wisest and noblest of the Egyptians, with the result that the most sacred and obscure sciences flourished for thousands of years in the congenial atmosphere of enlightened Egypt. The doctrines transplanted from Asia fared so well in the land of the Pharaohs that Egypt gained a reputation of being the most enlightened of Western nations, and from the Delta of the Nile the occult sciences spread among all the civilizations flourishing in Mesopotamia or along the shores of the Mediterranean.

The most enlightened of the Greeks acknowledged the Eastern origin of their cultural system. Priests, philosophers, lawgivers travelled from the Grecian provinces to the older



civilizations in search of such forms of essential learning as are necessary for the establishment of an enduring culture. Thus we find that such men as Thales, Solon, Pythagoras and later Plato, dissatisfied with the educational opportunities of their race, journeyed to Egypt to be initiated into the secrets of religion and science to be learned only from the hierophants of Memphis, Abydos, Thebes and the other great colleges of Egyptian learning.

The Egyptian method of teaching seems to have been of the interpretative kind. Initiates received keys which unlocked the elaborate systems of mythology which had accumulated during the formative periods of cultural systems. In their migrations from Asia thousands of years before the progenitors of the Grecians had brought with them an elaborate pantheon of divinities, a complicated mythology, and a confused mass of obscure legend. The esoteric keys to this undigested mass of material had been lost in the waste of time with the result that during the Homeric period, for example, a profound literalism darkened the face of truth.

From the sacred arts of the Egyptians a few of the noblest of the Greeks gained the skill to unravel the tangled skein of Grecian fable. Institutions of interpretation were set up among the Greeks. These institutions were called Mysteries and, under the ennobling influence of these Mysteries, Greece rose to an unparalleled height of philosophic and metaphysical idealism.

It is said that Orpheus first brought the Eastern wisdom to the Grecians. Nothing is known concerning the origin or person of Orpheus save that his name indicates that he was a dark man. The doctrine which he brought is termed Dionysian. Chief among his teachings are those of rebirth and

the perfection of the inner consciousness through specific religious or philosophic disciplines. The greatest interpreters of the Orphic or Dionysian revelation were Pythagoras and Plato. Through Platonism, Dionysius worship influenced Christianity and contributed a powerful impetus to the ethics and æsthetics of the modern world.

As we have already noted, mysticism is essentially a method of interpretation. It is an ensouling of material factors. Through mysticism emphasis is transferred from material effects to their spiritual causes. Mystical philosophy is a training in discernment. The mind is instructed in the technique of values. Permanent elements are elevated above impermanent elements. Motive is elevated above action, principle is elevated above personality, and the inward experience of the soul is elevated above all the phenomenal complexities of physical existence. Of course, by this philosophy, the mind verges away from the obvious towards the hidden truths which sustain the world.

In the light of the above, it is of course evident that metaphysics as an interpretation of life can only flourish in a highly evolved social order. The more ignorant a person is the more he dignifies the obvious. Ignoring both the past and the future, the uninformed person focuses his attention entirely upon the material factors of personal experience. Mysticism recognizes the often obscure but all potent factors of cause and consequence. Greek mysticism escapes not only materiality, with its limiting perspective, but also literal theology with its personalization of all spiritual principles. The Mysteries explain not only the spiritual factors behind material action but the universal principles behind the theogonies of the exoteric religions.



The keys used by the Greeks to interpret their mythologies are equally applicable to any system of religious mythology existing in our present time. All religions are capable of mystical interpretation. The inward sense is the true meaning in every case. The modern trend is away from literal theologies with their limiting and competitive aspects. Mysticism reveals a universal truth underlying all religious systems. "The letter of the law killeth but the spirit of the law giveth life." As races mature under the compelling force of experience, mysticism is released through the racial consciousness. There is a mystical truth behind every physical fact even as there is a moral force behind every aspect of universal law. As materialism leads inevitably to an emphasis upon material values, so mysticism leads inevitably to an emphasis upon metaphysical values. During the periods of mystical enlightenment the noblest part of man expresses itself and civilization makes its greatest progress in essential values.

The question is frequently asked: why, if a great spiritual truth is concealed under myths and fables and the mythologies themselves are but allegories, was not the fact of this matter taught from the beginning? Why have men been permitted to deceive themselves and each other when the knowledge of the inner truths might have brought peace and enlightenment to the whole world ages ago? There are two important answers to these very reasonable questions.

In the first place, the keys which unlock the mystical interpretations of the world's fables also unlock certain other secrets extremely dangerous to unenlightened and unrefined humanity. It has been proven through ages of bitter experience that any extension of knowledge, without a corresponding extension of the moral faculties, produces exploitation and disaster.

The little that we have already discovered about the working of universal law has too often left us the victims of the unscrupulous. It was for this reason that the ancient initiates tested with the greatest severity the integrity of all who desired to participate in metaphysical knowledge.

In the second place, mystical interpretation is not merely the communication of the key by which all universal mysteries may be unlocked. Mysticism is the awakening of the mystical consciousness within the individual himself. Mysticism is more than a secret. It is a spiritual experience, which can only come to a person who has achieved a certain maturity of attitude and a definite integrity of living and thinking. Metaphysics is not merely a formula, it is a realization which, unless lived, dies out of the life, leaving the consciousness more impoverished than before. Mysticism belongs to the experiences of maturity and to the immature is a hopeless and unappreciable vagary. The enlightened metaphysician lives a conviction and by this action perfects the conviction within himself. Religion is the living of a rational conviction, but this fact is not discernible to those who are still bound to the illusion of the significance of creeds and dogmas.

With this as a prologue, let us now consider the interpretation of the Dionysian myth outlined in the previous chapter.

The eternal Principle of Existence is designated Unaging Time, a duration in which there is neither past nor future, and all extensions are suspended in an eternal Now. Unaging Time is Absolute Existence. This principle the Egyptians honored by the title "the Thrice Deep Darkness." The Jewish Cabbalists denominated this principle Ain Soph, and the Lamaists contemplated under the term Adi Buddhi. Unaging

Time is the Absolute conditioned divinity, the God of all gods, the Father of all generations divine and human, and the Cause of all activity, and the Sustainer of worlds. Unaging Time is the One Immortal incapable of dissolution, above definition or defilement. In their adoration of Immovable Duration the Orphics were monotheistic, for they acknowledged one indivisible source of all the diversity which fills the realm of aging time.

Pythagoras, defining the Orphic principles, created the term "the Monad" to distinguish the attributes of Unaging Time. By the Monad Pythagoras meant unity or wholeness, an all-inclusive identity. The Pythagoreans further taught that from the immeasurable profundity of the Monad emerged the Duad, duality or condition, manifesting from what the Gnostics called Bythos—the Profundity.

The elements of the Duad are termed Æther and Chaos, or as the Chinese express it, Yin and Yang, revealed out of Tien. Æther and Chaos are the polarities, the parents of extremes and opposites, the root of the principle of confusion. To signify their antipathy for the Duad the Pythagoreans always spat upon the ground when mentioning the number two. The Æther of the Orphics was a luminous, self-moving principle. Activity was intrinsic to it and it moved through the Great Deep in a vast circular course. Chaos was Mut or Mud, the Ilus or Primordial Slime, from which was to crawl the dragon form of the world with the time cycles traced upon its scales, as in the mythology of Central America. Æther, the mighty whirling life, caught up the humid particles of Chaos and, whirling them for countless ages, fashioned by the whirling the Great Egg of the world. The great Spiritual Agent moving in Æther was termed by the Egyptians Ptah the

Artificer. Upon a potter's wheel Ptah shaped the world egg in the Abyss, which the Scandinavians called Ginnungagap, the cleft in space. Æther whirling the substances of Chaos and gradually forming them into a universal system would seem to indicate that the Orphics were aware of the nebular hypothesis.

The Orphic Egg is frequently depicted with the serpent of Æther coiled about it. In the doctrines of the Hindus there is the radiant or golden Egg Hiranyagarbha from which the Creator of the universe himself is born. In the Grecian account, the upper hemisphere of the egg is golden and the lower is silver and within the egg itself the potencies of the universe abide together in the form of the primordial Being, Phanes. The egg is the symbol of individualization. Within it is the germ from which springs the objective universe. The potentialities latent in space incarnate in the egg-born gods. Æther and Chaos and the Egg are the first triad, and from the Egg springs forth the luminous body of the informed divinity.

Phanes is the Sovereign Intellect of the world. In him are all the radiances of the mind. He is luminous intellection vested in the splendours of the Divine Thought. Winged, many-headed, yet unbodied, he is Living Reason, the personification of the rational urge which orders the world, bending the cosmic divergencies to the purpose of self-reasoning law. Phanes is Shang-te the Logos of the Chinese. He is the Grand Man of the Zohar. He is many-headed Brahma born from the navel of Vishnu. Phanes, first born from the womb of Meru, establishes the divine order of the gods. He is Sovereign Truth from which descend the many forms of wisdom sustaining the various creations that emerge from the all-embracing mind of the egg-born Lord.



Phanes, imperishable Reason, is by virtue of its very nature the Axis of the universe. Reason, being the center of all things, describes a magic circle about itself. It is said of Vishnu that he took three steps and boundaried the world. Phanes casts a circumference about himself, walling in his domain as explained in the Sepher Yetzirah. This is the Ring-Pass-Not that divides cosmos from cosmos, the shoreline of island universes. Within the great wall was Reason and the Great Deep which Reason had enclosed with its ring of power. The name of the Darkness which Phanes had encircled by his Will was Mother Night, and every atom of Night was vibrant with the Will of Phanes. Night was the mother of creations and Phanes was the father.

Now Uranus or Heaven was the first of the children of Night and he was the celestial firmament; not the sky that we see, but the spiritual sky, the sea of Divine Light. The Jews termed this the Schamayim the fiery-waters. It is referred to in Genesis where it is said that the Elohim created the waters which are above the firmament and the waters which are beneath the firmament. When Phanes had impregnated Deep Night with his power, every particle of the Deep became radiant and the whole universe was a luminous mist. This mist was Uranus, the fire-mist. It is also stated in Genesis that light was created before the sun. This light is Uranus the light of heaven, the light of truth, vibrating every particle of ensouled space.

From the union of Reason and Darkness—spirit and matter—there rises first titanic compositions—the zodiac and the planets—the first as spiritual entities and later as vast ensouled forms. The actions and reactions of the creative processes revealed Law. The universe passes from the dominion



of all-ensouling Uranus to the sway of aged Chronos or Saturn, a time-bent deity with a crooked tooth. Chronos is Time and the limitation imposed by Universal Law upon all the forms which are manifested by the creative processes. Phanes, Universal Reason, is now obscured by the intellectual processes of Saturn. According to the myth, Saturn devours his own sons to signify that time finally destroys all of the forms that are established within it. The consort or sakti of Chronos is Rhea, his feminine or capacity attribute. All of the deities are positive and radiant forces and their consorts are the fields or areas in which these forces operate.

Zeus and Terra, or Jupiter and Juno, are the twin children of Saturn and represent the material universe called by the Greeks the mundane sphere. Saturn and Rhea are Time and Place, and the material world is the offspring of Time and Place. The story of the substituting of the stone for Jupiter, and Saturn swallowing the stone instead of his son, has an identical meaning with the Christian fable of the fall of the angels and the legends in the Apocryphal Book of Enoch. The failure of Saturn to devour his son Zeus resulted in the establishment of the material world and the material consciousness. Later Zeus takes by force the throne of his father and the physical universe of science comes into being, ruled over by Jupiter, the ego of personality. Jupiter is the father of the egoic consciousness of man, and it is from Father Zeus that the human entity derives its power of individual selfhood. Zeus is the I-am consciousness in the cosmos, and the I-am consciousness in man is Zeus enthroned in the human heart. Consciousness descends then by what is called the royal line. First there is Space, Universal Mind; then Phanes, individualized intellect; and lastly Zeus, personal consciousness, limited in its per-

spective to the recognition of externals. Zeus is the Demi-urgos, the personal father-god, the deity of vengeance and favors that fills the Scriptures of ancient peoples.

In studying the mythological theology of the Greeks, it must always be remembered that the superior gods and lesser deities are in every case personifications of the cosmic force, the engendered, the world. The accounts of the actions of the divinities are therefore descriptions of universal processes. Pagan mythologies have been bitterly attacked by Christian writers on the ground of their apparent immoralities. The more profound student of classical learning however is not dismayed by the revelries on Olympus or the incontinences of the immortals. He realizes that he is dealing with abstract formulas and not with literalisms. The promiscuities of Zeus constitute no small part of Greek classic lore. Of all the Olympian spirits he was most given to amorous intrigue.

To understand the mystery of Zeus is to grasp at once the whole meaning of Orphic theology. The intrigues of high, thundering Jove relate entirely to the extensions of personal consciousness in the sphere of phenomenal existence. The life of Zeus reveals symbolically the entire evolution of objectified self-knowing. In Eastern metaphysics we may secure a key to the Olympian situation. Oriental philosophers distinguish two distinct aspects of consciousness. In primitive Buddhism they are called a Self and the Not-self. The Self is universal consciousness, the restatement of which in personal experience is termed Nirvana. The Not-self is personal or illusional consciousness by which man is bound to the wheel of transmigratory existence and the realm of Maya. The root of illusion is the acceptance of the erroneous belief of separate or personal existence. A man who believes in the reality of his personal

self lives egocentrically and subjects his life to the miseries of attachment and possession. To believe in ones lower self must inevitably lead to a code of action consistent with that belief. Having accepted the reality and permanence of personal consciousness, life becomes bondage to the cycle of attachments and ambitions. A person so deluded believes he can become wise or virtuous or rich, or powerful or good. Most of the world's trouble makers have suffered from the illusion of the dignity of the personal self. The inevitable outcome of an egoistic philosophy is such a doctrine as that of heaven and hell which has gripped Christianity for 1800 years.

Esoteric philosophy is always based upon disciplines of renunciation. These disciplines also have been misunderstood. We do not become virtuous by giving up possessions; rather we become wise by renouncing the consciousness of possession. As long as we are ensnared by the delusion of personal self we are limited by the littleness and unimportance of our belief. The Nazarene initiate is credited with a significant statement, generally disregarded. On one occasion he said: It is not Myself but the Father who doeth the works. No man is great in himself. Only the universal consciousness which sustains all things is great. The more personal a person is the less of universal consciousness there is in him, for his own small purposes obscure the diviner aspects of his nature. To the degree that the disciple overcomes personality to that degree he verges towards universals. Personality is the root of error; universality is the root of truth.

In the Christian system of theology, it is still taught without understanding that the sin of Adam brought all mankind under the displeasure of the Almighty. The doctrine of original sin can only be understood when Adam is recognized as the

root of personal consciousness, the prototype of what Jacob Boehme terms self-will. Adam is the principle of egotism, and self-will, living on in the so-called progeny of Adam, is the limitation which has been imposed upon all mortal beings since the mysterious "Fall." The Fall of Man is nothing more or less than the descent of created things from the sphere of universal to the sphere of personal consciousness.

In the Gnostic theologies the personal ego is called Ildabaoth, Lord of the lower Æons. It was this Ildabaoth that forbade man to eat of the Tree of Knowledge (the Secret Doctrine), and from him has descended all the despotism in the world. The Gnosis was based upon the mystical interpretation of the Greek, Egyptian and Hindu Mysteries. In the Greek Rites the Messianic Deliverer who came to release man from bondage to the Æons of illusion was called the Dionysius, in the Egyptian initiations Osiris, and in the Gnostic drama the Soter Christos, Achon of the Æons.

