

# THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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## HEAVEN AND EARTH

BY CHWANG TSZE

1. Great as are Heaven and Earth, their manifestations are rooted in one source; numberless as are the myriad of things, the power which governs them is one; multitudinous as are human beings, one Lord is their ruler. Sovereignty begins in virtue and ends in Tao,\* wherefore is virtue called mysterious and sublime.

In ancient times the Empire was governed by Wu-Wei,† which is heavenly virtue. The words of rulers being in conformity with Tao, all was ordinate; public services being performed in conformity with Tao, the duties of both rulers and subjects were clear; activities being in conformity with Tao, these duties were adequately performed; the universal outlook being in conformity with Tao, all things perfectly responded thereto. Thus virtue is the connecting link between Heaven and Earth, and operates in all things.

It is in the right directing of the affairs of men that the highest form of government is exercised, and the application of this is legislative skill. This skill was manifested in all the affairs of life; the affairs of life were applied in accordance with righteousness; righteousness in accordance with virtue; virtue in accordance with the Law of Heaven; and the Law of Heaven was applied in accordance with Tao.

Therefore it has been said: "Those who in ancient times had the care of the nourishment of the Empire, desiring nothing for

\* The word Tao has several significances. Tao is the Supreme Deity. It is also the ultimate goal of all things and beings, the Way of Heaven, the Divine Law, and the Giver of Grace.

† Mystical Action-in-Inaction.

themselves, the Empire was not in want. They rested in Wu-Wei, and all things proceeded harmoniously. Their stillness was profound and the people were tranquil."

The Book of History says: "By converging to Tao, all things may be accomplished. When the will is free from personal aims, even the spirits of nature submit."

2. The Master said: "Tao overspreads and sustains all things, so limitless is Its influence. The superior man will accordingly keep his mind pure and open.

Acting without action is the Way of Heaven.

Spontaneous speech is the mark of virtue.

Loving men and benefiting things is true benevolence.

Recognizing unity in diversity is an indication of greatness.

To be free from ambition and to make no distinctions is gracious.

To have the consciousness of universal variety is to possess wealth.

To hold firmly to virtue is enduring strength.

To be perfected in virtue is to be established in it.

To live in accordance with Tao is to become complete.

To transcend externals is to achieve perfection.

"When the superior man fully realizes these ten characteristics, he ensheathes them within; thus his mind is enlarged, his heart overflows, and all things are drawn towards him. Such a man will let gold remain hidden in the mountain, and pearls in the depths of the sea. He covets no possessions, he will not struggle for wealth, nor strive for fame. He neither delights in length of life nor grieves over early death. He will find no pleasure in success nor be ashamed of failure. He will not grasp a throne for his own private gain nor strive for the empire of the world for personal glory. His glory is in the knowledge that all things are united in one whole, and that life and death are but phases of the same existence."

3. The Master said: "How profound in Its repose and how infinite in Its purity is Tao! If metal and stone were without Tao, they would be incapable of resonance. And just as they possess the property of sound, but will not emit sound unless they are struck, so surely is the same principle applicable to all creation.

"The man of princely virtue performs his duties with humility,

blushing at his own achievements however excellent. Establishing his capacities in their essential source, his wisdom is spiritually enlightened. Thus his virtue expands his mind in ever greater measure, enabling it to grasp and solve its problems.

“Without Tao, forms cannot be infused with life, and life without virtue would have no intelligent manifestation. To preserve one’s form, to diligently examine all that pertains to one’s life, to establish and express one’s virtue, and to realize Tao—is not this the quintessence of achievement?”

“Going forth into action majestically yet spontaneously, all things follow where he leads—such is the man of princely virtue.

“He sees where there is the deepest obscurity, and hears where there is no sound. To him alone in the midst of black obscurity, all is clear and bright; he alone in the midst of perfect silence can distinguish harmony. Things that are deeper than the depths he is able to fathom; where transcendent mystery follows mystery he can clearly comprehend the subtlest significance of each. Wherefore he is one with the entire Universe. Without possessions, he yet provides for all who call upon him that which they seek; whether great or small, whether long or short, whether distant or near.”

## TRUE KNOWLEDGE

The knowledge that is not of Him is a burden.  
 Knowledge which comes not immediately from Him  
 Endures no longer than the rouge of the tire-woman.  
 Nevertheless, if you bear this burden in a right spirit  
 ’Twill be removed, and you will obtain joy.  
 See you bear not that burden out of vainglory,  
 Then you will behold a store of true knowledge within.  
 When you mount the steed of this true knowledge,  
 Straightway the burden will fall from your back.

*Jalalu'd-Din Rumi.*

## THE ASCENT TO THE INEFFABLE

From A Dissertation on the Philosophy of Aristotle

BY THOMAS TAYLOR

The ascent to the Ineffable, according to Plato, is as follows, beginning from that which is perfectly effable and known to sense, and establishing in silence, as in a port, the parturitions of truth concerning it. Let us then assume the following axiom, in which, as in a secure vehicle, we may safely pass from hence thither. I say, therefore, that the unindigent is naturally prior to the indigent. For that which is in want of another is naturally adapted from necessity to be subservient to that of which it is indigent. But if they are mutually in want of each other, each being indigent of the other, in a different respect, neither of them will be the principle. For the unindigent is most adapted to that which is truly the principle. And if it is in want of any thing, according to this it will not be the principle. It is, however, necessary that the principle should be this very thing, the principle alone. The unindigent therefore pertains to this, nor must it by any means be acknowledged that there is any thing prior to it. This, however, would be acknowledged, if it had any connection with the indigent.

