

# Iamblichus: *Theurgia or On the Mysteries of Egypt*

**NOTE:** for a more recent translation, see [Iamblichus: De Mysteriis. Ed. Clarke, Dillon, Hershbell \(Atlanta, 2003\)](#)

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Iamblichus (c. A.D. 250-325) is among the most important of the so-called Neoplatonic philosophers, second only to Plotinus. He was a student of Plotinus' disciple Porphyry. His influential treatise *Theurgia*, or *On the Mysteries of Egypt* deals with a 'higher magic' which operates through the agency of the gods. [Agrippa](#) refers frequently to Iamblichus in his [Occulta Philosophia](#). Iamblichus also had a strong influence on other Renaissance occultists like Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, and Giordano Bruno. Iamblichus is also explicitly mentioned in the [Grimorium Verum](#).

Compare with excerpts translated by Georg Luck in *Arcana Mundi* (Baltimore and London, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985). Since Luck numbers the text differently, I have noted his numbers in square brackets.

In addition to incorporating the errata, I have edited the spelling in a few places to make it less misleading to modern readers. Thus,

Originally	This edition
Asklepios	Asclepius
Kircê	Circe
demon	dæmon
Hippokrates	Hippocrates
Iamblichos	Iamblichus
Proklos	Proclus
Sokrates	Socrates
Theætetos	Theaetetus

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## Theurgia

or

The Egyptian Mysteries  
By Iamblichus  
Reply of Abammon, the Teacher  
to  
The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo  
together with  
Solutions of the Questions Therein Contained

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London: William Rider & Son Ltd. 164 Aldersgate Street  
New York: The Metaphysical Publishing Co. 1911

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**Translator's Note:**

The aim is to express "the original, the whole original, and nothing but the original, and withal good, readable English." -A.W.

# Chapter 1. Letter of Porphyry to Anebo

Porphyry to the Prophet Anebo.<sup>1</sup> Greeting.

I will begin this friendly correspondence with thee with a view to learning what is believed in respect to the gods and good dæmons and likewise the various philosophic speculations in regard to them. Very many things have been set forth concerning these subjects by the (Grecian) philosophers, but the for the most part have derived the substance of their belief from conjecture.

## 1. The Gods and their peculiarities

In the first place, therefore, it is to be taken for granted that there are gods. I ask then: what are the peculiarities of the superior races, by which they are differentiated from each other? Are we to suppose the cause of the distinction to be their energies or their passive motions, or things consequent: or is it a classification established by difference of bodies -- the gods being distinguished by aetherial bodies, the dæmons by aërial bodies, and souls by bodies pertaining to the earth?

As the gods dwell in heaven only, I ask therefore, why are invocations at the Theurgic Rites directed to them as being of the Earth and Underworld? How is it that although possessing power unlimited, undivided, and unrestricted, some of them are mentioned as being of the water and of the atmosphere, and that others are allotted by definite limitations to different places and to distinct parts of bodies? If they are actually separated by circumscribed limitations of parts, and according to diversities of places and subject-bodies, how will there be any union of them one to another?

## NOTES:

1. Porphyry, it is well known, was a distinguished scholar, and the foremost writer in the later Platonic School. He was a native of Tyre, and his name Molech, or King, was rendered by Longinus into *Porphurios*, denoting the royal purple, as a proper equivalent. He was a disciple of Plotinus, who had broadened the field of philosophic study till it included the "Wisdom of the East." In personal habits he followed the Pythagorean discipline. He was a severe critic of the Gnostic beliefs then current, and he evidently included with them also the new Christian faith. His mysticism was spiritual and contemplative, and he regarded the ceremonial rites of the Egyptian theurgy with distrust. He favored Mithraism, which prevailed in Asia, while Iamblichus belonged rather to the cult of Serapis, which was the State religion of Egypt. Of Anebo we know little. He is addressed as an Egyptian priest, and his name is that of Anabu or Anubis, the Egyptian psychopompos and patron of sacred literature. He was a "prophet" *hen niter* or servant of divinity, and expounder of the oracles:

and Porphyry himself an "epoptes" or initiated person, asks him accordingly to explain the Egyptian theosophic doctrines respecting the divine beings, rites and religious faith.