With this fundamental outline in mind, it is not difficult to recognize in Zeus the archetype of Personal Self. This deity is the root of self-will, of personal knowledge, and of separate existence. In the activities of Zeus therefore we discover the outworkings of mortal mind. The Greek account differs with that of the Christian Gnostics in one particular, however, for Hera the consort of Zeus and not the god himself attempts to destroy the Messianic deity. This point of difference is the very keynote of Platonic philosophy, for Platonism does not view the egoic personality as entirely bad but rather seeks to gain the cooperation of the intellect in the search for truth. Plato evolves a system by which the mortal intellect becomes the father of the divine realization. Therefore in the Dionysiac theology universal consciousness, Dio-



nysius, is the beloved son of the material reasoning power and not the adversary thereof as in the Asiatic doctrines.

Zeus, unaided, cannot give incarnation to the germ of the divine reality. Therefore it says that he consorts with his own mother, that is the super-mundane creative power, from which he himself came forth. Psychic energies (two serpents) Zeus and Rhea unite and the product of this union is two-faced, horned Persephone. By two faces is signified that Persephone embodies two forces. One face is turned backward or inward to perceive the divine order, and the other face looks forward or outwardly into the illusional diffusion. Persephone is intellect with which the ego is first vested. In the cycle of incarnation the mental body is the first to be formed. Mind is the link between the superior and inferior dispositions, and is capable by discipline of becoming intellectually aware of but not consciously united with universal consciousness. Mind also, if enslaved by the lower personal self, becomes the scheming cause of terrestrial disaster. In the Eleusinian Rites the rape of Persephone formed the dramatic pageantry of the lower degree. The ritual reveals the compromise by which the mind is divided in its purpose, to abide part of its time in the material nature (Hades) and another part in the Olympian or consciousness state.

Zeus in his serpentine or seminal form cohabits with his daughter, the intellect, and from this union the secret or hidden Dionysius, (here called Zagreus to distinguish him from his later objective form) is born. Zagreus is the soul, the root of feeling, and his attributes and qualities are so numerous and so diversified in the old Rites that it is necessary to examine them under several headings or aspects.

Zeus, the world Will-to-Be, manifests out of himself World

Intellect (Persephone), then World Soul (Dionysius Zagreus), and later as we shall discover World Body in the race of mortals molded from the ashes of the Titans. These steps are in the macrocosmic order, that is they are vast processes taking place in the world, later to be recapitulated in miniature in the microcosm as stages in the unfoldment of human consciousness. The material creation consists of spirit, soul and body; or heaven, earth and hell; and Dionysius Zagreus as World Soul unites the extremities. He is the servant of spirit and the master of matter. In the Platonic order of the One, the Beautiful and the Good, he is the Beautiful, the urge to harmony by which the whole creation is ennobled and ensouled. Beauty or harmony is the Beloved of Law—Zeus. To the keeping of his infant son, Universal Harmonics, Zeus bestows the world as a present to the divine child. Zeus places the infant Zagreus on the Olympian throne. Love and harmony sit on the seat of the mighty. The great scepter of universal authority is placed in the infant hand and all the worlds, heavenly and material, pay homage to the principle of universal love. In the terms of the Christian Trinity: the gods of the mundane order may be correlated to Zeus as the Father, Dionysius Zagreus the Son or Soul, and the reborn Dionysius as the Holy Spirit or the Comforter.

We must next consider Hera or Juno, the villainess in the cosmic drama. Zeus and Hera were twins, for the Law and the limitations which it establishes are born together. Jove, as his name has come to imply, like the principle of law, in his impersonal moments, is noble, just and benevolently inclined. Hera, the administratrix of the will of Zeus, is however less flexible. Law resists exception and the birth of Dionysius Zagreus, because universal love is above the law, is

said to cause the jealousy of the legislative processes. St. Paul calls Christ a priest after the Order of Melchizedek—above the law. From the celestial power of his grandmother, Rhea, Dionysius Zagreus has inherited the super-cosmic consciousness. He recognizes no law but the eternal truth that abides in space. He threatens the supremacy of the material order, therefore it is said that the Law as Hera seeks to destroy him. In nearly all allegories relating to the Messianic tradition, the Messiah is opposed by powerful instruments of man-made or mortal law, but in each case he triumphs over it. Jesus ascends victoriously from the grave, Prometheus at last is liberated by Hercules, and Buddha breaks the caste system of the Brahmins. The warfare waged in heaven between Hera and Dionysius Zagreus is the eternal warfare between the letter and the spirit of the law, between punishment and forgiveness. Soul power must always win but as in this mundane sphere of mortal concerns, truth triumphs only after Struggle and persecution, so in the Olympian court, Dionysius must die and rise again before he can triumph over the machinations of literalism.

Hera, to accomplish her ends, has recourse to the Titans, the Primordial Giants, who represent the impulses intrinsic to matter. The destructive power of the Titans lay in their resistance to the illuminating power of the soul. These giants were the shadowy forces dwelling in the Abyss. They are the vast darkness which seeks to swallow up the tiny ray of heavenly light. Like all resisting inertia, ensouled only by sluggish ghosts, Chaos, the symbol of eternal ignorance, becomes the willing tool of Hera in her conspiracy. This symbolism often works out in our daily life, where the ignorance of the many becomes a more or less willing tool to bring about the desires of the unscrupulous.

Dionysius Zagreus is like the infant Vishnu. The universe is his playroom and his toys are the elements with which he builds the house of many rooms, the material universe. The little god is sporting in the fields of Æther. His dice is the cube of material elements and the twenty-one spots upon it are the energies resident in the soul. The winged wheels are the vortices or centers upon which planets are built—in man the chakras. A wheel is frequently shown in the hand of Vishnu. The spinning, singing top represents the world itself upon its axis, its tone the cosmic keynote. The bouncing ball is the sun. The apples from the Hesperides are the seed atoms or luminous globes from which the three great orders of life were born. The Tree of the Hesperides is the Tree of Life upon which grow the luminous fruit from which all the races, species and types have their origin. The Golden Fleece is the creative power of the sun in its exaltation in Aries. It is the creative energy, the rays of light in the form of wool. The great figure in the Book of Revelation, who stands in the midst of the candlesticks, has hair like wool to represent the numerous fine emanations which pour from the source of life. While Dionysius Zagreus enjoys his play of world building, for it is the joy of love to create, and all who create are of the divine order, the Titans proceed with their conspiracy. They fashioned Chaos into a mirror to deceive the young god. The principle involved is that the divine energy is not intrinsic to matter but, as Plato says, is communicated to it. This communication is termed reflection, as for example, man appears to be his body but the body is really only a reflection of himself. Dionysius Zagreus is described as deceived. Believing the figure which he sees reflected in the mirror to be real he is led off into the extremities of space, following only the shadow of himself. This reflection allegory is also found in the Hermetic writings



of the Egyptians and appears again in the Grecian myth of Narcissus. A similar account is vaguely discernible in the legends of the Aztecs where Tze—the evil genius of Chaos,—causes men to lose their souls by gazing into a mirror which he wears strapped to his breast. The moral lesson is that men, gazing into the face of nature, fail to realize that the visible universe is only a reflection of the divine order. Following the illusion or reflection, men are led away from the realization of truth.

The Titans, or the Chaotic principles, realizing that they would be easily discovered unless they concealed their appearance, covered their faces with gypsum. This material has been used for ages in the manufacturing of magic mirrors and is closely related to sorcery. Hidden behind their magical masks, which reflect no light, they attack the god of harmony and beauty.

A great cosmic secret is herein concealed. The material elements close in upon the World Soul. Dionysius Zagreus attempts to escape his doom. He changes quickly from form to form, but lastly, in the form of the bull, the sign of the material earth, he dies. The forms which the god assumes represent the stages of the involutory processes through which soul passes before it is finally swallowed up in the darkness of body. The Titans, primordial Chaos, devour the god form, that is, darkness swallows up light. Zeus, discovering the crime, sends his vengeance upon the Titanic powers. Chaos is shattered by his thunderbolts but the evil has been done. Athena, the mind-born daughter of Zeus, representing his avenging intellect, swoops down from the heavens and rescues the heart of Dionysius Zagreus. This story has the same meaning as the myth of Orpheus. The body was destroyed by

## XXXVIII THE MYTH OF DIONYSIUS

the Aconian women but the head continued to speak. The heart of Dionysius Zagreus represents the spiritual essence itself. This cannot be consumed by him who is restored to the heavenly state. Some accounts are to the effect that the heart of the young god is the sun, the ball of luminous power which even the darkness cannot devour.

At the end of the first act of the drama, the universal soul power is locked in the terrestrial elements, for, as Plato said, there was a divine being crucified before the beginning of the world. From the ashes of the Titans and the blood or Soul Power of Dionysius the race of mortal beings was formed. Thus it is that each man has a soul within himself, part of the divine soul. This is also the story of Osiris whose body was dismembered and whose parts were scattered throughout the whole of Egypt. The restoration of soul power is the resurrection of the martyred god. To accomplish this resurrection was the work of the Mystery Schools. Zeus, after mourning for the death of his son, restored the soul essence to his own nature, awaiting a time when it could be sent forth again. Wisdom was swallowed up in ignorance, life was swallowed up in death. The drama of involution was complete. Zeus then turned the great wheel in the opposite direction. Evolution is the release of soul power and that this mystery might be accomplished Zeus sent forth into the world his divine son for a second time. In his second birth Dionysius is the psychopomp, the divine musician, the lord of ecstasy, the shepherd, calling back again the souls of men to light.

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The next part of the story takes place in the sublunary sphere. The races of men formed by Zeus evolve through vast periods of time. The Dionysian elements urge humanity

to the unfoldment of its soul power. The racial evolution is represented under the symbolism of Agenor and Cadmus. Agenor is the racial root, dwelling in the Trans-Himalayan height, sends forth Cadmus, the Aryan migration, in search of soul experience (Europa) who has been abducted by Zeus (Will) in the form of mortal mind (the Bull). Agenor tells Cadmus that he may not return to his source without soul experience. If he fails he will die (racial extinction). Cadmus did not have the inner illumination necessary to regain Europa. The racial migration failed in its quest of truth, so he consults the Oracle (auricle, the voice from the heart). The voice of racial experience bids the wanderer follow the young cow (Hathor the nourisher). The cow represents the intuitional faculty, the nourisher of the outer life, and so interpreted in the Mysteries of the Egyptians. Where the cow lies down he is told to build a city. Cadmus is under the patronage of the goddess Athena or Minerva, the personification of wisdom. He sends his followers to a nearby spring to draw water for a libation for the goddess. His men are set upon and slain by a great serpent who guards the waters of life, the inward waters of soul satisfaction. The soldiers of Cadmus are the instruments of his will. These failing to return, Cadmus himself battles with the monster, finally slaying it. By this action Cadmus becomes the dragon-slayer, like Siegfried in the Gothic cycle. The dragon always represents the animal soul which impedes the progress of the higher nature. The active principles of the dragon are symbolized as teeth. Even when desire itself is dead a progeny of destructive tendencies continue to confound the reason. The army of serpent's teeth, being symbolical of the Chaotic elements of desire, destroys itself, as unbalance must always be its own undoing, and but five of the army remain. These are the sense perceptions, and

they unite with Cadmus to build the city of seven gates—the body—and the seven races, the races being gates or outlets for the manifestation of the racial impulse.

Of course the Cadmus myth to this point not only represents the struggle of the root race and its five branches, but also the initiatory ritual by which Cadmus, the truth seeker, overcomes the limitations of his material part, and achieves to the condition of coordinated reason.

As a reward for his meritorious action, Cadmus is given Harmonia to wife. She is a maiden of great beauty and virtue. Harmonia is the sakti or negative aspect of enlightenment. She signifies the condition that is set up by the activity of wisdom. The union of Cadmus and Harmonia is also in a symbolical way the union of heaven and earth, or the superior and inferior principles. The five children of this union are the elements, termed by the ancients earth, water, fire, air and æther; or appetite, imagination, emotion or sense, thought, and intuition, in the sphere of soul power. In the fable four of the children came to a bad end, these being the four lower elements. Of these the lowest is the most miserable of all—the earth or appetitive quality. The eldest and most noble of the children, æther, is called Semele. She is the psychic humidity, the quintessence or fifth power, and contains within herself the higher qualities of the universe as seeds or principles. She is the World Virgin, variously named in different religions and philosophical systems, but always the Immaculate Mother of the incarnate god. Zeus, seeking throughout the mundane sphere for a proper vehicle for the incarnation of his son, chooses the intuitional essence, the root of the soul power in man, and therein he causes Dionysius to be reborn.

Zeus dissolved the heart of the divine child in wine, and



it was thus that he was conceived in the virgin mother. It is important at this point to establish the significance of the wine symbol. Each of the planes of nature is termed a crater or cup. Every form is a vessel containing a spiritual essence that is termed the wine of life. Dionysius is distributed throughout the æther as a fluidic life essence. He himself is the wine of ecstasy, the living water, the lord of life.

Hera again enters the scene to resist the incarnation of the Dionysian agent. Beroe is the personification of Gaia the great Mother Chaos. Hera as Beroe is the principle of resistance intrinsic to matter. The material animal nature is always represented as opposing the incarnation of the soul power. In the Christian form of the Mythos Herod seeks to destroy the infant Jesus, and in the Hindu legend of Krishna the Divine Babe is hidden from the machinations of the evil ruler who represents the egoistic principle of personality. In the Christian mysteries the animal personality is called the Prince of this World, the personification of physical instincts as opposed to soul power.

In the Dionysian myth an important psychological truth is especially emphasized. Hera in her effort to destroy Dionysius comes not in her own form but appears in the similitude of the faithful old nurse. By this is signified that accepted tradition becomes the instrument of destruction. Evil comes in the form of old and familiar doctrines which oppose the spiritual progress of the race. In every department of life originality and individual expression are hampered by the limiting influence of the conservatism which appears quite honest and worthy and well meaning. In the light of the individual, Beroe, old habits, old ideas, familiar customs and accepted methods of living and thinking. Hera, assuming the form

of these traditional acceptances, accomplishes her evil without arousing suspicion.

Several important metaphysical truths are revealed at this point in the allegory. Semele is induced to doubt the origin of the soul power that is arising within her. She is presented as the innocent victim of a conspiracy to remind the disciple that innocence is too often a synonym for ignorance. Semele demands proof that her immortal suitor is indeed Zeus himself. What follows is a warning to all neophytes on the path of wisdom. Zeus, bound by the great oath of the river Styx, must obey the silly whim of Semele.

By the laws of the mundane sphere the influx of spiritual power into the human body is regulated to the mortal constitution. Thus each person receives into himself an inflowing of spiritual energy consistent with his place in the evolutionary process. The great oath of the river Styx represents the magical power by which man is capable of controlling the motion of the psychical powers within himself. Any student of the transcendental sciences who attempts to bind cosmic force to his purposes without being personally worthy to control its action comes to the sorry end described in the case of Semele. Among nearly all ancient nations there arose schools of sorcery which sought by formulas and exercises to force the development of occult powers by unnatural means. The ceremonial Cabbala is devoted to these practices and they are widely used among certain classes in Asia. A person who looses upon his body by magical means rates of vibration too high for the bodies to sustain is destroyed by his own impudence. A common example which has caused no end of trouble in the last twenty years is Oriental breathing exercises. In India the stimulation of the chakra centers in the body through the

control of breath is practiced only after years of preparatory purifications and discipline. Pseudo-Orientalists have deluged the Western world with false or incomplete teachings on this subject. The result has been no end of distress and disaster. Students trying to achieve spiritual development, by breathing alone, loosed psychical currents within themselves for which the body was entirely unprepared; the result was that the nervous system and sometimes even the brain itself was literally burned out by the rates of vibration unwisely set in motion.

Ordinary mortals are not yet capable of sustaining the presence of the gods. In the metaphysics of Islam the face of Allah is covered with thousands of veils to dim the splendor of the creative principle. These veils are bodies through which the divine light filters but partly. By the disciplines of the Mysteries the mortal fabric is so refined and purified that it can sustain a greater measure of the universal glory and survive.