Let us then consider body, that is, a triply extended substance endued with quality; for this is the first thing effable by us, and is sensible. Is this, then, the principle of things? But it is two things, body, and quality which is in body as a subject. Which of these, therefore, is by nature prior? For both are indigent of their proper parts; and that also which is in a subject is indigent of the subject. Shall we say, then, that body itself is the principle and the first essence? But this is impossible. For in the first place the principle will not receive any thing from that which is posterior to itself; but body, we say, is the recipient of quality. Hence quality, and a subsistence in conjunction with it, are not derived from body, since quality is present with body as something different. And in the second place, body is every way divisible, its several parts are indigent of each other, and the whole is indigent of all the parts. As it is indigent, therefore,

and receives its completion from things which are indigent, it will not be entirely unindigent.

Further still, if it is not one but united, it will require, as Plato says, the connecting one. It is likewise something common and formless, being as it were a certain matter. It requires therefore ornament, and the possession of form, that it may not be merely body, but a body with a certain particular quality; as for instance, a fiery or earthly body, and in short, body adorned and invested with a particular quality. Hence the things which accede to it finish and adorn it. Is then that which accedes the principle? But this is impossible, for it does not abide in itself, nor does it subsist alone, but is in a subject, of which also it is indigent. If, however, someone should assert that body is not a subject, but one of the elements in each individual, as for instance, animal in horse and man, thus also each will be indigent of the other, namely, this subject and that which is in the subject; or rather the common element, animal, and the peculiarities, as the rational and irrational, will be indigent. For elements are always indigent of each other, and that which is composed from elements is indigent of the elements. In short, this sensible nature, and which is so manifest to us, is neither body—for this does not move the senses—nor quality, for this does not possess an interval commensurate with sense. Hence, that which is the object of sight, is neither body nor colour; but coloured body, or colour corporealized, is that which is motive of the sight; and universally that which is sensible, which is body with a particular quality, is motive of sense. From hence it is evident that the thing which excites the sense is something incorporeal. For if it were body, it would not yet be the object of sense. Body therefore requires that which is incorporeal, and that which is incorporeal, body; for an incorporeal nature is not of itself sensible. It is, however, different from body, because these two possess prerogatives different from each other, and neither of these subsists prior to the other; but being elements of one sensible thing, they are present with each other; the one imparting interval to that which is void of interval, but the other introducing to that which is formless, sensible variety invested with form. In the third place, neither are both these together the principle, since they are not unindigent. For they stand in need of their proper elements, and of that which con-

ducts them to the generation of one form. For body cannot effect this, since it is of itself impotent; nor quality, since it is not able to subsist separate from the body in which it is or together with which it has its being. The composite, therefore, either produces itself, which is impossible—for it does not converge to itself, but the whole of it is multifariously dispersed—or it is not produced by itself, and there is some other principle prior to it.

Let it then be supposed to be that which is called nature, being a principle of motion and rest in that which is moved and at rest, essentially and not according to accident. For this is something more simple, and is fabricative of composite forms. If, however, it is in the things fabricated, and does not subsist separate from nor prior to them, but stands in need of them for its being, it will not be unindigent, though it possesses something transcendent with respect to them, namely the power of fashioning and fabricating them. For it has its being together with them, and has in them an inseparable subsistence, so that when they are it is, and is not when they are not; and this in consequence of perfectly verging to them, and not being able to sustain that which is appropriate. For the power of increasing, nourishing, and generating similars, and the one prior to these three, namely, nature, is not wholly incorporeal, but is akin to a certain quality of body, from which it alone differs, in that it imparts to the composite to be inwardly moved and at rest. For the quality of that which is sensible imparts that which is apparent in matter, and that which falls on sense. But body imparts interval every way extended; and nature, an inwardly proceeding natural energy, whether according to place only, or according to nourishing, increasing, and generating things similar. Nature, however, is inseparable from a subject, and is indigent, so that in short it will not be the principle, since it is indigent of that which is subordinate. For it will not be wonderful, if being a certain principle it is indigent of the principle above it; but it would be wonderful if it were indigent of things posterior to itself, and of which it is supposed to be the principle.

By the like arguments we may show that the principle cannot be irrational soul, whether sensitive or orectic. For if it appears that it has something separate, together with impulsive and

gnostic energies, yet at the same time it is bound in body, and has something inseparable from it; since it is not able to convert itself to itself, but its energy is mingled with its subject. For it is evident that its essence is something of this kind, since if it were liberated, and in itself free, it would also evince a certain independent energy, and would not always be converted to body; but sometimes it would be converted to itself. Or, though it were always converted to body, yet it would judge and explore itself. The energies, therefore, of the multitude of mankind, though they are conversant with externals, yet at the same time they exhibit that which is separate about them. For they consult how they should engage in them, and observe that deliberation is necessary in order to effect or be passive to apparent good, or to decline something of the contrary. But the impulses of irrational animals are uniform and spontaneous, are moved together with the sensible organs, and require the senses alone that they may obtain from sensibles the pleasurable, and avoid the painful. If, therefore, the body communicates in pleasure and pain, and is affected in a certain respect by them, it is evident that the psychical energies—that is, energies belonging to the soul—are exerted, mingled with bodies, and are not purely psychical, but are also corporeal; for perception is of the animated body, or of the soul corporealized, though in such perception the psychical property predominates over the corporeal; just as in bodies the corporeal property has dominion according to interval and subsistence. As the irrational soul therefore has its being in something different from itself, so far it is indigent of the subordinate. But a thing of this kind will not be the principle.