How can the Theosophers<sup>2</sup> consider them as impressionable? For it is said that on this account phallic images are set up and that immodest language is used at the Rites?<sup>3</sup> Certainly if they are impassive and unimpressionable the invocations of the gods, announcing favorable inclinations, propitiations of their anger and expiatory sacrifices, and still further what are called "necessities of the gods," will be utterly useless. For that which is impassive is not to be charmed or forced<sup>4</sup> or constrained by necessity.

Why, then, are many things performed to them in the Sacred Rites, as to impressionable beings? The invocations are made as to gods that are impressionable beings: so that it is implied that not the dæmons only are impressionable, but the gods likewise, as was declared in Homer:

"Even the gods themselves are yielding."

2. The Theosophers were regarded as learned in the arcane knowledge, and especially in Theurgy. Iamblichus appears to have adopted these Rites and usages from the Egyptian worship, including with them a philosophic groundwork from the Platonic doctrines.

3. The use of images and emblems of a sacred character to typify divine power and energy is universal. Somewhat of the divine was supposed to inhere in them. The "images" and *asheras* or "groves" mentioned in the Bible were of this character. So was the "idol in a grove," made by Queen Maachah, as well as the simulacrums which, as Herodotus states, the Egyptian women carried at the festivals.

4. Compare *Gospel according to Matthew*, XI, 12. "From the days of John the Baptist till now, the kingdom of heaven is forced, and they who are violent seize it."

Suppose, then, we say, as certain individuals have affirmed, that the gods are pure mental essences and that the dæmons are psychic

5. Xenokrates, who was a disciple of Plato, himself

beings participating of mind.<sup>5</sup>The fact remains, nevertheless, that the pure mental essences are not to be charmed or mingled with things of sense, and that the supplications which are offered are entirely foreign to this purity of mental substance.<sup>6</sup> But on the other hand the things that are offered are offered as to sensitive and psychic natures.

Are gods, then, separated from dæmons by the distinction of bodied and unbodied? If, however, only the gods are incorporeal, how shall the Sun, the Moon, and the visible luminaries in the sky be accounted as gods?

How is it that some of them are givers of good and others bring evil?

What is the bond of union that connects the divinities in the sky that have bodies with the gods that are unbodied?

The gods that are visible (in the sky) being included in the same category with the invisible, what distinguishes the dæmons from the visible, and likewise the invisible, gods?

## 2. The superior races and their manifestations

In what does a dæmon differ from a hero or half-god or from a soul?<sup>7</sup> It is it in essence, in power, or in energy?<sup>8</sup>

taught these doctrines. He considered the heavens as divine and that the substance of the divine nature was mind pure and absolute. He also described the stars as "visible divinities." The dæmons were depicted as of a psychic nature, subordinate to that of the gods, and therefore subject to emotion and perturbation like human beings, while at the same time sharing in a degree in the power and intelligence of the gods.

6. Greek, the mind or "rational soul," the essence or principle of intelligence which transcends the understanding or reasoning faculty, and is capable of knowing truth intuitively and instinctively from being itself of divine origin.

7. Here Porphyry has given an ancient classification of spiritual beings into four orders, the gods, dæmons or guardians, the *heroes* or half-gods, and souls. There were other distinctions in the Eastern countries, and we find Abammon, the Teacher, adding to these the archangels, angels, and archons of both the higher and lower nature. These were named in several of the Gnostic categories that were extant at that period. "We have no conflict with blood and flesh," says the Christian apostle, "but with archonates, authorities, the

world-rulers of this dark region, and spiritual forces of evil in the upper heavens."

8. By "essence" is signified the underlying principle of being; by "power" the intermediate agency; and by "energy" the operative faculty which enables actual results.