In this interpretation Semele represents the soul body in man which is to become the vehicle of Dionysius, the soul principle in the universe. Hera seeks to prevent the incarnation of Dionysius by destroying the soul body. She accomplishes her end by luring the soul vehicle from a course of moderation. We must remember that she is the sakti or negative counterpart of universal law itself, personified by Zeus. She therefore sets up conditions by which she forces the law itself to destroy the very condition that it is trying to build up and perfect.

Zeus having fulfilled the law, that is, kept his oath, immediately attempts to rescue what he can from the destruction which he has been forced to bring about. Semele, her mortal existence brought to an end, descends into the shades of Hades,

that is she is dissipated throughout the mortal nature of man. Zeus however saves his son by carrying him in his own thigh. This fable requires considerable examination. In connection with it attention is called to the accompanying illustration from an early 16th century book. Herein the universe is represented with a figure of the Demiurgos or Zeus stretched out thereon. It will be observed that in this figure the thigh of Zeus corresponds with the earth in the sense that the material universe represents the generative power of the divine principle. The Dionysian soul is therefore removed from the æthers, representing Semele, and finishes its prenatal epoch in the body of the earth itself. By earth is to be inferred any entirely material fabric from the physical body of man or the whole elementary sphere itself. To orient the interpretation: the soul power first incarnates in the invisible bodies or auras where its force is centripetal. By the evolutionary process it moves gradually downward through the superphysical vehicles until finally it impinges itself upon the psychical centers of the physical body. It then reverses its motion and by a centrifugal force slowly objectifies itself through the consciousness. Jacob Boehme describes the whole mystery in the story of the seed, deriving the figure from the statement of St. Paul that unless the seed dies it cannot live again. To Boehme the soul power flows into man from the higher world as a seed falling into the dark earth. The mortal nature then becomes the guardian or gardener of the seed. When the earth is appropriate, that is when the body is purified, the life in the seed is awakened and from the soul seed emerges a divine nature which, growing up within the mortal fabric, extends itself like a vine throughout the entire temporal disposition ensouling the body. In the end all of the life of the body is directed to the nourishing of the soul and all the energies of the body are transmuted



into soul powers represented by the clusters of grapes that grow upon the vine.

Because he has both an inward and outward birth, or a spiritual and material existence, Dionysius is called Bimater as having two mothers. In human experience the soul power is first born as an inward experience and is born the second time as outward action, being delivered without a period of gestation in the subjective nature. Zeus is said to limp while carrying Dionysius. Because of the transition period between the inward and outward birth of soul power, the lower nature represented by the feet passes through a physical transition, usually accompanied by some loss of physical power. There is an ancient adage in occultism that for everything we gain of inner light we must sacrifice something of outer power. This is due to the redirecting of vital forces. As man perfects spiritual faculties, energies are deflected from the lower propensities. In the ancient times horns represented powers or active forces, and the horns of Dionysius or the release of its powers cripple the lower man.

One of the most difficult things to understand in the Dionysian myth is that the young god must be subjected to the apparently very human process of education. One would naturally suppose that the divinities, possessing intelligence intrinsic to their natures, would scarcely require schooling as do poor suffering mortals. From this part of the fable we secure a valuable key to the whole theory of education. The infant Dionysius is intrusted to the keeping of Hermes who thus is figured as the first instructor of the soul power. Hermes is the thrice-born instructor of the Egyptian Mysteries and was probably borrowed from the Egyptians by the knowledge-seeking Greeks. Hermes represents the highest of the body powers

—enlightened mind. Human nature, building upward from below, according to the Gnostic theory of emanations, meets divine nature descending from above. These two nature are united by the link of mind as represented in symbolism by the interlaced ascending and descending triangles bound together by the pivotal dot in the center. Soul power, moving downward into objective manifestation, must depend upon rationalized intellect to orient it in the phenomenal sphere. The neophyte preparing for initiation purifies and directs the intellect until it is worthy to guide and distribute the stream of soul force. This does not mean that intellect is greater than soul, but rather that soul power does not belong in the material nature still is communicated to it and being out of its own sphere is subject to the laws of the world in which it manifests. Mind does not control soul but rather distributes it by virtue of mental familiarity with objective phenomena. The intellectual energies therefore become the media for the distribution of the Dionysian agent which circulates in the nerve canals or in the nervous æthers, with their vine-like twistings and twinings. Hermes or Mercury, the messenger between divine and mortal concerns, immediately conveys the infant Dionysius to the mysterious land of Nysa in the midst of which stands high Meros the mystery mountain. Of course Meros is Meru the great mountain forming the Northern axis of the mundane sphere. In man Meros or Meru is the brain, the high place in mortal natures and the seat of the Hermetic or Mercurial energies. Here Dionysius grows up, that is, is released, surrounded by strange creatures, fauns, satyrs, dryades, and other beings unknown to ordinary physical perceptions.

The strange creatures of Mount Meros, like the mythical beings dwelling in caves in the heights of the Himalayas, are

the thought centers and their progeny which inhabit the mysterious caverns of the brain. The Greeks symbolized the thoughts and emotions of man as semi-divine, semi-animal creatures, invisible but very real factors in the average life. The oldest and wisest of the satyrs was old Silenus whose code of life is very like the general air of disillusionment which marks the quatrains of Omar the Tentmaker. Silenus is weary with the very thought of living and his most important statement by which he won the kingship over all mortal life is: "The greatest good is not to be born and the next greatest good is to die immediately." Silenus is experience, the oldest and wisest of the divine race that dwells in the brain. He has exhausted one after the other all of the illusional pleasures of the world and he drowns his myriads of memories in the cup of forgetfulness. Silenus is worldly wisdom, jovial in its outer aspects but melancholy within.

The coming of Dionysius to the mountain brought a new life to Silenus. The divine child filled all the longings and yearnings of his nature. Silenus devoted many years in teaching the young god all the mysteries and secrets of life. The aged preceptor occurs in most initiation myths. In Parsifal he is the old knight Gurnemanz, and in the Osirian cycle of the Egyptians he is the faithful Anubis who, in the form of the dog, accompanies Isis in her search for the body of Osiris. In this legend experience is represented as the power of scent by which Anubis discovers things which Isis cannot find.

Silenus rides upon an ass's back. The ass is the symbol of Typhon the Destroyer, the whole obstinacy of stupidity and ignorance. Jesus riding into Jerusalem on the ass's back represents soul power triumphing over the Typhonic adversary. It is further explained that Dionysius was fed on lion's milk.

The lion is the sacred symbol of the sun, the rays of which are likened to the lion's mane. The soul body is nourished by the energies descending from the sun, the evident symbolism being that illumination is nourished by light.

The universal law variously rewards the teachers and guardians of Dionysius. Some are placed among the constellations and others are deified to represent that the faculties which contribute to the release of the soul power become themselves the eternal agents of it and share in its glory.

Hera still opposes the Dionysiac soul. Dionysius has to pass from one state of consciousness to another to escape her limiting influence. These changes are represented as journeys in the same way that initiates seeking light journeyed to the East. Hera sends the two-headed serpent of passion to destroy him but he slays the reptile with a vine twig—nerve impulse. The snake represents two nerve ganglia at the base of the spine which radiate destructive currents. Dionysius overcomes them by means of the sushumna nadi, the canal of the soul power in the spine. The two-headed snake is the *Ida* and *Pingala* of Eastern metaphysics. Hera it is said next strikes the young god with madness. This she accomplishes by throwing the body out of adjustment with the soul power. Madness in this case simply represents matter closing out by its crystallization the rational impulses of the higher life. This explanation is evident when we learn that his reason is restored by initiation. The initiation rites were always directed towards restoring the rulership of the higher nature over its lower self. After his initiation Dionysius escapes forever from the power of Hera. Once the complete union of the lower and higher Self is achieved in the Mysteries, it is no longer possible for materiality to take away the reason of the soul.



The subtlest part of the Dionysian myth is that which relates of his mysterious journey to India. In the experience of initiation the journey to India is the achievement of illumination. It is the experience of the divine ecstasy—the Samadhi of the Vedantist and the Nirvana of the Buddhist. Having mastered all of the parts of the material nature, Dionysius leads the pilgrimage back to the immortal Self. The higher parts of the body represented by the satyrs and the demigods share in this resurrection. The journey is said to require three years. This period of time may be interpreted as either three days or three degrees. India represents what the neo-Platonists termed the summit of diversity—the point where manyness merges into unity. The geographical terms are entirely symbolical, representing states of consciousness under the names of countries. The Oriental initiate understands the seven countries as the seven conditions through which the Self rises to its unconditioned origin. Nirvana is here described as the source of the Ganges river, that is the source of the stream of life that flows out to sustain the whole created universe. The journey is truly inward. The center of consciousness moves from the brain to the heart, the source of the living waters which support the body. The same pilgrimage is described in the old Testament of the Jews by the wanderings of the tribes of Israel in the wilderness. Like the Israelites Dionysius and his companion crossed the Red Sea, that is the sphere of desire. In the Jewish story Moses is experience or the intellect. He is not permitted to enter the Promised Land, Nirvana, but dies in sight of it. Mind cannot enter the sphere of the eternal Self but by the reasoning faculties may perceive it afar off.

To the Freemason it is important that Dionysius should raise at the head waters of the Ganges two columns to bear

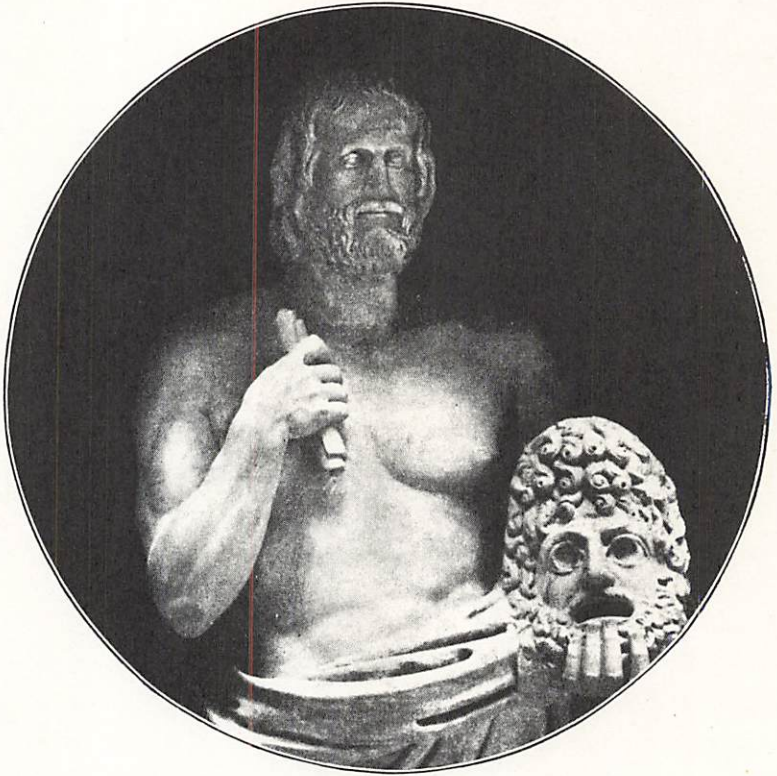
witness of his achievement. Like the pillars of Jachin and Boaz, these columns signify as monuments the two supreme proofs of the divine achievement. In alchemy the master adept was said to possess the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life. The Philosopher's Stone represents perfect knowledge and the Elixir of Life perfect understanding. Knowledge is the possession of truth; understanding is the application of truth to all of its reasonable ends. This is clearly set forth in the words of King Solomon for he said: "get wisdom, and with all thy getting get understanding." Wisdom and understanding are the perfect evidences which stand as monuments to the accomplishment of the Great Work.

Several fragmentary stories are introduced at this point in the legend. The journey of Dionysius is called one of peace for it is the journey to Self. The last part of this journey consists in conquering the intellect. It is therefore stated that Dionysius and his company are confronted by an Indian army mounted on elephants, the elephant being the Indian symbol of mind. The army is routed by the braying of the ass of Silenus, for intellect is confounded by ignorance and the stupidity which the ass represents. This thought is expressed in the statement of the Greek philosopher who once observed—fools ask questions that philosophers cannot answer.

Having achieved illumination, that is, the Dionysian soul having been perfected by illumination, the god is described as returning to his own land, the material nature into which he was born as the son of Semele, to convert the material world with his doctrine.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Greek tragic poet Euripides was undoubtedly an Initiate of the Dionysian Rites. His celebrated work *The Bacchi*



*Euripides*



is a thinly veiled representation of the esoteric significance of the Dionysiac myth. Pentheus, the king of Thebes, represents the lower personal self in the metaphysical drama. He is the animal soul which, by virtue of its intrinsic materiality, opposes the spiritualizing influences of the Dionysian discipline. He is the Prince of This World referred to by Jesus, the Adversary, the relapsed Adam of Jacob Boehme. Pentheus resolves to oppose the processes of regeneration which the soul, Dionysius, would impose upon the outer life.

In every system of ancient metaphysics the material consciousness is personified in some appropriate representation as an irrational entity conspiring against the divine impulse which would elevate man above the dictates of the flesh. The city of Thebes here signifies any area of manifestation in which light and darkness struggle for supremacy. By one interpretation the city becomes the universe and by another the sevenfold body of man himself. Cadmus, who signifies the reason, has grown old and no longer controls his kingdom. By this is inferred that the ancient institutions of enlightenment which preserved the spiritual truths of life had decayed and corrupted. Ambitious mortals had turned from the law of spirit to the course of ambition and exploitation. The old laws, the old foundations, and the old institutions have passed away and are now generally regarded as obsolete. Therefore Cadmus is described as senile and doddering by his materialistically minded and self-satisfied descendants. Yet in spite of his presumed mental infirmity, Cadmus, because he possessed the inward enlightenment, unrecognized by the profane, went forth rejoicing to meet the emissaries of Dionysius. Cadmus is described as without male heir, to show that Pentheus, irrationality, is not the son of reason or the offspring of rational intellect but



arises from one of the negative or body substances, the daughters of Cadmus.

When Dionysius reaches Thebes he finds the tomb of his mother neglected, her mysteries no longer celebrated, and the disciplines by which he was immaculately conceived regarded as idle superstitions. Euripides has carefully built up the symbolism that no doubt might remain as to the metaphysical inferences. He has shown what the Hindus call the Kali-Yuga or the period of spiritual sterility at the end of which the Messianic messenger comes forth to reestablish the Mysteries.

When Dionysius approaches Thebes the common people come forth joyfully to pay homage to him and join in the sacred dances and rites. The common people here represent the atomic life which makes up body or the mundane agencies which conspire together to sustain existence. Dionysius is here the spiritual vibration which awakens all the latent forces, thrills them with its life, and joins them together in the sacred dance (vibration). As an ancient philosopher observed, it is the natural choice of man to love the beautiful and serve the good, and the best parts of the individual go forth filled with happiness to mingle with the divine purpose. This threatens the continued superiority of Pentheus, the animal will, and the lower nature opposes violently the unfolding spiritual energy which threatens to dissipate its power. Pentheus orders Dionysius brought to him in chains, but the spiritual power itself is not so easily captured. One of its followers or manifestations is captured instead. A beautiful allegory is inserted at this point to further reveal the mystery to the discerning.