Prior, then, to this essence, we see a certain form separate from a subject, and converted to itself, such as is the rational nature. Our soul, therefore, presides over its proper energies, and corrects itself. This, however, would not be the case unless it were converted to itself; and it would not be converted to itself unless it had a separate essence. It is not, therefore, indigent of the subordinate. Shall we then say that it is the most perfect principle? But it does not at once exert all its energies, and is always indigent of the greater part. The principle, however, wishes to have nothing indigent: but the rational nature is an essence in want of its own energies. Someone,

however, may say that it is an eternal essence, and has never-failing essential energies, always concurring with its essence, according to the self-moved and ever vital, and that it is therefore unindigent, and will be the principle. To this we reply that the whole soul is one form and one nature, partly unindigent and partly indigent; but the principle is perfectly unindigent. Soul, therefore, and that which exerts mutable energies, will not be the most proper principle. Hence it is necessary that there should be something prior to this, which is in every respect immutable, according to nature, life, and knowledge, and according to all powers and energies, such as we assert an eternal and immutable essence to be, and such as is much-honoured intellect. . . . For what can be wanting to that which perfectly comprehends in itself its own plenitudes and of which neither addition nor ablation changes any thing belonging to it? Or is not this also, one and many, whole and parts, containing in itself, things first, middle, and last? The subordinate plenitudes also stand in need of the more excellent, and the more excellent of the subordinate, and the whole of the parts. For the things related are indigent of each other, and what are first of those which are last, through the same cause; for it is not of itself that which is first. Besides, *the one* here is indigent of *the many*, because it has its subsistence in *the many*. Or it may be said that this one is collective of the many, and this not by itself, but in conjunction with them. Hence there is much of the indigent in this principle. For since intellect generates in itself its proper plenitudes, from which the whole at once receives its completion, it will be itself indigent of itself, not only that which is generated of that which generates, but also that which generates of that which is generated, in order to the whole completion of that which wholly generates itself. Further still, intellect understands and is understood, is intellective of, and intelligible to itself, and both these. Hence the intellectual is indigent of the intelligible, as of its proper object of desire; and the intelligible is in want of the intellectual, because it wishes to be the intelligible of it. Both also are indigent of either, since the possession is always accompanied with indigence, in the same manner as the world is always present with matter. Hence a certain indigence is naturally co-essentialized with intellect, so that it cannot be the most proper principle. Shall we therefore, in the next

place, direct our attention to the most simple of beings, which Plato calls *the one being*? For as there is no separation there throughout the whole, nor any multitude, or order, or duplicity, or conversion to itself, what indigence will there appear to be in the perfectly united? And especially what indigence will there be of that which is subordinate? Hence the great Parmenides ascended to this most safe principle, as that which is most unindigent. Is it not, however, here necessary to attend to the conception of Plato, that the united is not *the One Itself*, but that which is passive to it? And this being the case, it is evident that it ranks after *the One*; for it is supposed to be *the united*, and not *the One Itself*. If also *being* is composed from the elements *bound* and *infinity*,\* as appears from the Philibus of Plato, where he calls it that which is mixed, it will be indigent of its elements. Besides, if the conception of *being* is different from that of *being united*, and that which is a whole is both united and being, these will be indigent of each other, and the whole which is called *one being* is indigent of the two. And though *the one* in this is better than *being*, yet this is indigent of being, in order to the subsistence of one being. But if *being* here supervenes *the one*, as it were form in that which is mixed and united, just as the property of man in that which is collectively-rational—mortal-animal, thus also *the one* will be indigent of *being*. If, however, to speak more properly, *the one* is two-fold, *this* being the cause of the mixture, and subsisting prior to being, but *that* conferring rectitude on being; if this be the case, neither will the indigent perfectly desert this nature. After all these, it may be said that *the One* will be perfectly unindigent. For neither is it indigent of that which is posterior to itself for its subsistence, since the truly One is by itself separated from all things; nor is it indigent of that which is inferior or more excellent in itself; for there is nothing in it besides itself; nor is it in want of itself. But it is one, because neither has it any duplicity with respect to itself. For not even the relation of itself to itself must be asserted of the truly One, since it is perfectly simple. This, therefore, is the most unindigent of all things. Hence this is the Principle and the Cause of all; and this is at once the First of all things. If these qualities, however, are present with it, it will not be *the One*. Or may we not say that all things subsist in *the One* accord-

\* *Bound* is the unitive principle in being; *infinity*, the multiform principle.

## THE TEACHING OF ZOROASTER

## ZOROASTER AND THE GATHAS

Zoroaster (the Greek form of the Persian "Zarathustra") was one of the few founders of great religions, but his importance as a great teacher is seldom recognized, partly on account of the failure of the Zoroastrian religion to become widespread, and partly because its origins are almost lost in antiquity. Zoroastrianism chiefly survives today among the Parsis of India, who, under religious persecution, migrated from Iran. It has suffered in the estimation of the world through the decadent forms which have existed during certain periods of its history, but of late it has undergone a process of revival and purification.

Zoroastrian teachings had a considerable influence in early times upon the religious life of Northern India, for since this country adjoins Persia there was contact between their two peoples both by land and sea.