What is the *token* (at the Sacred Rites) of the presence of a god or an angel, or an archangel, or a dæmon, or of some archon, or a soul? For it is a common thing with the gods and dæmons alike, and with all the superior races, to speak boastfully and to project an unreal image into view.<sup>9</sup> Hence the race of the gods is thus made to seem to be in no respect superior to that of the dæmons.

9. This inquiry in regard to the apparitions which the candidates beheld at the initiation is made plainer by Proclus: "In the most sacred stages of the Perfective Rites," says he, "before the gods come into view, there appear intrusive figures of dæmons of the Underworld, to draw away the attention of the candidate from the spotless Good to the gross and material." It may be pertinent to add that in the several Grottoes or Halls of Initiation there was machinery ingeniously constructed for the purpose of representing divine and other personages. See *The Epicurean*, by Thomas Moore, and *The Great Dionysiak Myth*, by Robert Brown, Jr., VI, 2, 3.

It is also acknowledged that ignorance and delusion in respect to the gods is irreligiousness and impurity, and that the superior knowledge in respect to them is holy and helpful: the former being the darkness of ignorance in regard to the things revered and beautiful, and the latter the light of knowledge. The former condition will cause human beings to be beset with every form of evil through ignorance and recklessness,<sup>10</sup> but the latter is the source of everything beneficial.

10. "I do not see any sin in the world," says George Sand, "But I see a great deal of ignorance."

### 3. Oracles and Divination

What is it that takes place in divination? For example, when we are asleep, we often come, through dreams, to a perception of things that are about to occur. We are not in an ecstasy full of commotion, for the body lies at rest, yet we do not ourselves apprehend these things as clearly as when we are awake.

In like manner many also come to a perception of the future through enthusiastic rapture and a divine impulse, when at the same time so thoroughly awake as to have the senses in full activity. Nevertheless, they by no means follow the matter closely, or at least they do not attend to it as closely as when in their ordinary condition. So, also, certain others of these ecstasies become enthused or inspired when they hear cymbals, drums, or some choral chant; as for example, those who are engaged in the Korybantic Rites, those who are possessed at the Sabazian festivals, and those who are celebrating the Rites of the Divine Mother. Others, also, are inspired when drinking water, like the priest of the Klarian Apollo at Kolophon; others when sitting over cavities in the earth, like the women who deliver oracles at Delphi; others when affected by vapor from the water, like the prophetesses at Branchidæ; and others when standing in indented marks like those who have been filled from an imperceptible inflowing of the divine plerome. Others who understand themselves in other respects become inspired through the Fancy: some taking darkness as accessory, others employing certain potions, and others depending on singing and magic figures. Some are affected by means of water, others by gazing on a wall, others by the hypethral air, and others by the sun or in some other of the heavenly luminaries. Some have likewise established the technique of searching the future by means of entrails, birds, and stars.

What, I ask, is the nature of divination, and what is its peculiar character? The diviners all say that they arrive at the foreknowledge of the future through gods or dæmons, and that it is not possible for others to have any inkling of it only those who have command over the things to be. I dispute, therefore, whether the divine power is brought down to such subserviency to human beings as, for instance, not to hold aloof from any who are diviners with barley-meal.

In regard, however, to the origins of the oracular art, it is to be doubted whether a god, or angel, or dæmon, or some other such being, is present at the Manifestations,<sup>11</sup> or at the divinations, or at any other of the Sacred Performances, as having been drawn thither through you by the necessities created by the invocations.

11. Greek, epiphany -- an apparition or manifestation, such as was exhibited in mystic and theurgic rites.

Some are of opinion that the soul itself both utters and imagines these things, and that there are similar conditions of it which have been produced from little sparks; others, that there is a certain mingled form of substance produced from our own soul and from the divine in breathing; others, that the soul, through such activities, generates from itself a faculty of Imagination in regard to the future, or else that the emanations from the realm of matter bring dæmons into existence through their inherent forces, especially when the emanations are derived from animals.