Acetes, the pilot, heavily fettered, stands before Pentheus. He is the personification of experience which stands strong in the face of bigotry and perversion. Acetes is made to signify

the strength of inward enlightenment in the face of adversity. As the Neo-Platonist taught, when man once experiences inward illumination, the power of worldliness over that man is forever destroyed. The pilot, secure in inward truth, fearlessly tells his story. Of course the sea and the ship are frequently employed to represent the course of life. The sea is the illusion of matter, the Maya of the Hindus, the confusion of mortal existence. The ship with its crew represent organized mind and its forces. These together in the form of individuality are journeying upon the great ocean. They stop at an island for water, that is the intellect seeks knowledge from some wise source represented as an island, an immovable area in the midst of inconstant motion. On this island they find a beautiful youth sleeping—the mind seeking knowledge discovers a spiritual mystery sleeping, that is, not revealing itself. The young Dionysius, for it is he, is described as a graceful young man of slender, adolescent body. Long curls hang upon his shoulders, bunches of grapes and ivy leaves are twined in his hair. His features are full of dignity and a celestial splendor. The sailors, the sense perceptions, decide to sell this young man into slavery in Egypt.

Here Egypt has the same significance as in the Biblical accounts. It is the land of darkness, of bondage and servitude to material ambitions. The senses, having discovered a divine power, are, in other words, resolved to capitalize it. They would use spiritual forces for material purposes. The Philistines blinding Samson, and binding him to the millstone, has the same meaning. There is ample evidence in modern religion of the perversion of spiritual forces to the achievement of material superiority. Men have always sought to direct divine power to unworthy ends. But, as described in the case

of Dionysius, they must always fail. The young god is taken to the ship. Acetes, the pilot, the intellect, alone perceives the divinity of the Savior. He warns the senses that they are trafficking in a divine power but they will not heed his warning.

We now see the effect produced by the Dionysian soul when imprisoned in a human body. The vessel becomes filled with wine, representing the spiritual forces arising within. Up the mast of the ship, the spinal column, the grape and ivy vines twist themselves. The vines are the spiritual energies rising through the chakras or soul ganglia of the spinal system. Dionysius, the inward consciousness, then appears in his full glory, sceptered, and crowned and surrounded by flickering auric lights. The senses bow in terror before the spiritual splendor. Then Dionysius assumes the form of the Messianic animal, the lion. The lion is the symbol of power. The sailors cast themselves into the sea and are turned into dolphins, that is, the senses return to their own elements, the illusion, and become creatures of it. The pilot, the intellect, alone survives this transfiguration. He becomes the servant of the soul. Like John the Baptist he prepares the way and as John was brought before Herod so Acetes is brought before Pentheus.

The legend of Theseus and the Minotaur is one of the most beautiful of the esoteric fables of the Greeks. The labyrinth motif is traced in the symbolism of many ancient peoples of both the Eastern and Western hemispheres. The maze or labyrinth is a symbol of the circuitous and confused course of human life. The subterranean passages of the Cretans represent the tortuous complexities of the mundane sphere. There is but one way in and out of the labyrinth. The entrance is birth and only the initiated can come out again by the same door wherein they went.

In the Labyrinth dwelt the Minotaur, the composite offspring of unnatural passion—the bull-headed, man-bodied guardian of the darkened passageways. In the spiritual mystery of human regeneration the Minotaur represents the animal soul, the union of intellect and phenomenon, the outward nature bound to the earth by a complex of inordinate desires.

Theseus, the hero of the fable, representing the neophyte or aspiring soul, plans the destruction of the monster. But lest he himself also become hopelessly lost in the Labyrinth, Ariadne, daughter of the Cretan king Minos, gives Theseus a spindle of thread. Fastening the end of the thread at the gate of the Labyrinth, Theseus unwinds it as he penetrates the dark and bone-strewn caverns. Having destroyed the Minotaur after a fierce battle, Theseus is able to make his way out of the Labyrinth by following back along the course of the thread.

All this has great symbolic significance. Ariadne of course represents the soul and the thread the intuitional faculty, the sense of values in the soul, by which the mind of man is finally brought back to the light of truth. Every soul that descends into the oblivion of matter, according to the Greek Mysteries, is attached to its superior source by a thread of consciousness or a germ of truth within itself. After conquering the lower world, signified by the Minotaur, the initiate returns to the sphere of light guided by the thread of truth within himself.

Theseus, however, is not fully grateful to Ariadne for her assistance. Intellect, grown strong by experience, claims for itself the vision that really comes not from the mind but from a secret source beyond the mind. Theseus deserts Ariadne on the Island of Naxos and it is here that Dionysius discovers her. Dionysius, the divine Self, is of course immediately enamoured of the intuitional soul which is his proper consort or negative



aspect. He bestows upon Ariadne the seven-jewelled crown of Venus. The soul is of course the regenerated emotional nature, Venus. Ariadne is at this time also given the name Gnosis, a term reminiscent of the word Gnosis (knowledge or wisdom). Ariadne, however, does not remain long in the mundane sphere but dies giving birth to the son of Theseus, and her jewelled crown is lifted to heaven to become one of the constellations. The death of Ariadne continues the mystical account. The symbolism is almost identical with that of the snake-maiden Kundry in the legend of Parsifal. Kundry dies at the foot of the Grail, and Ariadne does not survive her union with Dionysius. The term death in the Greek fables infers immortalization. The Heroes pass from the terrestrial state to union with the gods. Ariadne, the soul, is absolved into Dionysius the Universal Self-Soul.

The son of Ariadne, whose birth is the direct cause of her death, is an heroic incarnation. It represents the progeny of the union of aspiration, Theseus, and intuition, Ariadne. From these unions, as described in the Greek myths, the Heroic race is born, the Heroes being a genera between gods and men. The Heroic birth is an inward spiritual experience, later symbolized by the alchemists under the fable of the Philosopher's Stone. The son of Ariadne is called Staphylus, but antiquity is silent concerning his life and fate. He merely appears as a symbol of the inward generation of Heroes arising from the experience of the soul.

Dionysius then continues his journey. The closing years of his material manifestation are wrapt in obscurity. Dionysius, the symbol of eternal life, eternal youth, and eternal truth, is never depicted as growing old. The soul within knows no age, consciousness never becomes infirm. The soul is eternal

radiance and eternal youth. So Dionysius continues to the end, either in his adolescent form or else as a strong, bearded man, the symbol of maturity of strength, spiritual strength depicted through the symbol of material strength. One account describes him as King of Thebes, the mysterious city of the seven gates where he was born. Here he represents the sun, master of the seven gates of the world, or again the spiritual Self, master of the seven gates of the body. He reforms and perfects the laws of man. Like all the great benefactors, he establishes the arts and sciences, and most of all teaches men the cultivation of the grape.

The most important episode that stands out in this period of the Dionysian myth relates to the descent of Dionysius into the under-world to rescue the soul of his mother from the abyss of Hades. This is the conflict between the Dionysian and pre-Dionysian cults in Greece. The old religions of the Hellenes uniformly describe death as the final experience in living. After death souls, regardless of merit, descended into a sort of shadowland where they remained forever ghosts, neither happy nor unhappy, but shades abiding on the outer boundaries of life. For these shades there was no future and no return. There was certain punishment in some cults for the evil doer, but the good man was left without hope—he was merely a ghost wandering forever in the shadows of eternity.

The Dionysian cult swept all this belief away. Reincarnation took the place of the ghostly after-life. Virtue rose supreme and even death had no power over wisdom and integrity. Dionysius descends into the under-world, freeing the dead, as in the Christian mythos Christ, in the Apocrypha of Bartholomew, cleanses all of the abyss of hell, releasing souls. The resurrection of Semele from the dead as a spiritual experi-

ence signifies the release of the ancestral soul. She is carried upward to the immortals to become herself a demigoddess. Dionysius, lifting his mother to the Olympian heights, is similar to the Christian fable of the Ascension of the Virgin where it is distinctly taught that Mary ascends to heaven enveloped in the glory of her Son. Of course Semele represents Nature, the earth, and all the terrestrial forces of the universe—Mother Nature, the matrix of the immortals. The Ascension of the Virgin therefore represents the final transmutation of all material factors into spiritual forces—the earth itself spiritualized, lifted into heaven, to become itself identical with the essences of the Empyreum; body itself transmuted into soul, form ascending to the Formless, material consciousness finally universalized.

His work accomplished in the world, his doctrine revealed, his Mysteries established, his priests instructing men in the divine orgies, Dionysius, the fruit of the vine, the wine of life, the Eternal Self, the judge and the Redeemer, the psychopomp, the Master of the Herds of Souls, is finally lifted up to remain forever on the right hand of the Law. He is reabsorbed into the consciousness of Zeus, the Creator of the world. Law becomes tempered with mercy, truth becomes manifested through beauty. Love and Law—Dionysius and Zeus—are one forever.



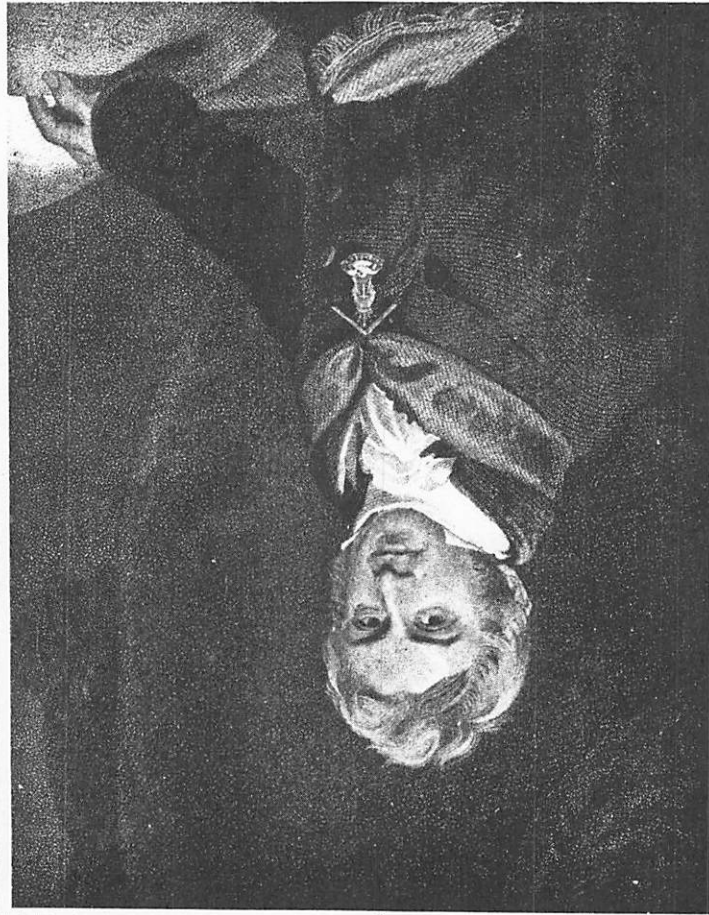


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**SKETCH**  
FOR  
THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
**DIONYSIAN ARTIFICERS**  
A FRAGMENT

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BY  
HIPPOLYTO JOSEPH DA COSTA, Esq.

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# SKETCH FOR THE HISTORY OF THE DIONYSIAN ARTIFICERS



THE mysteries of the ancients, and the associations in which their doctrines were taught, have hardly been considered in modern times, but with a view to decry and ridicule them.

The systems of ancient mythology have been treated as monstrous absurdities, debasing the human reason, conducting to idolatry, and favouring depravity of manners.

However, they deserve attention, if the motives of their inventors, rather than the profligacy and ignorance of their corruptors be contemplated.

When men were deprived of the light of revelation, those who formed systems of morality to guide their fellow creatures, according to the dictates of improved reason, deserved the thanks of mankind, however deficient those systems might be, or time may have altered them; respect, not derision, ought to attend the efforts of those good men; though their labours might have proved unavailing.

In this point of view must be considered an association, traced to the most remote antiquity, and preserved through numberless vicissitudes, yet retaining the original marks of its foundation, scope, and tenets.

It appears, that, at a very early period, some contemplative men were desirous of deducting from the observation of nature, moral rules for the conduct of mankind. Astronomy was the science selected for this purpose; architecture was afterwards called in aid of this system; and its followers formed a society or sect, which will be the object of this enquiry.

The continuity of this system will be found sometimes broken, a natural effect of conflicting theories, of the alteration of manners, and of change of circumstances, but it will make its appearances at different periods, and the same truth will be seen constantly.

The importance of calculating with precision the seasons of the year, to regulate agricultural pursuits, navigation, and other necessary avocations in life, must have made the science of astronomy an object of great care, in the government of all civilized nations; and the prediction of eclipses, and other phenomena, must have obtained for the learned in this science, such respect and veneration from the ignorant multitude, as to render it extremely useful to legislators, in framing laws for regulating the moral conduct of their people.

The laws of nature and the moral rules deducted from them were explained in allegorical histories, which we call fables, and those allegorical histories were impressed in the memory by symbolical ceremonies denominated mysteries, and which, though afterwards misunderstood and misapplied, con-



tain systems of the most profound, the most sublime, and the most useful theory of philosophy.

Amongst those mysteries are peculiarly remarkable the Eleusinian. Dionysius, Bacchus, Orisis, Adonis, Thamuz, Apollo, &c., were names adopted in various languages, and in several countries, to designate the Divinity, who was the object of those ceremonies, and it is generally admitted that the sun was meant by these several denominations. \*

Let us begin with a fact, not disputed, that in these ceremonies, a death and resurrection was represented, and that the interval between death and resurrection was sometimes three days, sometimes fifteen days.

Now, by the concurrent testimony of all ancient authors † the deities called Osiris, Adonis, Bacchus, &c. were names given to, or types, representing the sun, considered in different situations, and contemplated under various points of view. ‡

Therefore, these symbolic representations, which described the sun as dead, that is to say, hidden for three days under the horizon, must have originated in a climate, where the sun, when in the lower hemisphere, is, at a certain season of the

\* The number of authorities to prove this are collected in Kirker, vol. I p. 288.

Ogygia me Bacchum canit,

Osiris Egyptus putat,

Arabia gens Adoneum.

Ausonius in Myobarbum

Epig. 29.

† Meursius has collected all the authorities and fragments found in ancient authors upon the Eleusinian ceremonies.

‡ Plutarchus, De Iside et Osiride.

year, concealed for three days from the view of the inhabitants.

Such climate is, in fact, to be found as far north as latitude 66°, and it is reasonable to conclude, that, from a people living near the polar circle, the worship of the sun, with such ceremonies, must have originated; and some have supposed that this people were the Atlantides. \*

The worship of the sun is generally traced to Mitraic rites, and those invented by the Magi of Persia. But if the sun could be made an object of veneration, if the preservation of fire could be thought deserving of religious ceremonies, it is more natural that it should be with a people living in a frozen clime, to whom the sun is the greatest comfort, whose absence under the horizon for three days is a deplorable event, and whose appearance above the horizon a real source of joy.

Not so in Persia, where the sun is never hidden for three days together under the horizon, and where its piercing rays are so far from being a source of pleasure, that to be screened from them, to enjoy cool shades, is one of those comforts, to obtain which all the ingenuity of art is exerted. The worship, therefore, of the sun, and the keeping sacred fires, must have been a foreign introduction into Persia.

The conjecture is strengthened by some important facts, which, referring to astronomical, allusions, place the scene out of Persia, though the theory is found there.

In the *Boun Dehesch* (translated by Anquetil Du Perron page 400) we find, that "the longest day of the summer is equal to the two shortest of the winter; and that the longest

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\* *Recherches sur les Atlantides.*

night in the winter is equal to the two shortest nights in summer."

This circumstance can only take place at the latitude of  $49^{\circ} 20'$ , where the longest day of the year is of sixteen hours ten minutes, and the shortest of eight hours five minutes.

This latitude is far beyond the limits of Persia, where history places Zoroaster, to whom the sacred doctrines of the Persian book *Boun Dehesch* are attributed. This proportion, then, of days and nights, as a general rule could only be true in Scythia, whether at the sources of the *Irtisch*, the *Oby*, the *Jenisci*, or the *Slinger*.

We know nothing of the antient history of those Scythians or *Massagetes*, but we know that they disputed their antiquity with the Egyptians,\* and that the above principle, though attributed to the Persian Zoroaster, is only applicable to the country of those Scythians.