It is impossible to state exactly how much Western religion owes directly to Zoroastrianism, for the date of the foundation of the latter is not known with certainty, although modern scholarship tends to the opinion that Zoroaster lived about 1,000 B.C. There is no doubt that it flourished in Babylon at the time of the Jewish exile, in the sixth century B.C., and it is evident that much interchange of ideas must have taken place between the two faiths. It is thus probable that some of the important truths incorporated in the Jewish religion and subsequently handed down to the Western world are inherited from this great teacher. In addition, Greek and Roman thought were influenced by contact with Iran, especially in the Neo-Platonic period during part of which Mithraism came into prominence. However this may be, there is much in common between them.

Zoroastrianism, although usually classed as dualistic, is in its essence monotheistic, and presents a very exalted conception of God. Great stress is laid upon personal responsibility and the ethical life.

It teaches the immortality of the soul, the two post-earth states of Heaven and Hell or Purgatory, following a judgement day; it also prophesies the coming of a world Saviour, even

gnostic energies, yet at the same time it is bound in body, and has something inseparable from it; since it is not able to convert itself to itself, but its energy is mingled with its subject. For it is evident that its essence is something of this kind, since if it were liberated, and in itself free, it would also evince a certain independent energy, and would not always be converted to body; but sometimes it would be converted to itself. Or, though it were always converted to body, yet it would judge and explore itself. The energies, therefore, of the multitude of mankind, though they are conversant with externals, yet at the same time they exhibit that which is separate about them. For they consult how they should engage in them, and observe that deliberation is necessary in order to effect or be passive to apparent good, or to decline something of the contrary. But the impulses of irrational animals are uniform and spontaneous, are moved together with the sensible organs, and require the senses alone that they may obtain from sensibles the pleasurable, and avoid the painful. If, therefore, the body communicates in pleasure and pain, and is affected in a certain respect by them, it is evident that the psychical energies—that is, energies belonging to the soul—are exerted, mingled with bodies, and are not purely psychical, but are also corporeal; for perception is of the animated body, or of the soul corporealized, though in such perception the psychical property predominates over the corporeal; just as in bodies the corporeal property has dominion according to interval and subsistence. As the irrational soul therefore has its being in something different from itself, so far it is indigent of the subordinate. But a thing of this kind will not be the principle.

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ing to *the One*? And that both these subsist in it, and such other things as we predicate of it, as for instance, the most simple, the most excellent, the most powerful, the preserver of all things, and the Good Itself? If these things, however, are thus true of *the One*, It will thus also be indigent of things posterior to itself, according to those very things which we add to it. For the principle is, and is said to be the principle of things proceeding from it, and the cause is the cause of things caused, and the first is the first of things arranged posterior to it.\* Further still, the simple subsists according to a transcendency of other things; the most powerful according to power with relation to the subjects of it; and the good, the desirable, and the preserving, are so called with reference to things benefited, preserved and desiring. And if it should be said to be all things according to the pre-assumption of all things in itself, it will indeed be said to be so according to *the One* alone, and will at the same time be the one Cause of all things prior to all, and will be this and no other according to *the One*. So far, therefore, as it is *the One* alone, it will be unindigent; and so far as unindigent, it will be the first Principle and stable Root of all principles. So far, however, as it is the Principle and the first Cause of all things, and is pre-established as the Object of desire to all things, so far it appears to be in a certain respect indigent of the things to which it is related. It has, therefore, if it be lawful so to speak, an ultimate vestige of indigence, just as on the contrary matter has an ultimate echo of the unindigent, or a most obscure and debile impression of *the One*. And language indeed appears to be here subverted: for so far as it is *the One*, it is also unindigent, since the principle has appeared to subsist according to the most unindigent and *the One*. At the same time, however, so far as it is *the One*, it is also the principle; and so far as it is *the One* it is unindigent, but so far as the principle, indigent. Hence, so far as it is unindigent, it is also indigent, though not according to the same; but with respect to being that which it is, it is unindigent, but as producing and comprehending other things in itself it is indigent. This, however, is the peculiarity of *the One*;

\* For a thing cannot be said to be a principle or cause without the subsistence of the things of which it is the principle or cause. Hence so far as it is a principle or cause it will be indigent of the subsistence of these. (Thomas Taylor.)

so that it is both unindigent and indigent according to *the One*. Not indeed that it is each of these, in such a manner as we divide it in speaking of it, but it is one alone; and according to this is both other things, and that which is indigent. For how is it possible it should not be indigent also so far as it is *the One*? Just as it is all other things which proceed from it. For the indigent also is something belonging to all things. Something else, therefore, must be investigated which in no respect has any kind of indigence. But of a thing of this kind, it cannot with truth be asserted that it is the principle, nor can it even be said of it that it is most unindigent, though this appears to be the most venerable of all assertions. For this signifies transcendency, and an exemption from the indigent. We do not, however, think it proper to call this even *the perfectly exempt*; but That Which is in every respect incapable of being apprehended, and about Which we must be perfectly silent, will be the most just axiom of our conception in the present investigation; nor yet this as uttering any thing, but as rejoicing in not uttering, and by this venerating that immense Unknown. This, then, is the mode of ascent to That Which is called the First, or rather to That Which is beyond every thing which can be conceived, or become the subject of hypothesis.

## JEWELS

Better is one's own duty, though without merit, than the duty of another, though well done. In the fulfilling of the purpose ordained for him by the Law, man is free from stain of sin.

Better is death in one's duty; another's duty is full of danger.  
—*Bhagavad Gita.*

What should be done—ye do it!  
Nor let pass by the day;  
With vigour do your duty,  
And do it while ye may.