These conjectures are put forth for the following statements:

1. That during sleep, when we are not engaged with anything, we sometimes chance to obtain perception of the future.
2. That likewise, an evidence that a condition of the Soul is a principal source of the art of divining is shown by the facts that the senses are held in check, fumes and invocations being employed for the purpose; and that by no means everybody, but only the more artless and young persons, are suitable for the purpose.
3. That likewise, ecstasy or alienation of mind is a chief origin of the divining art; also the mania which occurs in diseases, mental aberration, abstinence from wine, suffusions of the body. fancies set in motion by morbid conditions or equivocal states of mind, such as may occur during abstinence and ecstasy, or apparitions got up by technical magic.<sup>12</sup>
4. That both the realm of Nature, Art, and the feeling in things of common throughout the universe, as of the parts in one animal, contain foreshadowings of certain things with reference to others. Moreover, there are bodies so constituted as to be a forewarning from some to others. Examples of this kind are manifest by the things done, namely: that they who make the invocations (at the Rites) carry stones and herbs, tie sacred knots and unloose them, open places that are locked, and change the purposes of individuals by whom they are entertained, so that from being paltry they are made worthy. They also who are able to reproduce the mystic figures are not to be held in low esteem. For they watch the course of the heavenly bodies, and tell from the position and relation of one with another whether the oracular announcements of the ruling planet will be false or true, or whether the rites which have been performed will be to no purpose, or will be expressive or archaic, although no god or dæmon is drawn down to them.

12. *Goeteia* (goetia), or "black magic."

There are some, however, who suppose there is likewise, the subject-race of a tricky nature, artful, and assuming all shapes, turning many ways, that personates gods and dæmons and souls of



the dead like actors on the stage; and that through these everything that seems to be good or bad is possible. They are led to form this judgment because these subject-spirits are not able to contribute anything really beneficial as relates to the soul, nor even to perceive such things; but on the other hand, they ill treat, deride, and often impede those who are returning to virtue.

They are likewise full of conceit, and take delight in vapors and sacrifices.

5. Because the begging priest with open mouth attempts in many ways to raise our expectations.<sup>13</sup>

#### **4. The invocation of the Theurgic powers**

It perplexes me greatly to form a conception how they who are invoked as superior beings are likewise commanded like inferiors; also that they require the worshipper to be just, although when entreated, they themselves consent to perform unjust acts. They will not hearken to the person who is invoking them if he is not pure from sexual contamination, yet they themselves do not hesitate to lead chance individuals into unlawful sexual relations.

#### **5. Sacrifices and Prayers.**

(I am likewise in doubt in regard to the sacrifices, what utility or power they possess in the world and with the gods, and for what reason they are performed, appropriate for the beings thus honored and advantageously for the persons who present the gifts.<sup>14</sup>)

The gods also require that the interpreters of the oracles observe

13. The *agurtes* or begging priest generally belonged to the worship of Rhea or Cybele, the Mother. He is frequently depicted in a most unfavorable light. Apuleius speaks of a company of these emasculate priests in the eighth book of the *Metamorphoses*. They are also described in the *Republic* of Plato: "*Agurtæ and Mantics* frequent the houses of the rich and persuade them that they possess a power granted by the gods to expiate, by sacrifices and chants any unjust act that has been committed and that they induce the gods by blandishments and magic rites to help them. They collected money in this way, and they also followed the selling of nostrums and telling of fortunes."

14. This paragraph is taken from Part V, Chapter I, and is not found in the text of the Letter as we have it. It is quoted there as belonging in this place. In the original Greek text the preceding paragraph appears in

strict abstinence from animal substances, in order that they may not be made impure by the fumes from the bodies; yet they themselves are allured most of all by the fumes of the sacrifices of animals.