But let the origin of the mysteries of the sun begin where it may, they were celebrated in Greece, in various places, amongst others, at *Appollonia*, a city dedicated to *Apollo*, and situated in latitude  $41^{\circ} 22'$ .† In this latitude the longest day has fifteen hours, differing three hours from the length of the day when the sun is on the equinoxial: the reverse is the case with the nights.

This circumstance will account for the preservation of three days in these mysteries, even when celebrated in Greece, and

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\* Herodotus.

† *Martiniere Dicc. Geogr. art. Appollonia.*

also for the fifteen days, or representation of the number of fifteen in some of the Eleusinian rites.

The mysterious numbers were employed to designate such and similar operations of nature, for it is said that the Pythagorean symbols and secrets were borrowed from the Orphic or Eleusinian rites; and that they consisted in the study of the sciences and useful arts, united with theology and ethics, and were communicated in cyphers and symbols.\* Similar intimations, as to the mystic import of numbers are found in many other authors.†

The letters, representing numbers formed cabalistic names, expressive of the essential qualities of those things they meant to represent; and even the Greeks, when they translated foreign names, whose cabalistic import they knew, so they rendered them by Greek letters, as to preserve the same interpretation in numbers, which we find exemplified in the name Nile.‡

\* Jamblicus, part. I cap. 32.

† Plutarchus (in vitæ Numæ) says, that "to offer an odd number to the celestial gods, and an even one to the terrestrial, is proper. The sense of which precept is hidden from the vulgar."

The same Plutarchus (in vitæ Lycurgi) explaining the number of the Spartan Senators, who were 28, says, "something perhaps there is in being a perfect number formed of seven, multiplied by four, and withal the first number after six that is equal to all its parts."

Another proof of the mystic import of numbers is found in Plutarchus (in vitæ Fabii.) "The perfection of the number three consists in being the first of odd numbers, the first of plurals, and containing in itself the first differences, and the first elements of all numbers."

‡ The fertility caused by the inundations of the Nile over the adjacent country caused this river to be considered as a mystic representation of the sun, parent of

But in the number three to which so many mystical and moral allusions were made, had a reference to the three celestial circles, two of which the sun touches, passing over the third in its annual course.\*

The mysteries of Eleusis, the same as those of Dionysius or Bacchus, were supposed by some to have been introduced into Greece by Orpheus;† they may have come there from Egypt, but Egypt may have received them at a previous period from the Persians, and these again from the Scythians; but taking them only as we find them in Greece, we will give here an outline of their ceremonies.

The aspirant for these mysteries was not admitted a candidate till he had arrived at a certain age, and particular persons were appointed to examine and prepare him for the rites of

all fecundity of the earth; and therefore a name was given to it containing the number 365, or days in the solar year. The Greeks thus preserved the name.

N	50
E	5
I	10
Λ	30
O	70
Σ	200
	365

\* Potter's Grec. Antiq.

† Dionysius Siculus, Lib. VI. says, that the Athenians invented the Eleusinian mysteries; but in the first book of his Library he says they were brought from Egypt by Erecteus.

Theodoret Lib. Grec. Affect, says, that it was Orpheus who invented those mysteries, imitating, however, the Egyptian festivities of Isis.

Arnobius and Lactantius describe those mysteries, as also does Clemens.



initiation.\* Those, whose conduct was found irregular, or who had been guilty of atrocious crimes, were rejected, those found worthy of admittance were then instructed by significant symbols in the principles of society.†

At the ceremony of admission into these mysteries, the candidate was first shown into a dark room, called the mystical chapel.‡ There certain questions were put to him. When introduced, the holy book was brought forward, from between two pillars or stones;§ he was rewarded by the vision: \*\* a multitude of extraordinary lights were presented to him, some of which are worthy of particular remark.

He stood on a sheep skin; the person opposite was called the revealer of sacred things;†† and he was also clothed in a sheep skin or with a veil of purple, and on his right shoulder a mule skin spotted or variegated, representing the rays of the sun and stars.‡‡ At a certain distance stood the torch-bear-

\* Hesichius in γδραυ

"They were exhorted to direct their passions. Porphir. ap. Sob. Ecclog. Phis. p. 142.

To merit promotion by improving their minds. Arrian in Epictet. lib. 3 cap. 21.

† Clemens, Strom. Lib. I. p. 325. Lib. VIII. p. 854.

‡ μυςκος σηκος

§ πετωμα

\*\* αντοψια

†† ιεροφαντες

‡‡ Mairobius Saturnalia. Lib. I. c. 8. I will copy here an English translation of this passage, which I have read some where.

"He who desires in pomp of sacred dress,  
The Sun's resplendent body to express,

er,\* who represented the sun; and beside the altar was a third person, who represented the moon.†

Thus we perceive, that over those assemblies presided three persons, in different employments, and we may remark, that in the government of the caravans in the eastern countries, three persons also direct them, though there are five principal officers, besides the three mathematicians; those three persons are, the commander in chief, who rules all; the captain of the march, who has the ruling power, as long as the caravan moves; and the captain of the rest, or refreshment, who assumes the government, as soon as the caravan stops to refresh.‡

Should first a veil assume of purple bright,  
 Like fair white beams combined with fiery light;  
 On his right shoulder next, a mule's broad hide,  
 Widely diversified with spotted pride,  
 Should hang an image of the pole divine,  
 And doedal stars whose orbs eternal shine;  
 A golden splendid zone then, o'er his vest  
 He next should throw, and bind it round his breast,  
 In mighty token how with golden light,  
 The rising sun from earth's last bounds, and night  
 Sudden emerges and with matchless force,  
 Darts through old Ocean's billows in his course,  
 A boundless splendour hence enshrined in dew,  
 Plays on his whirlpools, glorious to the view,  
 While his circumfluent waters spread abroad,  
 Full in the presence of the radiant god;  
 But Ocean's circle, like a zone of light,  
 The sun's wide bosom girds and charms the wand'ring sight.

• *δαδουχος*

† Atheneus, Lib. V. cap. 7.  
 Apuleius. Lib. II. Metamorph.

‡ Fragments, added to Calmet's Dict.  
 Dissertation on the Caravans, taken from Col. Campbell's Travels in India.

Some authors have observed the same division of power, in the march of the Israelites through the wilderness, and consider Moses as the captain general, Joshua the captain of the march; and perhaps Aaron as the captain of the rest.\*

The society of which we are speaking, was ruled by three persons, with different duties assigned to them, by a custom of the most remote antiquity.

The mysteries, however, were not communicated at once, but by gradations,† in three different parts. The business of the initiation, properly speaking was divided into five sections, as we find in a passage of Theo, who compares philosophy to those mystic rites.‡

These ceremonies, thus far, appear to contain the lesser mysteries, or the first and second stages of the candidate in his

\* Ib.

† "The *perfective* part precedes *initiation*, and *initiation* precedes *inspection*."  
Proculs. in Theol. Plat. lib. IV. p. 220.

‡ Again philosophy may be called the initiation into the sacred ceremonies, and the tradition of genuine mysteries; for there are *five* parts of initiation. The first is previous purgation; for neither are the mysteries communicated to all, who are willing to receive them; but there are certain characters, who are prevented by the voice of the crier; such as those who possess impure hands, and an inarticulate voice; since it is necessary that such as are not expelled from the mysteries should first be refined by certain purgations; but after purgation, the tradition of the sacred rights succeeds. The third part is denominated inspection. And the fourth, which is the end, fixing of the crowns: so that the initiated may, by these means, be enabled to communicate to others the sacred rites, in which he has been instructed; whether after this he become the torch-bearer, or an interpreter of the mysteries, or sustain some other part of the sacerdotal office. But the fifth, which is produced from all these, is friendship with divinity, and the enjoyment of that felicity, which arises from intimate converse with the gods.

Theo of Smyrna, in *Mathemat.* p. 18.

progress through the course of his initiations. There was, however, a third stage, when the candidate, himself, was made symbolically to approach death, and then return to life.\*

In this third stage of the ceremony, the candidate was stretched upon the couch,† to represent his death.

As to the festivities, in which those mysteries were celebrated, we find that on the 17th of the month Athyr‡ the images of Osiris were enclosed in a coffin or ark: on the 18th was the search;§ and on the 19th was the finding.\*\*

Thus in fables or symbolical histories, relating to these mysteries, we find Adonis slain and resuscitated; the Syrian women weeping for Thamuz, &c.

Let us now examine what was meant by this symbolical

\* "I approached the confines of death, and treading on the threshold of Proserpine, and being carried through all the elements, I came back again to my pristine situation. In the depths of midnight I saw the sun glittering with a splendid light, together with the infernal and supernatural gods, and approaching nearer to those divinities, I paid the tribute of devout adoration."

Apuleius *Metamorph.* lib. III.

† παζος

‡ This month Athyr, according to the Julian year answers to November, or the winter solstice; but with the Jews, the month of Thamuz, when the solemnities of Adonis were celebrated in Judea, was in June, or summer solstice. The reason appears to be, that the Jews taking this month from the vague year of the Egyptians (and not from the fixed year) settled Thamuz in the summer solstice.

Selden. *De diis Syriis.*

Kirker, vol. I. p. 291.

§ ζητησις. Plutarchus.

\*\* ερρεσις. Plutarchus.

death and resurrection, or by certain personages, said to have visited the Hades, and returning up again.\*

It appears that this type in all its various forms and denomi-

\* We must here observe that the fables were intended to convey more than one meaning; in proof of which we copy the following passage:

"Of fables some are theological, others animastical (or relating to the soul) others material, and lastly others mixed of all these. Fables are theological, which employ nothing corporeal, but speculate the very essence of the gods: such as the fable, which asserts, that Saturn devoured his children: for it insinuates nothing more than the nature of an intellectual god, since every intellect returns to itself. But we speculate fables physically when we speak concerning the energies of the gods about the world; as, when considering Saturn the same as time, and calling the parts of time the children of the universe, we assert that the children are devoured by their parent. But we employ fables in an animastic mode, when we contemplate the energies of the soul; because, the intellection of our souls, though by a discursive energy, they run into other things, yet abiding their parents. Lastly, fables are material, such as the Egyptians ignorantly employ, considering and calling corporeal natures divinities; such as Isis, Earth, Osiris, Humidity, Typhon, Heat; or again, denominating Saturn water, Adonis fruits, and Bacchus, wine. And, indeed, to assert that these are dedicated to the gods, in the same manner as herbs, stones, and animals, is the part of wise men; but to call them gods is alone the province of fools and madmen; unless we speak in the same manner, as when from established custom we call the orb of the sun and its rays the sun itself. But we may perceive the mixt kind of fables, as well in many other particulars, as when they relate, that discord, at the banquet of the gods through a golden apple, and that a dispute about it arising amongst the goddesses, they were sent by Jupiter to take the judgment of Paris, who, charmed with the beauty of Venus, gave her the apple in preference to the rest. For in this fable, the banquet denotes the supermundane powers of the gods, and on this account, a subsisting conjunction with each other: but the golden apple denotes the world, which on account of its composition from contrary natures, is not improperly said to be thrown by discord or strife. But again, since different gifts are imparted to the world by different gods, they appear to contest with each other for the apple. And a soul living according to sense, (for this is Paris) and not perceiving other powers in the universe, asserts that the apple is alone the beauty of Venus. Of these species of fables, such as are theological belong to philosophers, the physical and animastical to poets. But they were mixt with initiatory rites, and the intention of all mystic ceremonies is to conjoin us with the world and the gods."

Salust, the Platonic Philosopher.



nations, indicated the sun passing to the lower hemisphere, and coming again to the upper.\*

The Egyptians, who observed this worship of the sun, under the name of Osiris, represented the sun in the figure of an old man, just before the winter solstice, and typified him by Serapis, having the constellation of Leo opposite to him, the Serpent or Hydra under him, the Wolf on the east of the Lion, and the Dog on the west. This is the state of the southern hemisphere at midnight about that period of the year.

The same Egyptians represented the sun by the boy Harpocrates, at the vernal equinox; and then was the festivity of the death, burial, and resurrection of Osiris; that is to say, the sun in the lower hemisphere; just coming up, and rising above in the upper hemisphere.

In this upper situation the sun was called Horus, Mithras, &c. and hailed as *sol invictus*. We will now point out some other symbols to express the same phenomena, though different from those types we are treating of at present.

In the Mithraical astronomical monuments, where the figure of a man is represented conquering and killing a bull, there are two figures by their sides with torches; one pointing downwards, the other, upwards.

These monuments, where the mysteries in question were depicted, the man killing and conquering the bull, represent the sun, passing to the upper hemisphere, through the sign of Taurus, which in that remote period (four thousand six hundred years before our era) was the equinoxal sign. The two

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\* Orpheus, Hymn. Sol and Adon.

torch-bearers, the one pointing his torch downwards, the other upwards, represent the sun passing down to the lower hemisphere, and coming up again.\*

At the remote time before alluded to, the sun entered the sign Taurus, at the summer equinox, and the year was begun at this period among the Egyptian astronomers.† Afterwards, in consequence of the precession of the equinoxes, the summer equinox took place in the sign of Aries; hence part of the Egyptians transferred their worship from the bull or calf to the ram;‡ while others continued to worship the bull.§

We may explain this in the language of our modern astronomers by saying, that some of the learned Egyptians continued to reckon by the moveable zodiac, while others reckoned the year by the fixed zodiac; and this circumstance produced a division of sects in the people, as it was a division of opinion, amongst the learned.

Likewise, by the same precession of the equinoxes, the sun

\* Kirker, Vol. I. p. 217. Vide Hide, Hist. vet. Persar. 113.

† "The Egyptians began to reckon their months from the time when the sun enters, now, in the beginning of the sign Aries."

Rabb. A. Seba.

‡ "Why has he (Aratus) taken the commencement of the year from Cancer, when the Egyptians date the beginning from Aries?"

Theon. p. 69.

Herodotus (L. 2. cap. 24) says, that the statue of Jupiter Ammon had the head of a ram. Eusebius (Præparat. Evang. L. 3. cap. 12.) tells us, that the idol Ammon had a ram's head with the horns of a goat.

§ Strabo (L. 17.) informs us, that in his time, the Egyptians nowhere sacrificed sheep but in the Niotic Nome.

passed from Aries to Pisces in the vernal equinox, about three hundred and thirty eight years before our era; yet the beginning of the year continued to be reckoned from Aries. If the Egyptian astronomy and Egyptian religion had then existed with the same vigour, both would have perhaps suffered a similar alteration; but the Egyptian systems were at that period nearly annihilated. We may observe, however, that the Christians, at the beginning of our era, marked their tombs with fishes, as an emblem of Christianity, to distinguish their sepulchers from those of the heathens, by a symbol unknown to them.

Returning from this short digression to our immediate purpose, we have to observe, that if those ceremonies and symbols were meant to represent the sun, and the laws of its motions, these very phenomena of nature were studied with a moral view, as being themselves types or arguments to a more sublime or metaphysical philosophy; and the moral rules therefrom deducted, were impressed on the memory by those lively images and representations.

The emerging of the sun into the lower hemisphere, and its returning, was contemplated either as a proof or as a symbol of the immortality of the soul; one of the most important, as well as the most sublime tenets of the Platonic Philosophy.\*

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\* "Also Pindar, speaking of the Eleusinian mysteries, deducts this inference: "Blessed is he, who having seen the common things under the earth, also knows what is the end of life, for he knows the empire of Jupiter."

Clemens Strom. Lib. III. p. 518.