—*Dhammapada.*

## THE TEACHING OF ZOROASTER

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Zoroaster (the Greek form of the Persian "Zarathustra") was one of the few founders of great religions, but his importance as a great teacher is seldom recognized, partly on account of the failure of the Zoroastrian religion to become widespread, and partly because its origins are almost lost in antiquity. Zoroastrianism chiefly survives today among the Parsis of India, who, under religious persecution, migrated from Iran. It has suffered in the estimation of the world through the decadent forms which have existed during certain periods of its history, but of late it has undergone a process of revival and purification.

Zoroastrian teachings had a considerable influence in early times upon the religious life of Northern India, for since this country adjoins Persia there was contact between their two peoples both by land and sea.

It is impossible to state exactly how much Western religion owes directly to Zoroastrianism, for the date of the foundation of the latter is not known with certainty, although modern scholarship tends to the opinion that Zoroaster lived about 1,000 B.C. There is no doubt that it flourished in Babylon at the time of the Jewish exile, in the sixth century B.C., and it is evident that much interchange of ideas must have taken place between the two faiths. It is thus probable that some of the important truths incorporated in the Jewish religion and subsequently handed down to the Western world are inherited from this great teacher. In addition, Greek and Roman thought were influenced by contact with Iran, especially in the Neo-Platonic period during part of which Mithraism came into prominence. However this may be, there is much in common between them.

Zoroastrianism, although usually classed as dualistic, is in its essence monotheistic, and presents a very exalted conception of God. Great stress is laid upon personal responsibility and the ethical life.

It teaches the immortality of the soul, the two post-earth states of Heaven and Hell or Purgatory, following a judgement day; it also prophesies the coming of a world Saviour, even

associating this in later times with the concept of the immaculate birth. One of its striking features is the teaching regarding the Ameshaspends, who bear a strong resemblance to the Archangels of the Jewish and Christian religions. The Zoroastrian scriptures include the legend of the tasting of the forbidden fruit by primeval man, and a passage which parallels that of Noah and the ark. There seems little doubt that many of its concepts antedate those of the Jewish religion, though it is impossible to say how far they originated with Zoroaster and how far he inherited them from his predecessors.

Some of the terms used approximate closely to those of Western religious thought, such as, for instance, righteousness, the fear of God, the Holy Spirit, the Kingdom of God, both in Heaven and on earth, and Wisdom—a feminine term corresponding very much to the ideal ethical and practical virtues. It is significant that whereas the Greek term for the Holy Spirit is derived from the word “breath”, the Zoroastrian term is derived from the word “to think”, which closely links it with the Spirit of Truth.

Very little is known of the life of its founder, and it is necessary to distinguish carefully between the actual facts and the legends which subsequently grew around Zoroaster’s life and were introduced into the later sacred writings, in which he was almost deified. But the oldest scriptures—the Gathas—which bear the impression of being largely his actual utterances, reveal Zoroaster as a very human personality, imbued indeed with intense zeal for the fulfilment of his mission, but fighting against powerful opposition; at times despondent and contemplating flight, at others burning with the certainty of ultimate triumph.

According to tradition he was born in Western Iran, probably at Raghæ in Media, which had a more advanced civilization than Eastern Iran, but opinions differ as to the actual locality. His father was Pourushaspa of the Spitama family, and the name Zarathustra, based upon the word “ustra”, camel, indicates the pastoral nature of the community to which he belonged. There seems to be no doubt that he began his mission in the Eastern part of the country.

The precise religious beliefs of his countrymen cannot be stated with real accuracy, but it seems probable, as with so

many religious founders, that he regarded himself more as a reformer and purifier of the existing religion than as an initiator of a new one. The Gathas reveal him as a man with an intense personal realization of the Divine Presence, conversing with God and receiving from Him the command to challenge and to destroy the Lie, the Liar, and all his works. Accordingly, although intensely aware of this Divine Presence, he did not emphasize in his teachings the contemplative life of reclusion, but rather the ideal active life of moral ordination as the means for the upliftment of mankind. In all likelihood he was one of the Magi—a community of students of religion and mysticism, and the art of healing, the “wise men” of the land—and doubtless strongly denounced the inordinate practices of some of the members of the community, thus arousing against him great antagonism.

For about ten years he fought an uphill fight and only gained one disciple, his cousin Maidhyoimaonha. A local prince, Vishtaspa, was then converted, through whose influence the reformer’s work was greatly facilitated, although he still had much opposition, for strife against him and his followers, as so-called unbelievers, continued until the end of his life.

According to Firdusi, Zoroaster’s death occurred during the Turanean invasion at the storming of Balkh. It is said that he was killed at the altar with a group of his priests.

His teachings first spread amongst the Magians and eventually through the whole of Iran, continuing there as the national religion for several centuries. During this period they inevitably underwent various changes and became more elaborated, then in course of time decadence set in, bringing with it the emphasis on dualism with which it is associated in Western thought, for it was chiefly in the later periods that contact was made with Eastern Europe.