## 6. Conditions for successful results

It is also required that the Beholder<sup>15</sup> must be pure from the contact of anything dead, and yet the rites employed to bring the gods hither, many of them, are made effective through dead animals.

What, then, is more preposterous than these things -- that a human being, inferior in dignity, should make use of threats, not to a dæmon or soul of some dead person, but to the Sun-King himself, or to the Moon, or some one of the divine ones in the sky, himself uttering falsehood in order that they may be caused to speak the truth? For the declaration that he will assail the sky, that he will reveal to view the Arcana of Isis, that he will expose to public gaze the ineffable symbol in the innermost sanctuary, that he will stop the Baris; that, like Typhon, he will scatter the limbs of Osiris, or do something of a similar character, what is it but an extravagant absurdity, threatening what he neither knows how nor is able to perform? What dejection of spirit does it not produce in those who, like children, destitute of intelligence, are dismayed by groundless fear and terrified by these false alarms?

And yet Chairemon, the Scribe of the Temple, records these things as current discourse among the Egyptian priests.<sup>16</sup> It is also said that these threats, and others of like tenor, are very violent.

unbroken connection with the one which follows, and in dividing them we find it necessary to add a clause, to introduce the subject.

15. Greek, an epopt, seer, or beholder; a person admitted to the higher degree of initiation. "The Perfective Rite leads the way as the *muesis* or mystic initiation," says Proclus, "and after that is the *epopteia* or beholding." Theôn describes it as three degrees -- "the Purification, Initiation, and Beholding of the Divine Vision." Mr. Robert Brown, Jr., explains the last of these very fully. "This is the Autopsia or Personal Inspection, the Crown of Mysteries, the Epopteia or Divine Beholding, and he becomes an Epoptes or Contemplator." (*Great Dionysiac Myth*, VI, 2, 3.) As the Autoptic Visions are the principal topic in this work, the term "Beholder" is adopted uniformly for several words of the same import.

16. As the term "Egyptian" is applied only in this work to individuals of sacerdotal rank, the designation of "priest" is added. The Hierogrammateus, or Scribe of the Temple, was a priest of the lower class, and his duty was to keep the records, teach students the religious observances, and take care that they were duly obedient. The prophets were

superior to the Scribes. The Temples of Egypt, like those of Babylonia, were seminaries for instruction, and all departments of Science and philosophy were included in their teachings as being Sacred Learning.

## 7. Sacred names and symbolic expressions

The Prayers also: What do they mean when they speak of the one coming forth to light from the slime, sitting on the Lotus-blossom, sailing in a boat, changing forms according to the season, and assuming a shape according to the Signs of the Zodiac? For so this is said to be seen at the Autopsias; and they unwittingly attribute to the divinity a peculiar incident of their own imagination. If, however, these expressions are uttered figuratively, and are symbolic representations of his forces, let them tell the interpretation of the symbols. For it is plain that if they denote the condition of the Sun, as in eclipses, they would be seen by every one who looked toward it intently.

Why, also, are terms preferred that are unintelligible, and of those that are unintelligible why are foreign ones preferred instead of those of our own language? For if the one who hears gives attention to the signification it is enough that the concept remains the same, whatever the term may be. For the divinity that is invoked is possibly not Egyptian in race; and if he is Egyptian, he is far from making use of Egyptian speech, or indeed of any human language at all. Either these are all artful contrivances of jugglers, and disguises having their origin in the passive conditions induced about us through being attributed to the divine agency, or we have left unnoticed conceptions of the divine nature that are contrary to what it is.