"Since in Phædo he venerates with a becoming silence, the assertion delivered in the Arcane Discourses; that men are placed in the body, as in a certain prison, secured by a guard, and testifies, according to the mystic ceremonies, the different allotments of pure and impure souls in Hades; their habits, and the triple path

The doctrines of the spirituality and immortality of the soul, explained by those symbols, were very little understood, even by the initiated; thus we find some of them\* took those types to signify merely the present body, by their descriptions of the infernal abodes; whereas, the true meaning of these mysteries inculcated the doctrine of a future state of the soul, and future rewards and punishments; and that such were the doctrines of those philosophers is shown by many and indisputable authorities.†

The union of the soul with the body was considered as the death of the soul; its separation as the resurrection of the soul;‡ and such ceremonies and types were intended to impress the doctrine of the immersion of the soul into matter as is well attested.§

arising from their essences, and thus, according to paternal and sacred institutions, all which are full of symbolical theory, and of the poetical descriptions concerning the ascent and descent of souls, of Dionysial signs, the punishment of the Titans, the trivia and wanderings in Hades, and every thing of the same kind."

Proclus, in Comm. of Plauto's Politics, p. 723.

\* Macrobius.

† "We live their death, and we die their life."

Macrobius himself.

‡ "The ancient Theologists also testify, that the soul is in the body, as it were in a sepulchre, to suffer punishment."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. III. p. 518.

§ "When the soul has descended into generation she participates of evil, and profoundly rushes into the region of dissimilitude, to be entirely merged in nothing more than into dark mire."

Again,

"The soul therefore dies through vice, as much as it is possible for the soul to die, and the death of the soul is, while merged or baptized, as it were, in the

By the emblem of the sun descending into the lower hemisphere was also represented the soul of the man, who through ignorance and uncultivation, was in a state compared to sleep, or almost dead; which mystery was intended to stimulate man to the learning of sciences.\*

The Egyptians also considered matter as a species of mud or mire, in which the soul was immersed;† and in an ancient author we find a recapitulation of these theories in the same sense.‡

present body, to descend into matter, and be filled with its impurity; and after departing from this body, to lie absorbed in its filth, till it returns to a superior condition, and elevates its eye from the overwhelming mire. For to be plunged in matter is to descend into the Hades, and there fall asleep."

Plotinus, in *Enead. I. Lib. VIII. p. 80.*

"O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"  
Rom. VII. v. 24.

\* "He who is not able, by the exercise of his reason to define the idea of the good, separating it from all other objects, and piercing, as in a battle, through every kind of argument; endeavouring to confute, not according to opinion, but according to essence, and proceeding through all these dialectical energies, with an unshaken reason: he who cannot accomplish this, would you not say that he neither knows the good itself, nor any thing which is properly denominated good? And would you not assert that such a one, when he apprehends any certain image of reality, apprehends it rather through the medium of opinion than of science; that in the present life he is sunk in sleep, and conversant with delusions of dreams, and that before he is roused to a vigilant state, he will descend to Hades, and be overwhelmed with sleep perfectly profound?"

Plato, *De Rep. Lib. VII.*

† The Egyptians called matter (which they symbolically denominated water) the dregs or sediment of the first life, matter being, as it were, a certain mire or mud.  
Simplicius, in *Arist. Phis. p. 50.*

‡ "Lastly, that I may comprehend the opinion of the ancient theologists on the state of the soul after death, in a few words, they considered, as we have elsewhere asserted, things divine as the only realities, and that all others were only the images



The Persians, who followed the tenets of Zerdoust, called by the Greeks Zoroaster, having received the same doctrines upon the mystical contemplation of the sun, made also the same metaphysical application to the soul, of the passage of the sun through the signs of the zodiac.\*

The sun, moreover, was considered as the symbol of the active principle; whereas the moon and earth were symbols of the passive.†

The sun itself, considering its beneficial influence in the physical world, was chosen as the symbol of the Deity, though afterwards taken by the vulgar as a Deity.‡

or shadows of truth. Hence they asserted that prudent men, who earnestly employed themselves in divine concerns, were above all others in a vigilant state. But that imprudent men, who pursued objects of a different nature, being laid asleep, as it were, were only engaged in the delusions of a dream; and that if they happened to die in this sleep, before they were roused, they would be afflicted with similar and still sharper visions in a future state. And that he who in this life pursued realities, would, after death, enjoy the highest truth; so he who was conversant with fallacies, would hereafter be tormented with fallacies and delusions in the extreme: as the one would be delighted with true objects of enjoyment, so the other would be tormented with delusive semblances of reality."

Ficinus, De Immortalitate Anim.

Lib. XVIII. p. 411.

\* Plato mentions, that this Zoroaster twelve days after his death, when already placed on the pile, came again to life, which perhaps represented, if not something more abstruse, the resurrection of those who are received in heaven, going through the twelve signs of the Zodiac; and he says, likewise, that they hold the soul to descend through the same signs when the generation takes place. This is to be taken in no other way, than the twelve labours of Hercules, by which, when done, the soul is liberated from all the pains of this world.

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 711.

† Apuleius.

‡ Mocopulus, in Hesoid, Ptol. See Cudworth, Book. I. chap. 4.

"This God, whether he ought to be called that which is above mind and un-

It must be here particularly observed, that the different names, which the Egyptians (from whom the Greeks learnt them) gave to God, instead of meaning several gods were only expressions of the different productive effects of the only one God.\* Not very different from

derstanding, or the idea of all things, or the one, (since unity seems to be the oldest of all things) or else, as Plato was wont to call him, the God, I say this uniform cause of all things, which is the origin of all beauty and perfection, unity and power, produced from himself a certain intelligible sun, every way like himself, of which the sensible sun is but an image."

Julian's Orat. in praise of the Sun.

"We see the unity (of God) as the sun from a distance obscurely, if you go nearer, more obscure still; and, lastly, it prevents seeing any thing else. Truly it is an incomprehensible light, inaccessible; and profoundly it is compared to the sun, to which the more you look the more blind you become."

Damascius, Platonius, De Unitate.

The remains of the sectarians of Zoroaster, called now in Persia, Guebres, and who lead a miserable life, and more persecuted by the Mahomedans than the Jews are in Europe by the Christians, still perform their devotions, and say their prayers towards the sun or fire; but assert, that they do not adore them, only conceive them symbols of the Deity.

Vide Stanley, De Vet. Persar.

\* "The first God, before the being and only, is the father of the first God, who he generated, preserving his solitary unity, and this is above the understanding, and that prototype which is said his own father his son, one father, and truly good God . . . . This is the beginning, God of gods, unity from one, above essence, the principle of essence, essence comes from him, for this reason is called father of essence: this is the being, the principle of intelligence; these are principles the most ancient of all . . . . . This intelligence acting or operating, which is the truth of the Lord, and the science, in as much as it proceeds in generating, bringing to light the occult power of the concealed reasons, is called in the Egyptian language *Ammon*; but in as much as it acts without fallacy, and likewise artificially with truth, is called *Phia*; the Greeks call it Vulcan, considering the acting or operating; in as much as he is the operator of all good, is called Osiris, who in consequence of his superiority has many other denominations, in consequence of the many powers and different actions, which he exercises."

Jamblicus, De Myser. Egypt.

what the Jews derive from the great name Tetragramaton.\*

The fables, allegories, and types of the ancients, being of three classes,† import some times various meanings; therefore, some of the ceremonies to which sublime import is attached, are also applied to typify less dignified operations, in the natural system. Thus, for instance, the fable of Proserpine, which alludes to the immersion of the soul into the body, was also employed to symbolize the operation of the seed in the ground.‡

But the general doctrine of Plato of the descent of the soul into the darkness of the body, the perils of the passions, the torments of vices, appears to be perfectly described by Virgil;§ though this Poet was of the Epicurean sect, the most fashionable in his days.

The lesser mysteries represented, as we have seen, the descent of the soul into the body, and the pains therein suffered. The greater mysteries were intended to typify the splendid visions, or the happy state of the soul, both here and hereafter, when purified from the defilements of material nature. These doctrines are also inculcated, by the fables of the fortunate islands, the Elysian fields, &c. The different purifications in these rites were symbols of the gradation of virtues, necessary to the re-ascent of the soul. Inward purity, of which external

\* The Hebrews call it שֵׁם הַמְּפֹרֶשֶׁת Shem Hamphoresh.

† See not \* page 14.

‡ Porphyr. cited by Eusebins, De Præp. Lib. III. cap. 2.

§ Encid. Lib. VI.

purifications were symbols, can only be obtained by the exercise of these virtues.\*

To the allusion of these virtues must be understood what Socrates says,† that it is the business of the philosophers to study to die and to be themselves death; and as at the same time he reprobates suicide, such death cannot mean any other but philosophical death, or the exercise of what he calls the cathartic virtues.

If such was the meaning and import of the Eleusinian and Dionysian rites, symbols, and ceremonies, it must be allowed that a society or sect, which was employed in the contemplation of such sublime truths, cannot be looked upon as trifling or profligate.

The very Christian Fathers, who so strongly attacked the Pagan religion, confessed the utility of these symbols;‡ and that the circumstances previous to initiation into those mys-

\* "In the sacred rites, popular purifications are in the first place brought forth, and after these those as are more Arcane. But in the third place, collections of various things into one are received; after which follows inspection. The ethical and political virtues, therefore, are analogous to the apparent (or popular) purifications. But such of the cathartic virtues as banish all external Impressions correspond to the more occult purifications. The theoretical energies about intelligibles are analogous to the collections; but the contraction of these energies into an indivisible nature, corresponds to initiation. And the simple self-inspection of simple forms, is analogous to epoptic vision."

Olimpiodorus, in Plato's Phæd.

† Vide note † page 18.

‡ "The interpretation of the symbolic kind is useful in many respects; for it leads to theology, to piety, and to show the ingenuity of the mind, the conciseness of expression, and serves to demonstrate science."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 673.

teries, tended to exclude impious notions, and prepare the mind to hear the truth.\*

Those mysteries were concealed from the vulgar; because it would be a ridiculous prostitution of such sublime theories to disclose them to the multitude incapable of understanding them, when even many of the initiates, for want of study and application, did not comprehend the whole meaning of the symbols.

The multitude were told only in the abstract, the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, and were made acquainted with the calendar, the result of astronomical observations; the knowledge of which was connected with their festivities and agricultural pursuits. They were likewise taught other practical parts of science calculated for general use.

The secrecy of these mysteries was the first cause of obloquy against them; next came, beyond doubt, the depravity of their followers, and the perversion of those assemblies into convivial meetings first, and then into the most debauched associations.

Secrecy, also, was enjoined by the laws, it was death to reveal any thing belonging to the Eleusinian mysteries; to disclose imprudently any thing about them, was supposed even indecorous; of this we find a very conspicuous instance in Plutarch.†

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\* "For before the delivery of these mysteries, some expiations ought to take place, that those, who were to be initiated, should leave impious opinions, and be converted to the true tradition."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. VII. p. 848.

† "Alexander gained from him (Aristotle) not only moral and political knowledge, but was also instructed in those more secret and profound branches of science,



Out of respect for this custom the scholars were, in general, only instructed in the *exoteric* doctrines.\* The *acroamatic* doctrines were taught only to the few select, by private communication and *viva voce*.

But when the ignorance of the very teachers of those mysteries caused their forms only to be attended to, the essence was lost, the shadow only remained; and, then, even those forms and ceremonies were frequented by persons, ignorant of their import, and wicked enough to turn them to their private interests, as a machine employed in deceiving the people, and to occasions of debauchery and depravity. We shall give an example of this,

The mysteries of Eleusis, or the Sun, were united or analogous to those of Dionysius or Bacchus; because, according to the Orphic theology, the intellect of every planet was denominated Bacchus: so when the sun was considered as the spiritual intelligence, who moved or caused this planet to move, in its annual circle, he was denominated Trietericus Bacchus.†

which they call *epoptic* and *acroamatic*; and which they did not communicate to every common scholar. For when Alexander was in Asia, and received information that Aristotle had published some books, in which those points were discussed, he wrote to him a letter, in behalf of Philosophy, in which he blamed the course he had taken. The following is a copy of it."

"Alexander to Aristotle, prosperity.—You did wrong in publishing the *acroamatic* parts of science. In what shall we differ from others, if the sublimer knowledge, which we gained from you, be made common to all the world? For my part, I had rather excel the bulk of mankind in the superior parts of learning, than in the extent of power and dominion. Farewell."

Plutarch, in vit. Alex.

\* Aulus Gellius. Lib. XX. cap. 5.

† "He is called Dionysius, because he is carried with a circular motion through the immensely extended heavens."

Orphic vers. apud.

The ceremonies, therefore, of Bacchus, were attended with rejoicings, as the triumph of the spirit over matter; but this circumstance, so intimately connected with the sublime notions of the Eleusinian mysteries, was completely turned into a mere banqueting, and processions of drunken people, who of the ceremonies knew nothing else, than to carry branches of trees in their hands.\*

More, still: a depraved priest introduced those Bacchanalian mysteries into Rome, for the very worst of purposes, which alarming the Senate, the most severe punishment was inflicted on him and his followers.†

In consequence of those abuses, it was, that Socrates refused to be initiated,‡ and the same did Diogenes, alledging that Patæcion, a notorious robber, had obtained initiation:§ Epaminondas, also, and Agesilaus never desired it.\*\*

But if those who were desirous of being licentious clothed themselves with those mysteries, this has nothing to do with the original tenets of the institution. For the purity of its votaries was carried, according to the primitive mysteries, to the most delicate and scrupulous point.††

\* "Indeed there are, as the saying is, many, who go into the mysteries: a multitude certainly of branch bearers (Thyrsirii) but very few Bacchians."

Socrates, in Plato; apud. Clemens Strom. Lib. I. p. 372.

† Livii. Lib. XXXIX. cap. 8 and 18.

‡ Lucian, in Demonat. tom. 2. p. 308.

§ Plutarch. De aud. Poet. tom. 2. p. 21.

\*\* Diogen. Lært. Lib. VI. § 39.

†† "A woman asked, how many days ought to pass, after she had congress with her husband, before she could attend the mysteries of Ceres. The answer was, with your husband immediately, with a strange man never."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. IV. p. 619.

After such respectable authorities, as we have referred to, we must reject, as impudent calumnies, the assertion of Tertullian, who says, that the natural parts of a man were enclosed in the ark carried about in the processions of those mysteries: Theodoret and Arnobius say, they were the parts of a woman: such assertors had no means of ascertaining what was not known to any one, out of the precincts of those most recondite mysteries.\*

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\* As a proof of the sublime ideas of God, entertained by the Egyptian sages, in contradiction to these gross accusations, we copy the following passages, from the very Mercurius Trimegistus, as related by Pimandrus.

"The Artificer fabricated the whole universe with his word, not with his hands. He however has it always present in his mind, acting all, one only God, constituting every thing with his will; this is his body, not tangible, not visible, nor similar to any other: for he is not fire, not water, not air, not even spirit; but from him depend every thing good; however, such he is, as every thing belongs to him."

Again,

"But that you should not want the principal name of God, nor you should be ignorant of what is clear, and seems concealed from many; for, if it never appears, it is nowhere. Whatever appears only to your sight is created; what is concealed is all eternal; nor is it a reason why it should appear, as it never ends; he puts every thing before our eyes, but he remains concealed; because he enjoys an all eternal life: clearly he brings every thing to light, but he delights in the *adytum*; one, and uncreated, incomprehensible to our imagination (*phantasia*); but as every thing is enlightened by him, he shines in all and through all things; and yet appears chiefly to those, to whom he is pleased to communicate his name."

Again,

"There is nothing in nature that is not him; he is all that exists; he is even what is not; and what is, he brought into light. And as nothing can be made without a maker, so you must think that unless God is always acting, it is impossible for any thing to exist in heaven, air, earth, sea, in all the world, in any particle of the world, in what is as well as in what is not. This is with the best name, God; this, again, is the most powerful of all things; this, conspicuous in mind; this, present with eyes; this, incorporeal; this, as it were, *multi-corporeal*, for nothing is in the bodies that is not in him; because, he alone exists in all; he has all names; because he is the only father; so it has no name because he is the father of all."