The original Gathas were transmitted orally, but subsequently rituals and myths accumulated around them and were incorporated; commentaries and laws were added, and thus the sacred writings became voluminous. In the seventh century A.D. Iran succumbed to the conquering Mohammedanism, which has held sway there ever since, with the result that Zoroastrianism was carried to North-West India, where it was preserved by the Parsis. But its scriptures suffered some destruction

at the hands of military Islam. Its influence, however, did not completely die out in its original home, for it played a part in helping to develop the mystical movement of Sufism within Mohammedanism. Some centuries before it had sustained heavy damage when Alexander sacked the country during his invasion of the Middle East. The extent of this loss may be judged from the fact that according to tradition the original Avesta comprised twenty-one books, the greater number of which were destroyed in the invasion. After the death of Alexander the priests assembled the remnants and combined with them portions they knew by heart into a restored but considerably depleted Avesta. Consequently it is impossible to state with any certitude whether some of the beliefs and practices which later developed in Zoroastrianism were directly based upon the founder's actual teachings, and therefore nothing has been included in this article for which authority cannot be found in the Gathas themselves as the only scriptures that can be regarded as recording the prophet's undoubted utterances.

The Gathas were written in a language that was dead even in the early ages of Zoroastrianism, which testifies to their antiquity. They were preserved by generations of priests reciting them as incorporated in rituals, which themselves were in a later dialect known as Avestan, in which the greater part of Zoroastrian texts are recorded, and it is only in comparatively recent times that it has been possible correctly to translate the Gathas. But their meaning has been preserved in other documents, the final revision of the scriptures having been made about the fourth century A.D. in Pahlavi, the court language of the Sassanians. It has been estimated, however, that this represents only about a third of the Avesta which existed when the last Zoroastrian monarch was on the throne of Persia.

Such chequered history is common to many religions, the present existent scriptures of which seldom comprise the totality of the originals. Therefore the serious study of those which survive calls for careful discrimination between what may be judged to truly pertain to the original teaching and the accretions that subsequently developed, some of which are distinctly decadent. Thus certain elements which are found in historical Zoroastrianism, but which were absent from the Gathas, may

well have formed part of the Prophet's teaching, either verbally or in lost Gathic documents.

A consideration of those factors which can be definitely found in or deduced from the Gathas themselves, suffice for the formulation of a working philosophical and mystical system which affords a criterion by which to judge later developments.

(*To be continued*)

## PRAYERS OF THE MYSTICS

“O Thou Truth unchangeable, Light of mine eyes, Eternal Wisdom, Righteousness and Peace, O all my good, my strength, and my praise: along with Thee do I run in freedom, and without Thee I am exceeding constrained on every side. I, a little child, a poor little one, Thy servant, useless within and without, the least in my Father's house, on the bended knees of my heart and my body salute Thee from afar, for my purity is not great enough for me to be firmly fastened to Thee. Take away the veil, cleanse my countenance, that I may clearly behold Thee: and that when the darkness of my heart has been put to flight, my soul may rejoice and exult in Thy divine light, run quickly on its way and with sweet delight may praise and exalt Thee.”

—*Gerlac Petersen.*

\* \* \* \* \*

“Grant me, I beseech Thee, Almighty and most Merciful God, fervently to desire, wisely to search out, and perfectly to fulfil, all that is well-pleasing unto Thee. Order Thou my worldly condition to the glory of Thy name; and, of all that Thou requirest me to do, grant me the knowledge, the desire, and the ability, that I may so fulfil it as I ought, and may my path to Thee, I pray, be safe, straightforward, and perfect to the end.

Give me, O Lord, a steadfast heart, which no unworthy affection may drag downwards; give me an unconquered heart, which no tribulation can wear out; give me an upright heart, which no unworthy purpose may tempt aside.

Bestow upon me also, O Lord my God, understanding to know Thee, diligence to seek Thee, wisdom to find Thee, and a faithfulness that may finally embrace Thee. Amen.

—*St. Thomas Aquinas.*

## THE DIVINE NAMES \*

## Chapter XII

CONCERNING *Holy of Holies, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, God of Gods*

Now since that which it was necessary to say on these matters has been brought in my opinion to a fitting end, we must praise Him of innumerable Names as *Holy of Holies* and *King of Kings*, reigning in Eternity, and eternally, and beyond Eternity, and as *Lord of Lords* and *God of Gods*. And first we must say what we think Holiness Itself to be, and Kingship, Lordship, Divinity, and what the Scriptures intend by the reduplication of the names.

Now Holiness, as we conceive it, is a purity free from all defilement, perfect and wholly without stain; and Kingship is the apportionment of all bound, order, law, and rank; and Lordship is not only a superiority over that which is lower, but also the perfectly complete and universal possession of the Beautiful and the Good, and a true and constant stability. Wherefore Lordship is derived from *kyros*, *kyrion*, and *kyrieuon*.† And Deity is the Providence Which is all-seeing and Which with perfect Goodness embraces all and binds together all things and fills them with Itself and excels all the things that enjoy Its Providential care.

These Names, therefore, must be given in an absolute sense to the All-transcendent Cause, and we must add that It is Transcendent Holiness and Lordship and Supreme Kingship and a perfect Simplicity of Deity. For from It, universally and individually, have sprung forth and have been imparted to all things the unsullied perfection of spotless purity; the whole law and order of the world which expels all disharmony and inequality and disproportion, and brings the joy of well-ordered

\* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom* Nos. 96 to 108.

† Authority, that which has authority, and that which exercises authority; or power, that which has power, and that which exercises power.

stability and rightness, and converts to Itself the things found worthy to participate in It; all the perfect and complete possession of all that is good; and all that Good Providence Which sees and supports the objects of Its care, imparting Itself beneficently for the deification of those who are converted to It.