## 8. The First Cause

I desire you further to declare plainly to me what the Egyptian Theosophers believe the First Cause to be; whether Mind, or above mind; and whether one alone, or subsisting with another or with several others; whether unbodied or embodied, whether the very same as the Creator of the Universe (Demiurgos) or prior to the Creator; also whether they likewise have knowledge respecting Primal Matter;<sup>17</sup> or of what nature the first bodies were; and whether the Primal Matter was unoriginated, or was generated. For Chairemon and the others hold that there is not anything else prior

17. Greek, hulé; a term first adopted by Aristotle to signify the objective, negative or passive element upon which the Creative energy operates. Plato named it the "receptacle," as containing the creative energy and making it

to the worlds which we behold. At the beginning of their discourses they adopt the divinities of the Egyptians, but no other gods, except those called Planets, those that make up the Zodiac and such as rise with these, and likewise those divided into decans, those which indicate nativities, and those which are called the Mighty Leaders. The names of these are preserved in the Almanacs, together with their routine of changes, their risings and settings, and their signifying of future events. For these men perceived that the things which were said respecting the Sun-God as the Demiurgos, or Creator of the Universe, and concerning Osiris and Isis, and all the Sacred Legends, may be interpreted as relating to the stars, their phases, occultations, and revolutions in their orbits, or else to the increase and decrease of the Moon, the course of the Sun, the vault of the sky as seen by night or by day, or the river Nile, and, in short, they explain everything as relating to natural objects, and nothing as having reference to incorporeal and living essences.<sup>18</sup>

More of them likewise attribute to motion of the stars whatever may relate to us. They bind everything, I know not how, in the indissoluble bonds of necessity, which they term Fate, or allotment; and they also connect everything with those gods whom they worship in temples and with carved images and other objects, as being the only unbinders of Fate.

## 9. Nativities and Guardian Dæmons

The next thing to be learned relates to the peculiar dæmon or guardian spirit -- how the Lord of the House<sup>19</sup> assigns it, according to what purpose or what quality of emanation or life or power conies from it to us, whether it really exists or does not exist, and whether it is impossible or possible actually to find the Lord of the House. Certainly, if it is possible, then the person has learned the scheme of his nativity; knowing his own guardian dæmon, is liberated from fate, is truly favored by divinity. Nevertheless, the rules for casting nativities are countless, and beyond comprehension. Moreover, it is impossible for expertness in astral observations to amount to an actual knowing, for there is great disagreement in relation to it, and Chairemon, as well as many others, have spoken against it. Hence the assumption of a Lord of the House (or Lords of the House, if there are more than one) pertaining to a nativity is almost confessed by astrologers themselves to be beyond absolute proving; and yet it is from this assumption, they say, that the ascertaining of the person's own personal dæmon is possible.

But further, I wish to be informed whether our personal dæmon presides over some specific one of the regions within us. For it

effective.  
18. Plutarch comments somewhat severely upon this mode of interpretation. In his treatise *On Isis and Osiris* he remarks that some individuals do not scruple to say that Osiris is the Sun, Isis no other than the Moon, and that Typhon is fire, or drouth, or the Ocean. But he adds in rebuttal: "No one can rationally imagine that these objects can be gods in themselves; for nothing can be a god that is either without soul, or under the power of natural objects." He also remarks that "there is an excellent saying among philosophers, that they who have not learned the true sense of words will also mistake in the things that are meant."

19. Greek, *oikoresmotys*: Hebrew, *Baal Zebul*. In astrology a "house" is a twelfth part of the sky as marked out for the purpose of horoscopes. Every sign of the Zodiac thus had a "house," which a planet or planetary genius was considered as occupying, and thence ruling the days and events of the month to which it belonged.

20. Compare *First Epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians*,

seems to be believed by some persons that there are dæmons allotted to specific departments of the body -- one over the health, one over the figure, and another over the bodily habits, forming a bond of union among them; and that one is placed as superior over all of them in common. And further, they suppose that there is one dæmon guardian of the body, another of the soul, and another of the superior mind;<sup>20</sup> also that some dæmons are good and others bad.

V, 23: "Spirit and soul and body."

I am in doubt, however, whether our particular dæmon may not be a special part of the soul; and hence he who has a mind imbued with good sense would be the truly favored one.

I observe, moreover, that there is a twofold worship of the personal dæmon; also, that some perform it as to two and others as to three, but nevertheless he is invoked by all with a common form of invocation.