Apud Kirker, Vol. II. p. 504.

We should rather guess, that in the ark, carried in the procession, and said to enclose the body of Osiris, spheres were deposited, representing our solar system.\*

In regard to these accusations, found in some of the ecclesiastical writers, we must also observe, that many of them, led by a mistaken zeal for the Christian religion, disfigured in a most reprehensible degree, the ancient historical monuments: taking, for instance, the manner in which the history of Egypt as written by Manethon, was transmitted to us by those ecclesiastical writers:† others of such writers, in fact, knew nothing of the Egyptian mysteries.‡

The conclusion, therefore, is, that the motives of those institutions were good and pure, as tending to the study of science, and practice of morality, though the same institutions

\* Synesius, speaking of the Egyptian hierophant; observes thus; "they have *κωμαστῆρια*, which are arks, concealing, they say, the spheres."

See Plutar. De Iside and Orsiride.

† Julius Africanus, a Christian Priest, by birth a Jew, made a short compendium of the history of Manethon, that the author himself might be dispensed with: this was about the year 230 of the Christian era. Finding that the Egyptian Chronology represented the world some thousands of years older than the chronology of the Bible, he so disfigured the dates of Manethon as to make him agree with the Bible.

Moreover, this work of Africanus is also lost, and we have only extracts of it, preserved in the work of a monk, generally known by the name of Syncellus, who confesses that he mutilated and altered Africanus. Now this individual not even had the original Bible, but only the Greek translation, which avowedly has the chronology vitiated; and yet Manethon's data were to be disfigured and interpolated, to make it square with the incorrect Greek translation of the Bible.

‡ "Celsus seems to me, here, to do just as if a man, travelling into Egypt, where the wise men of the Egyptians, according to their country learning, philosophize much, about those things that are accounted by them divine, whilst the idiots, in the mean time, hearing only certain fables, which they know not the meaning of, are very much pleased therewith: Celsus, I say, does as if such sojourner in Egypt,

afterwards degenerated;\* and their degeneration was followed by the ruin of the state, as predicted by Trimegistus himself,

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who had conversed only with those ideots, and not been at all instructed by any of the priests, in their arcane and recondite mysteries, should boast that he knew all that belonged to the Egyptian theology."

Origines, contra Celsum, Lib. I. p. 11.

"When amongst the Egyptians there is a king chosen out of the military order, he is forthwith brought to the priests, and by them instructed in that arcane theology which conceals mysterious truths under obscure fables and allegories."

Plutarch. De Iside, p. 354.

\* We will content ourselves, here with the authority of Kircher, one of the most learned antiquarians in Egyptian matters.

"Therefore, Hermes, that great author of the hieroglyphic doctrine, elucidating many things, chiefly about God, and his perfections, also of the creation of the world, and its preservation, of the administration of the same world and its parts, both by himself, and through his angels, as he heard of the Patriarchs about the government of the world, endeavoured seriously to penetrate these things: hence sprang a new philosophy in which as he treated of more sublime things than the ignorant could understand, he veiled under a new art, afterwards called hieroglyphic, which was hidden from rude understandings, not in wooden monuments, but in mystic figures, engraved in hard stones, for an eternal memorial with posterity; as a sublime science of things deserving eternal veneration, and worthy of being recommended to all; and in imitation of the great eternal Artificer, in the administration of the world, he so constituted his system, that it was communicated only to the select hieromists, priests, stolist, and hierogramatists, men of great genius, wise for the government of the state, according to the rules of administration, prescribed in the obelisks, and men who had shown ability and aptitude, and were moreover restricted, by oath, to keep it secret. By these means the priests, being looked upon by all with admiration, in consequence of their science in those new things, expressed in the symbols, were honoured by the multitude almost as half gods. But to increase this veneration they told the people many things about the apparitions of the gods, their answers, and how they were to be worshipped to sooth them and make them propitious: to this we must add the great profit they had by their machines and mechanical inventions and their skill in mathematics; and their making statues that moved their eyes and head, to express approbation or disapprobation: and that the miserable multitude was deceived and beguiled, paying always to obtain a favor from the gods, or to avert their anger. Hence it came, that in the course of time, that religion conceived by Trimegistus in a sincere sense, was by degrees degenerated into open and declared idolatry."

Kircher, vol. IV. p. 82.



who in this prediction proved how great a philosopher and politician he was.\*

Having thus established what was the meaning and import of the Eleusinian or Dionysian mysteries amongst the ancient Greeks, who transmitted to us the knowledge of them; and having shown that the ceremonies were not intended in their origin as a worship of the sun, considered as a Deity, we shall proceed to examine how those mysteries were communicated to other nations by the Greeks.

About fifty years† before the building of the Temple of Solomon in Jerusalem, a colony of Grecians, chiefly Ionians, complaining of the narrow limits of their country, in an increased population, emigrated; and having been settled in Asia Minor, gave to that country the name of Ionia.‡

\* "O Egypt, Egypt, of thy religion only the fables remain, and those incredible to thy posterity."

Trimegistus, in Asclepio.

† The emigration of the Ionians to Asia Minor is mentioned by Herodotus, and others, but the epoch is fixed by various authors differently:

By Playfair in the year B. C. ....	1044
Gillies .....	1055
Barthelemy. Anacharsis .....	1076

‡ "It is said, that the chief of the Ionian colony was Androclus, a legitimate son of Codrus, the king of Athens; so it is related, that the Ionians established their royalty; and those descending from that race, even now, are called kings, and enjoy their honors, that is to say, a place where they attend the spectacles and the public games, wearing the royal purple, and a staff instead of the sceptre, and the Eleusinian rites."

Strabo, Lib. XIV. p. 907.

This emigration is also mentioned by Herodotus, Lib. I. cap. 142, and 148; Aelianus, Lib. VIII. Pausanias, in Achaicis; Plutarchus, in Homero, Veleius Paterculius, in Chronico. Clemens, Lib. I. Strom.

No doubt that people carried with them their manners, sciences, and religion; and the mysteries of Eleusis\* among the rest. Accordingly we find that one of their cities, Byblos, was famed for the worship of Apollo, as Apollonia had been with their ancestors.†

These Ionians, participating in the improved state of civilization in which their mother country, Greece, then was, cultivated the sciences, and useful arts; but made themselves most conspicuous in architecture, and invented or improved the order called by their own name Ionian.

These Ionians formed a society, whose purpose was to employ themselves in erecting buildings. The general assembly of the society, was first held at Theos; but afterwards, in consequence of some civil commotions, passed to Lebedos.‡

This sect or society was now called the Dionysian Artificers, as Bacchus was supposed to be the inventor of building theatres; and they performed the Dionysian festivities.§ They afterwards extended themselves to Syria, Persia, and India.\*\*

\* Vide Strabo, above.

† "Byblos was capital of Cinera, and there was a temple of Apollo, situated on an elevated spot, not far from the sea. Afterwards is the river called Adonis."  
Strabo, Lib. XVI. p. 1074.

‡ "Lebedos, was the seat and assembly of the *Dionysian Artificers*, who inhabit from Ionia to the Hellespont; there they had annually their solemn meetings and festivities in honor of Bacchus. Their first seat was Theo.

Strabo, Lib. XIV. p. 921.

The Latin translator of Strabo renders the *Dionysian Artificers* (Διονυσιοῦ τεχνῆ) *scenicos artificers*; because Bacchus or Dionysus was supposed to be the inventor of theatres and *scena*, derived from the Heb. שָׁנָה, to inhabit.

§ Polydor. Virg. de Rer. Invent, L. 3. c. 13.

\*\* Strabo, p. 471.

From this period, the Science of Astronomy which had given rise to the symbols of the Dionysian rites, became connected with types taken from the art of building.\*

These Ionian societies divided themselves into different sections, or minor assemblies.† Some of those small or dependent associations had also their distinguishing names.‡

But they extended their moral views, in conjunction with the art of building, to many useful purposes, and to the practice of acts of benevolence.§

\* From the application of instruments of architecture to morality, the Platonic and Pythagorean philosophers took not only types but words to explain our moral ideas.

For instance, a *right* man (*rectus*); *obligation*, from ligament (*ligare*) and from the same law (*lex a ligare*); to *square* our actions (*quadrare*) *Iustum aequum*, &c. *Rude* mind, *polished* mind; from *rude* stone, and *polished* stone, &c.

† The meetings or assemblies of the Dionysian Artificers went by various names, (*αἷ συνοικία*) *contubernium*, which was the place of their meeting. The society was called sometimes *συναγωγή* (*collegium*); *ἄρεσις* (*secta*); *συνόδος* (*congregatio*) *κοινός* (*communitas*).

Aulus Gellius, Lib. cap. 11.

‡ See Chiseul, *Antiquitates Asiaticæ*, p. 95.

§ "This example imitated those Ionians who emigrated from Europe to the maritime countries of Caria (Asia Minor) and also the Dorians, their neighbours, building temples at a common expense. The Ionians built the temple of Diana at Ephesus, the Dorians that of Apollo at Triopii, where at a certain period they repaired with their wives and children, and there performed sacred rites, and had a market, likewise games, races, wrestlings, music-parties of different kinds, and made common offerings to the gods. When they had performed the spectacles and the business of the market, or fair, and fulfilled towards each other the duties of fellow creatures, if there was any litigation between the cities, they sat as judges to settle the dispute: moreover, in these assemblies they debated as to the war with the barbarians, and the means of keeping a mutual concord amongst the nations."

Dionis. Halicarn. Lib. III. p. 229. edit. 1691.

We find recorded, that these societies, and their utility, were many years afterwards inquired into, by Cambyses, king of Persia, who approved of them, and gave to them great marks of favour.\*

It is essential to observe, that these societies had significant words to distinguish their members;† and for the same purpose they used emblems taken from the art of building.‡

Let us now notice the passage of the Dionysian Artificers to Judea. Solomon obtained from Hiram, king of Tyre, men skilful in the art of building, when the Temple was erected at Jerusalem.§ Amongst the foreigners, who came on this occasion, we find men from Gabel, called Giblim; \*\* that is to say, the Ionians settled in Asia Minor, for Gabel, or Byblos, was

\* "After this, the inhabitants of Ionia thought proper to apply to Cambyses, and having represented to him what was their business, the king ordered them into his presence, and asked who they were, and how they came to live in his dominions; and having examined and ascertained from whence they proceeded, he admired them, and chose rather that they should be erected into a society by himself, than to allow that he received such as coming from another country; for he thought it was not decorous to receive favours from others, who sojourned in his country, as if he would receive those services as pay for their habitations; and, therefore, to show this, dismissed them with presents, as marks of his munificence."

Libanius in Orat. XI. Antiochus. Vol. II. p. 343.

† Robertson's Greece, p. 127.

‡ Eusebius de Prep. Evang. L. III. c. 12. p. 117.

§ I Kings, chap. v.

\*\* The English translation of the Bible in I Kings c. v. v. 18 where the original Hebrew says Giblim (גִּבְלִים) or Gibblites, which means inhabitants of Gebbel, renders it, by the appellation, *stone squares*. The proof that this reading is not correct, is not only because of the different opinions of all other translations, which understand by this Giblim the inhabitants of Gebbel; but that the same English

that city where stood the temple of Apollo, where the Eleusinian rites or Dionysian mysteries were celebrated, as we have already stated.\*

We could, in addition to this argument produce some authority; for Josephus says that the Grecian style of architecture was used at the temple of Jerusalem.†

After this we cannot be surprised to find that the ceremonies of Eleusis, or Thamuz, should be introduced into Judea, particularly, as Solomon himself, after having entered into the scientific allusions, in the construction of the temple, was not free from the accusation of the gross superstition of idolatry. ‡

So we find some years afterwards the prophet Ezekiel complaining that the Israelitish women were weeping for Thamuz

translation, in another part of the Bible, renders the same word by the *ancients of Gebbal*. (Ezek. ch. xxvii. v. 9.)

Now that Gabbal was the same as Byblos is clear; because the Septuagint version always translates this Gebbal for Byblos, and though there were several cities of this name, yet this one seems to be that which is between Tripoli and Berite; and still called Gebail.

In fact, Lucian, in his Treatise De Dea Syria, says expressly, that Gabala was Byblos, famous for the worship of Adonis.

\* For we find in Ezekiel these words "And I saw the women sitting weeping for Thamuz," that is to say, Adonis. Such, however, was what was done by the inhabitants of those cities, in testimony of which, they sent letters to women who were at *Byblos*, when Adonis was found, and afterwards sealed and thrown into the sea, they say they were spontaneously carried to Byblos; and, when arrived there, women ceased to weep for Adonis."

Procopius in Isaiah c. xviii.

† Josephus Antiquit. Lib. VIII. c. 5.

‡ I Kings chap. xi. v. 5, and 6.



at a certain period of the year, at the very gates of the temple.\*

But it is natural to suppose that the Dionysian Artificers would not have attempted to introduce those rites amongst the religious Jews, as a mere matter of idolatry, for the worship of the sun. The ideas of the Israelites, concerning the unity of God, would have revolted at any thing, inducing a belief of the polytheism of the Gentiles.

The symbol, therefore, in these mysteries, must have been explained to the Jews, to mean only the sun, in the true and original sense of those mysteries; that is to say, as an emblem of God's goodness to man; and the apparent motions of that luminary, first as the guide for fixing the seasons; next as types or remembrances of the immortality of the soul: for this dogma does not appear either clear in the books of the Jews before that period, or universally admitted amongst them at a much later date.†

To avoid, therefore, any allusion to idolatry in these ceremonies and symbols, another personage or another name must have been substituted for Adonis or Osiris; and as a symbolical death and resurrection was essential, in the allegory of the

\* Ezek. c. viii. v. 14. *Thamuz* signifies the name of a month, and likewise the name of an idol or divinity, which even in the opinion of St. Jerome is the same as Adonis. Plutarch says that the Egyptians called Osiris *Ammuz*, and from thence was corruptly derived the name of Jupiter Ammon. Robertson (*Thesaurus Linguae Sanctæ*) says that the word *Ammuz* (read *Ammoum*) used by Herodotus and Plutarch, were corruptions from the Hebrew *Thamuz* (תָּמוּז). I would rather say that the word was originally Egyptian, and made Hebrew by the addition of the formative ט; and the more so, as *Ammuz* in the Egyptian language signifies (by the explanation of Manetho in Plutarch) something abstruse or concealed; which has an evident allusion to the concealment or symbolical death of Osiris or Adonis.

† Mark. chap. xii. v. 18.

system, the history of the death of another individual must have been substituted . . . . .

However, in framing this new symbolical history, such circumstances were to be related, connected with the death of that personage, as to typify and account for the whole of the Eleusinian mysteries, or the passage of the sun from the upper to the lower hemisphere, and its return up again.\*

In the formation of this new system, or rather new allegory to the same system, though the name of the hero was changed, the circumstances must have been preserved, as far as consistent with new names . . . . .

The whole fabric of the temple would favor an allusion of this sort.

The foundation stone was laid on the second day of the second month;† which corresponds upon an average to the 20th of April; reckoning the sacred year, upon the fixed zodiac.

Now if you rectify your globe to the latitude of Jerusalem (31.° 30′) at that period of the year, you will have the sun in Aries, or the sun represented by a ram or sheep, or a man in a sheep's skin; as the hierophant was represented, in the mysteries of Eleusis.‡

\* Thus in the numbers, 3, 5, 7, 12, 15 must have been preserved as essential. In the ceremonies, the symbol of death and resurrection; the crossing of the equinoxial twice, &c. In the time, the season of the year, when the sun arrives at the two tropics, the rising, the southing, the setting, &c.

† Chron. chap. iii. v. 2.

‡‡ page 10.

‡ See note

Therefore, the very period of the year in which the foundation stone of the temple was laid, would afford an opportunity of establishing upon it a new allegorical system, to explain the ancient mystery.