But since the Cause of all is the Supra-plenitude of all in His One Transcendent Super-fulness, He is named Holy of Holies and the rest because of His overflowing Causality and exceeding Transcendence. For just as those things which are holy or divine or kingly excel things which have not these attributes; and just as the things which participate are excelled by that in which they participate, even so, all things that are are excelled by Him Who is established above them all and is the impartial Cause of all participants and participations. But the Scriptures give the names Holy, King, Lord, God, to the first Orders in each hierarchy through which the secondary ranks, receiving the gifts from God, bring the unity of their participation into multiplicity through their own diversity, and this variety the First Orders, in Their Providential God-like activity, bring together into Their own Unity.

### *Chapter XIII*

#### CONCERNING PERFECT AND ONE

So much for these names. Now, if you are willing, let us go forward to what, I think, is the greatest Name of all—for the Scriptures predicate of the Cause of all every Attribute singly and unitedly and celebrate Him as the One. Now such an One is not only Perfect as Self-perfect, having through and in Himself an exempt Unity, and as wholly perfect in His Wholeness, but also as Super-perfect by virtue of His All-transcendent Nature and because, while bounding every infinitude, He surpasses every bound and is not comprehended or contained by anything, but extends to all things at once and beyond all things in His unfailing Bounty and unceasing Energy.

But again, He is called Perfect because He is not subject to increase, being eternally perfect, nor to decrease, since He forecontains all things in Himself and overflows in one inex-

haustible, identical, super-full, never-ending abundance, whereby He perfects all perfect things and fills them with His one Perfection.

But He is named One because He is the All unifically, by virtue of His One Transcendent Unity, and is the Cause of all things without Himself departing from Unity. For there is nothing in the world which does not participate in unity; (and we speak of one duad, one decad, one half, one third, one tenth) so everything and each part of everything participate in the One, and because the One is, all existing things are. And the Cause of all is not One as being one of many, but is before all unity and multiplicity, and gives to unity and multiplicity their definite limits. For there is no multiplicity which does not, in some manner, participate in the One. Even that which is a manyness in its parts is one in its wholeness; that which is many in its accidental qualities is a unity in its substance; that which is many in its species is one in its genus; that which is many in its emanations is one in its source. And there is not a single thing which does not in some way participate in the One Which in Its All-embracing Unity fore-contains all things—even opposites—and the all as one whole in Its Unity. Indeed, without the One there will be no multiplicity, but without the multitude there will be the One. In like manner the unit is prior to every multiplied number, and if all things are conceived as united together, then all things as a whole are one.

Again, it must be understood that things are said to have a common unity in accordance with the classified species of each one. Therefore the One is the ultimate basis of all, and if you take away the One, neither the whole, nor the part, not a single existing thing will be left. For all things are fore-contained and enclosed in the Unity of the One Itself. Hence the Scriptures celebrate the whole Godhead as the Cause of all through the Name of the One. And there is One God, the Father, and One Lord Jesus Christ, and One and the Self-same Spirit, through the all-surpassing indivisibility of the whole Divine Unity in Which all things are joined together in unity, pre-subsist super-essentially, and are transcendently united. Therefore all attributes are justly assigned and referred to It, since by It and in It and to It all things are and are co-ordinated and abide and are bound together and are filled and return.

And you will not find any existing thing but has its own being and nature and is perfected and preserved through the One Which is the Super-essential Name of the whole Godhead. And we also must turn, by the Power of the Divine Unity, from the many to the One and proclaim the Unity of the whole Unific Godhead—the One Cause of all—Which is before every unit and multitude and part and whole and bound and infinity; Which bounds all things that are, even Being Itself, and is the Unitive Cause of all things and of the wholeness of all things, at once, before all, and above all, above the existent unity and bounding the existent unity, since unity in existences is characterized by number and number participates in essence; but the Super-essential One bounds both the existent unity and every number and is Itself the Origin and Cause, Number and Law of unity, number, and all existence. And therefore although we celebrate Him as Unity and Trinity, the Supreme God is neither a unity nor a trinity such as can be known by us or by any other kind of being, but in order to celebrate truly Its Transcendent Unity and Its Divine Theogony we give to That Which is beyond all names the Names of Divine Unity and Divine Trinity, applying to the Super-essential the name of that which has being.

But no unit or triad or number or unity or prolificness or any other thing that either exists or is known to any existing thing can reveal the Mystery, beyond all intellect and reason, of that Transcendent Deity Which is super-essentially beyond all things. It is nameless and incomprehensible, dwelling above in the secret places. And even the Name of Goodness is not given to It as being appropriate, but desiring to think and speak about Its Ineffable Nature, we consecrate, as the most highly appropriate to It, the most revered of names. And although in this matter we are in agreement with the theologians, the truth about this is very far beyond us. Therefore they have chosen the negative way, since by this the soul is lifted above things akin to itself and travels through all the conceptions of God which are transcended by That Which is above all names and all reason and knowledge, and at the summit of the whole is united to Him in the measure of its power of union with Him.