## **10. Eudæmonia, or the True Success**

I question, however, whether there may not be some other secret path to true success which is afar from (the Rites of) the gods. I doubt whether it is really necessary to pay any regard to the opinions of individuals in regard to the divine endowment of divination and Theurgy, and whether the Soul does not now and then form grand conceptions. On the contrary, also, there are other methods for obtaining premonitions of what will take place. Perhaps, also, they who exercise the divine art of divining may indeed foresee, and yet they are not really successful: for they may foresee future events and not know how to make use of the foresight properly for themselves. I desire from you, therefore, to show me the path to success and in what the essence of it consists. For among us (philosophers) there is much wrangling, as though good might be derived from human reasonings by comparison of views.

If, however, this part of the inquiry, the intimate association with the superior race is passed over by those who devised it, wisdom will be taught by them to trivial purpose, such as calling the Divine Mind to take part about the finding of a fugitive slave, or a purchase of land, or, if it should so happen, a marriage or a matter of trade. Suppose, however, that this subject of intimate communion with the Superior race is not passed over, and those who are thus in communication tell things that are remarkably true about different matters, but nothing important or trustworthy in relation to the true success -- employing themselves diligently with matters that are difficult, but of no use to human beings -- then

there were neither gods nor good dæmons present, but on the contrary, a dæmon of that kind called "Vagabond," or it was all an invention of men or an air-castle of a mortal nature.

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## Part I. The Gods and their peculiarities

### Chapter 2. Reply of Abammon the Teacher to The Letter of Porphyry to Anebo.

#### Introduction

Hermes<sup>1</sup>, the patron of literature, was rightly considered of old to be a god common to all the priests<sup>2</sup> and the one presiding over the genuine learning relating to the gods, one and the same among all. Hence our predecessors were wont to ascribe to him their discoveries in wisdom and to name all their respective works *Books of Hermes*.

#### NOTES:

1. Hermes is here the same as the Egyptian divinity, Thoth or Tahuti, the god of learning and medicine. He was regarded as the Scribe or recorder who registered the actions of the dead and living, so that they "were judged out of those things which were written in the books." He was also the revealer of the divine will to men. His name *Tahuti* signifies "thrice great" or "very great," or *Trismegistos*, Greek.

2. The priests in Egypt consisted of many orders, including those who performed the Rites, the learned profession which included prophets, philosophers, poets, authors, physicians, artists, master mechanics, and also embalmers of the dead.

3. This form of expression extends through this entire

If, therefore, we participate in this god<sup>3</sup>, of the measure which has fallen to us and become possible to us, thou dost well to propose

these questions in regard to the Divine Sciences to the priests as to friends for an accurate solution. Having good reason therefore for considering the letter sent by thee to Anebo, my pupil, as having been written to myself, I will answer thee truly in regard to the matters about which thou hast enquired. For it would not be becoming that Pythagoras, Plato, Demokritos, Eudoxos, and many others of the old Greeks, should have obtained competent instruction from the temple-scribes of their own time<sup>4</sup>, but that thou who art contemporary with us, and having the same disposition as they, should be turned away by those now living and recognized as public teachers.

book. Though hardly familiar to us, it was formerly common in philosophic writings. The gods being spiritual essences, it was very properly considered that their worshipers would participate in their substance as we partake of the air that we inhale. In this way their powers and virtues were supposed to be imparted to the recipients. This treatise accordingly mentions the gifts received by the persons initiated at the telestic or Theurgic Rites, as a participating of the gods. The fact that they represent or personify qualities rather than individualities makes this mode of speaking eminently proper.

4. In archaic periods, the worship and literature of every people was exclusive. Every repast being accompanied by religious ceremonies, the Egyptians would not eat with foreigners. Ashmes II broke through this restriction and made treaties of friendship and commerce with several Grecian and Ionian States. By his command, and at the instance of Polykrates of Samos, a tyrant-king, Pythagoras was admitted to instruction at the temples, and formally initiated into the sacerdotal caste. After the Persian conquest others resorted to Egypt for similar

purposes; among them  
Plato, Demokritos,  
Archimedes, Chrysippos,  
Euripides.