If we suppose the globe to represent the world in the position above described, the aspirant being in the west facing the hierophant, who in the east represents the rising sun, the candidate will find himself between the two tropics, represented by the two columns\* which were placed on the west entrance of that temple . . . . .

The better to understand the facility with which the ancient system could be adapted to the circumstances of the temple of Jerusalem, we must consider its typic emblems, according to the notions of the Jews, and some of the Christian fathers.

The temples built in honor of the several gods, were so shaped, as to have allusion to the supposed attributes of such gods.† But the universe was supposed by the Platonists to be the true temple of the true and only God.‡ The temple, therefore, dedicated to the true God, was to be a type of the universe.

Thus we find that the temple of Jerusalem was situated

\* πετρωμα

† Vitruvius Lib. IV. c. 5.

‡ "Justly, therefore, Plato knowing the world to be the temple of God, showed a place in the city where the symbols should answer."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 691.

east and west, and with dimensions and types all adapted to represent the universal system of nature.\*

If the temple of Solomon was a type of the universe, to

\* We shall here first quote the authority of the Jews on this point.

"Now let us consider what may be subindicated by the cherubim and flaming sword turning every way. What if this ought to be thought the circumvolution of the whole heavens?"

"But of the flaming sword turning every way, it may thus be understood to signify the perpetual motion of these (Cherubim) and of the whole heavens. But what if it be taken otherwise? So that the two cherubim signify both hemispheres."

Philo Judeus, p. 111, & 112.

"The tunic of the high priest since it was of linen, represents the earth; but the blue, the pole of heaven; the lightnings were indicated by the pomegranates; the thunders by the sound of the bells, &c. . . ."

". . . . But the two sardonixes, with which the pontifical garment is clasped, denotes the sun and the moon, but if any one wish to refer the twelve stones to the twelve months, or to the same number of stars (constellations) in the circle, which the Greeks called the zodiac, he will not wander from the true meaning."

Josephus, Antiq. Lib. III.

Now for the Christian Fathers:

"It would be too long to follow the prophetical and legal (statements) which have been expressed by enigmas: almost the whole of the divine Scripture offer up these sort of oracles.

"He who reasons properly will find sufficient for the purpose, we shall give a few examples. So for instance what the ancients told of the temple, the seven enclosures, which also refer to other things in the history of the Hebrews, and what was inside by the apparatus of divers symbols, referring to appearances, signify in their composition what refers to heaven and earth. They signify, then, what to the nature of the elements imports the revelation of God. For the purple comes from the water, the linen (Βυσσος) from the earth, the blue (hyacinthus) from the colour of the sky, as it is dark; the scarlet, the fire. In the middle, however, of the Temple was the veil, beyond which only the priests could go; there was the censer, symbol of the earth, which is this world, and from which exaltations takes place. But that place, which afterwards inside of the veil, where only the high priest had permission to enter, and that on certain days; the external court which was open to all Hebrews, they say was the medium between heaven and earth. Others say it was the symbol of the world, which is perceived by our intellectual senses. But the opening which separated the infidelity of the people,

symbolize that Jehovah was no local God, but the only God, Lord of the universe; tradition also tells us that the place of assembly of the Dionysian Artificers was allegorically describ-

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was extended before five columns, and separated those who were in the court."

Clemens, Strom. L. V. p. 665.

This Christian Father explains these columns, by the following passage of Plato:

"Plato says we must contemplate these columns, and diligently see that no profane person dares to go there. Those are profane who believe that nothing exists, but what they can touch with their hands, but the actions and generations, and all those things, which we cannot see, in things which exist, are without number. Such are those who attend to nothing else beyond the five senses."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V.

"Now for the candlestick, which was placed on the south of the censer. By this was exemplified the motion of the seven planets, which have their motions in the south. For on each side of the candlestick were branches, and in them lamps; because, the sun also, as a lamp, is placed in the middle of the other errant (stars), and those which are above it, and those which are below it, by a certain divine harmony receive light from him."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 666.

"Those things, however, told of the sacred ark, signify the world as perceived by the intellectual senses, which are occult and shut to the vulgar. Besides those golden images, each having six wings, they either signify the two bears, as some will have it; or, what seems more convenient, the two hemispheres. Indeed the name of cherubim signifies an extensive knowledge. But both have two wings, and thus signify the sensible world, and the time carried on by the circle of the zodiac."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 667.

"But the 360 bells, pending from the long robe (of the priest) are the times of the year; for it is said, this is the year of the Lord, preaching and sounding the great arrival of the Saviour."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 668.

"The two brilliant emerald stones, which are on the shoulder-piece, signify the sun and the moon, which are the helpers of nature. For it was supposed the shoulder to be the beginning of the hand. But those other twelve stones, which are disposed in four rows, describe to us the circle of the zodiac, and agreeing to the four seasons of the year."

Clemens, Strom. Lib. V. p. 691.



ed by its dimensions, as a symbol of the universe, in length, in breadth, in height, and in depth.

The ancients represented the course of the stars, by the winding of a snake; but if this snake was so placed as to have the tail in her mouth, it then represented eternity.

Now if we consider the beginning of the civil year amongst the Hebrews, the month Tisri, which was in the winter equinox;\* the sun, proceeding from thence, approaches the south, and touches the tropic of Capricorn; then retrocedes towards the north, crossing the equinoxal, and touching the tropic of Cancer; from whence retroceding again to the south, arrives at the equinoxial, finishing the year.

These points, in an extended map of the two hemispheres seem separate; but the emblem of the snake biting its tail, would represent the end of the year, meeting the beginning.†

\* The first civil month of the Jews, called Tisri, (תִּישְׂרִי) was from the Egyptian Misri, changing only the formative מ into ת. And the word was derived from יִסְרָךְ (*rectum esse*), as then the sun was in the equinoxial: and the Rabbins, to this day, call the equinoxial מִישְׂרִי. The Greeks spelling badly the name called this Egyptian month ημυζορο.

† The number 12, which is that of the months of the year, and alluded to in so many types of the Temple, must have afforded also facilities to establish the system of the Dionysian Artificers; and therefore we shall give some idea of the heathen philosophy attached to this number, in the following extracts from Suidas:

"The great Demiurgos, or architect of the universe, employed twelve thousand years, in the work he has produced, and divided in twelve times the twelve houses of the sun."

Suidas, Art. Tyrrenhia.

"In the first thousand, he made the heaven and earth. In the second thousand, the firmament (expansion) which he called *coelum*. In the third thousand, he made the sea, and the water that runs on the earth. In the fourth, he made two

Mr. Hutchinson has proved, that the globes, on the top of the two columns, at the portico of the temple, were orreries, or

great torches of nature. In the fifth, he made the quadrupeds, animals that live on the earth and in the waters. In the sixth, he made the man."

"The first six thousand years having preceded the formation of the human race, it seems it will not exist but during six thousand years, which are the others to complete the period of twelve thousand, at the end of which the world will finish."

Suidas ib.

Now if you take each sign of the zodiac for 24,000 years, you will explain the above mystery. When the sun comes out of Aries, or the spring sign, the world is said to be born; here the period of life begins. When the sun is in Cancer, or the summer, is the pleasure and delights of life. When in Libra, life has declined: after that all is winter of death; and from this arise the fables about the four ages of the world.

The books of the Persian Mythology explain to us the same meaning.

"Time is 12,000 years, it is said in the law, that the celestial people were three thousand years to exist, and then the enemy (Satan or Arhiman) was not in the world, which makes six thousand years . . . ."

"The thousand of good appeared in the Lamb, the Bull, the Taurus, the Cancer, the Lion, and the Sheep, which make six thousand years. After the thousand of God, comes the Scale (Libra), Arhiman came into the world (that is to say the winter)."

Boun Dehesh; translation du Perron, p. 420.

"Orsmud, speaking in the law, says, 'I made the productions of the world in 365 days: it is for this reason that the six *gahs gahambars* (months) are included in the year."

ib. p. 400.

Astronomically speaking, there is no period or cycle of 12,000 years. But Dupuis has solved the mystery, by saying, that the periods of the ancient Indians and Chaldeans, answered to the series 1, 2, 3, 4, or 4, 3, 2, 1.

Thus the duration of the four ages of the world, according to the Ezour Vedan, were

1st age	_____	4.000 years
2nd	_____	3.000
3rd	_____	2.000
4th	_____	1.000

Memoirs de l'Academie des Inscript. tom. 31. p. 254.

The Baga Vedan counts thus,

mechanical representations of the motions of the heavenly bodies.\*

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1st age _____	4.800 years
2nd _____	3.600
3rd _____	2.400
4th _____	1.200
	12.000
Total	12.000

The Indians figured this system by a cow with four legs; or the number twelve, taken successively four times.

Another Indian period establishes the duration of the world thus,

1st age _____	1:728.000 years
2nd _____	1:296.000
3rd _____	864.000
4th _____	432.000
	4:320.000
Total	4:320.000

Now the smallest of these numbers (432.000) elevated to 2, 3, and 4, will give a sum total of 4:320.000.

The Indians say that the year of the gods is composed of 360 years of those of men; if you divide 4:320.000 for 360 you will have 12.

In the Chaldean period, as given by Berosus, we find the same numbers of 432.000, and to compose it, he follows the arithmetic order, thus:

1st degree _____	12.000
2nd _____	24.000
3rd _____	36.000
4th _____	48.000
5th _____	60.000
6th _____	72.000
7th _____	84.000
8th _____	96.000
	432.000
Total	432.000

\* The columns or pillars were denominated יכין and כצן; the first signifies establish, from כין to establish or make firm; the second signifies in strength, from the proposition ב in, and the root צון strength.

I think, that after those circumstances, which afforded so many facilities for the introduction of the system of the Dionysian Artificers in Judea, the continuance of the same, in subsequent periods, cannot be of difficult explanation.

We find it stated, in the Book of the Maccabees,\* that a society existed in those days in Judea, called the Assideans or Cassideans, whose business it was to take care of the repairs of the temple.

From these Cassideans proceeded the sect or society of the Essenians, which, according to Philo and Josephus, were the same as the Assideans; and probably, because they admitted no women in their assemblies, Pliny says† that they were propagated without wives.

Josephus‡ mentions the first of the Essenians, in the time

\* "Now the Assideans were the first amongst the children of Israel that sought peace of them."

Maccab. vii. v. 13.

I should translate this passage differently, thus:

"And those, who amongst the sons of Israel were called Assideans, were the first of this assembly, and they wished to ask them peace."

According to this interpretation, by far more expressive of the text, it is seen, that the Assideans were a respectable body, for they were the first of that assembly.

In 1 Maccab. ii. v. 42, it is said, "Then came there unto him a company of Assideans, who were mighty men of Israel, even all such as were voluntarily devoted unto the law."

The very word Assidean or Cassidean is supposed to be derived from the Hebrew *Casidim*, which in Psalm 78. v. 2. is taken in the sense of men pious, holy, full of piety and mercy.

† "So for thousands of centuries, incredible to be said, this people is eternal, without any body being born amongst them."

Pliny, Lib. V. cap. 17.

‡ Josephus, Lib. 13. cap. 19.

of Aristobulus, and Antigonus the son of Hircanus; but Suidas\* and others were of opinion that they were a branch of the Rechabites, who subsisted before the captivity.

Josephus, probably ignorant of the secret tenets of the Essenians, also accuses them of worshipping the sun, or saying prayers before the sun rising, as if to incite him to rise. But this very accusation, again, identifies them with the sect of the Dionysian Artificers, who, as appears by the reasons above stated, were supposed to adore the sun.

Josephus relates many other particulars, by which, in a striking manner, he brings them to what we have related of the other societies which preceded them.† It also points out the conformity of their ideas with those of the Platonists and Dionysians, on the nature of the soul.‡ In short, they used

\* In προγονοι.

† "Before they admit any one who desire it, into their sect, they put him to one year's probation, and inure him to the practice of their most uneasy exercises. After this term they admit him into the common refectory, and the place where they bathe; but not into the interior of the house, till after another trial of two years; then they are allowed to make a kind of profession, wherein they engage by horrible oaths, to observe the laws of piety, justice, and modesty; fidelity to God and their Prince; never to discover the secrets of their sect to strangers, and to preserve the books of their masters, and the names of angels with great care."

Josephus, loco citato.

‡ "They hold the soul to be immortal, and believe that souls descend from the highest air into the bodies animated by them, whither they are drawn by some natural attraction, which they cannot resist; and after death, they swiftly return to the place, from whence they came, as if freed from a long and melancholy captivity. In respect to the state of the soul after death, they have almost the same sentiments as the heathen, who place the souls of good men in the Elysian fields, and those of the wicked in Tartarus."

Josephus, loco citato.



symbols, allegories, and parables, after the manner of the ancients. \*

The practices of those Essenians are represented by Philo† as the most pacific, and full of social virtues; and those amongst them who were most enthusiastic for their tenets, had their goods in common, as the Christians had in the first ages of Christianity.‡

The Essenians had not their ceremonies and mysteries, recorded in history; but thus far we know, that they transmitted to posterity the doctrines which they received from their ancestors;§ they had also distinguishing signs;\*\* and the festival banquets;†† though it does not appear that they followed the profession of builders or architects exclusively.

\* Philo, Lib. V. cap. 17.

† "Some employ themselves in husbandry, others in trade and manufactures of such things only as are useful in time of peace, their designs being beneficial only to themselves and other men . . . ."

"You do not find an artificer among them, who would make an arrow, a dart, or sword; or helmet, or cuirass, or shield, or any sort of arms, machines, or warlike instruments."

Philo, loco citato.

‡ "Their instructions run principally on holiness, equity, justice, economy, policy, the distinction between real good and real evil; of what is indifferent, what we ought to pursue or to avoid. The three fundamental maxims of their morality are, the love of God, of virtue, and of our neighbour."

Philo, loco citato.

§ "the Essenians transmitted the doctrines they had received from their ancestors."

Philo. De vita contemplativa

Apud opera, p. 691

\*\* "They had distinguishing signs."

Ib.

†† "I shall say something of their congregations and how often they celebrated their banquets, &c."

Ib. p. 692.

Out of Judea we find also societies distinguished by the same characters as the Essenians, and with the same tenets of Plato; for, the Pythagoreans also employed the symbols from the art of building.\*

The Dionysian Artificers existed also in Syria, Persia, and India;† and the Eleusinian mysteries were preserved in Europe, even at Rome, until the eighth century of the Christian era.‡

After this epoch, Europe was visited by the most barbarous nations who, persecuting every scientific research, scattered a general darkness, in which all the labours of the ancients, in favor of mankind, were nearly lost, in the general ignorance of their times.

Those very societies and sects, had also been in former periods much abused, and the ceremonies converted, as we have seen, for the worst of purposes: this was another powerful cause for their decline and ruin.

Christianity was then in Europe, the only bond of morality, by which power could, in some measure, be controuled, or restrained.

When the sciences began to revive, a general fanaticism prevailed, and a spirit of persecution appeared, which caused the ancient doctrines of philosophers, and the old systems of

\* Vide Iamblicus, de Vita Pythagoræ, cap. 17. and Basnage, History of the Jews, B. II. cap. 13.

† Strabo, p. 471.

‡ Psellus, quoted by Clinch, Antologia Hibernica, for January, 1794.

morality to be regarded only as offsprings of atheism, and practices of idolatry.

Under these circumstances, the Eleusinians, the Dionysian Artificers, Assideans or Essenians, sunk into such oblivion, that no mention is made of them in history.

In the tenth century, during the wars of the crusades, some societies were instituted in Palestine, and Europe, which adopted some regulations resembling those of the ancient fraternities. But it was in England, and chiefly in Scotland, where the remains of the old system, identified with that of the Dionysian Artificers, were discovered in modern times.

*Cætera desunt.*