These intelligible Divine Names we have collected and unfolded to the best of our ability, yet we have fallen short not

only by their precise meaning (for this truly might be said even by Angels), nor only of such praises as Angels might sing (and the greatest of our theologians is below the lowest of them), not only are we less than the theologians or than their followers and fellow-workers, but we are also least and feeblest of our own fellows. If, therefore, we have spoken rightly and, so far as we are able, have attained true conceptions in unfolding the Divine Names, this must be ascribed to the Cause of All Who gives first the power of speech, then the power of speaking well. And if any Name of equal dignity has been omitted, you must interpret this according to the methods we have used. And if our work is wrong or imperfect and we have strayed from the truth, either wholly or partially, do thou in loving kindness correct one who is unwillingly ignorant; instruct by reasoning the mind of one who desires to learn, aid one who is lacking in power, and heal one who involuntarily is sick; and having interpreted some things by thyself and some from others and all from the Good, do thou pass them on to us. And do not, I pray thee, grow utterly weary in doing good to thy friend, for thou seest that we have not kept to ourselves any of the hierarchical traditions which have been handed down to us, but have imparted them, unaltered, both to you and to other holy men, and will continue to transmit them as long as we are able to speak and those to whom we speak can hear, doing no harm to the tradition, except in so far as we fail in our interpretation or expression. But let this be done and spoken as God pleases. And let this, indeed, be the end of our discourse on the Divine Names. Now I will pass on to the Symbolic Theology with God for my Guide.

*(The End)*

## SEED THOUGHT

The way of Truth is like a great Road. It is not difficult to know it. The evil is only that men will not seek it.

—*Mencius.*

## THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS\*

Proposition CCIV

*Every divine soul is the leader of many souls that always follow the Gods, and of a still greater number of such as sometimes receive this order*

For if it is a divine soul it is necessary that it should be allotted an order which is the leader or generator of all things, and which has a primary rank among souls. For in all beings that which is divine is the leader of wholes. It is likewise requisite that every divine soul should neither preside over such souls only as perpetually follow the Gods, nor over those alone that are sometimes Their attendants. For if any divine soul should preside over those only that sometimes follow the Gods, how can there be a contact between these and a divine soul, since they are entirely different from it, and neither proximately participate of intellect nor, much less, of the Gods? But if it only presides over those that always follow the Gods, how is it that the series proceeds as far as to these alone? For thus intellectual natures would be the last, and would be unprolific, and unadapted to perfect and elevate. It is necessary, therefore, that such souls as always follow the Gods, and energize according to intellect, and which are elevated to intellects more partial than divine intellects, should be primarily suspended from a divine soul. But it is necessary that partial souls, which through those that are divine as media, participate of intellect and a divine life, should be suspended in a secondary manner from a divine soul; for through those which always participate of a more excellent condition, those that only sometimes participate of it, are perfected.

Again, it is necessary that about every divine soul there should be a greater number of those that only sometimes follow, than of those that always attend on the Gods; for the

\* For previous sections, see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 108.

power of the monad always proceeds into multitude according to diminution, being deficient indeed in power, but redundant in multitude. Since every soul also of those that always follow the Gods, is the leader of a greater multitude of partial souls, imitating in this a divine soul; and elevates a greater number of souls to the primary monad of the whole series. Every divine soul, therefore, is the leader of many souls that always follow the Gods, but presides over a still greater number of those that only sometimes receive this order.

#### Proposition CCV

*Every partial soul has the same ratio to the soul under which it is essentially arranged, as the vehicle of the one has to the vehicle of the other*

But if the distribution of vehicles to souls is according to their nature, it is necessary that the vehicle of every partial soul should have the same ratio to the vehicle of the soul which ranks as a whole, as the essence of the one to the essence of the other. The distribution, however, is according to nature; for things which primarily participate are spontaneously conjoined with the natures which they participate. If, therefore, as a divine soul is to a divine body, so is a partial soul to a partial body, each soul being essentially participated, if this be the case, that which was at first asserted is true, that the vehicles of souls have the same ratio to each other as the souls themselves of which they are the vehicles.

#### Proposition CCVI

*Every partial soul is able to descend infinitely into generation, and to ascend from generation to real being*

For if it sometimes follows the Gods, but sometimes falls from its upward striving to a divine nature and participates of intellect and the privation of intellect, it is evident that it is alternatively conversant with generation and the Gods. For since it is not for an infinite time with the Gods, it will not for the whole of the succeeding time be conversant with bodies. For that which has not a temporal beginning will never have an

end; and that which has no end is necessarily without a beginning. It follows, therefore, that every partial soul makes periods of ascents from, and of descents into generation, and that this must be unceasing through an unending time. Every partial soul, therefore, is able to descend and ascend infinitely. And this never ceases to be the case with all such souls.

*(To be continued)*

### JUDGING THE WORKS OF GOD

First, therefore, we say that in judging of the works of God, we ought not to consider the parts of the world alone by themselves; and then because we could fancy much finer things, thereupon blame the Maker of the whole. As if one should attend only to this earth, which is but the lowest and most dreggy part of the Universe; or blame plants, because they have not sense, brutes because they have not reason, men because they are not demons or angels, and angels because they are not Gods, or want Divine Perfection. Upon which account, God should either have made nothing at all, since there can be nothing besides himself Absolutely Perfect; or else nothing but the higher rank of Angelical Beings, free from mortality and all those other evils that attend mankind; or such fine things, as Epicurus his Gods were feigned to be, living in certain delicious regions, where there was neither blustering winds, nor any lowering clouds; nor nipping frosts, nor scorching heat, nor night nor shadow; but the calm and unclouded ether always, smiling with gentle serenity. Whereas were there but one kind of thing (the best) thus made; there could have been no music nor harmony at all in the world for want of variety. But we ought in the first place, to consider the whole. Whether that be not the best that could be made, having all that belongeth to it; and then the parts in reference to the whole, whether they be not in their several degrees and ranks, congruous and agreeable thereunto.

—*Ralph Cudworth*