Accordingly, I myself engage thus in the present discussion. Thou, if thou dost so choose, art at liberty to consider the person who is now writing to thee as the same individual to whom thou hast sent thy letter. If, however, it shall seem to thee more proper, then regard the individual who is discoursing with thee in writing to be one or some other prophet of the Egyptians, for this is not a matter worth differing about. Or, as I think still a better way, let it pass unnoticed whether the person speaking is of inferior or superior rank, and direct the attention solely to the things that are uttered, thus arousing the understanding to eagerness simply as to whether that which is said be true or false.

In the first place, let us take the subjects separately in order to ascertain the scope and quality of the problems which are now proposed for discussion. Next let us examine in detail the theories respecting divine matters from which thy doubts were conceived, and make a statement of them, as to the sources of knowledge by which they are to be investigated.

Some which are badly jumbled together require to be taken apart; while others have relation to the Divine Cause through which everything exists, and so are readily apprehended. Others which we might put forward according to a certain plan of exhibiting contradictory views, draw out the judgment in both directions; and there are likewise some which demand from us to explain the whole of the Initiatory Rites.

Such being the facts, our answers are to be taken from many places and from different sources of knowledge. Some of these introduce fundamental principles from the traditions which the sages of the Chaldaeans delivered; others derive support from the doctrines which the Prophets of the Egyptian temples teach; and some of them follow closely the speculations of the Philosophers and elicit the conclusions which belong to them. And now there are some of these which involve an unbecoming dispute from diverse notions that are not worthy of a word; and others that have their origin from prejudices common to human beings. All these, therefore, are to be disposed of in various ways by themselves, and are in many ways connected with one another.

Hence, on account of all these things, there is some discussion



necessary for the directing of them properly.

## PLAN OF THE DISCUSSION

We will, therefore, set forth to thee the hereditary opinions of the Assyrian Sages<sup>5</sup> in regard to the True Knowledge, and will show thee in plain terms our own. Some things in the Gnosis will be brought into the discussion from the innumerable arcane writings, and the rest will be from the works upon the entire range of Divine Matters, which the old compilers have collected into a book of limited dimensions.

If, however, thou wouldst propose some philosophic question, we will determine it for thee according to the ancient Tablets of Hermes<sup>6</sup>, which Plato and Pythagoras, having studied thoroughly beforehand, combined together in Philosophy.

But questions that are foreign to the subject, or that are disputatious and exhibit a contentious disposition of mind, we shall tone down gently and aptly, or else show their impropriety. So far also as they go in the line of common ways of thinking we shall try to discuss them in a familiar manner. Those, likewise, which require the experiences of the Divine Dramas<sup>7</sup> for an intelligent understanding we will, as far as it is possible, explain by words alone;<sup>8</sup> but those which are likewise full of intellectual speculation will be shown to be effective for purifying (from the earthly contamination).

5. It is evident that there was a Gnosis, or Sacred Doctrine common to the religions of the principal countries, and that its focus was at Babylon. Compare *Jeremiah* LI. 7 and *Revelation* XVII. Iamblichus lived chiefly at Khalkis In Syria, and was familiar with the magi and learned men of Persia and Assyria. Hence as Abammon he refers the Gnosis to that region.

6. The Stellae, Pillars or Tablets of Thoth, appear to be little else than a figurative expression for the sacred learning in possession of the Sacerdotal Caste in Egypt. When we call to mind that the Pyramids in that country, before their spoilation, were cased all over with tablets of stone on which hieroglyphic writing was engraved, we shall the better apprehend the significance of the allusion of Abammon.

7. Greek, *ergatheia* divine works or performances; the exhibitions at the Mystic Rites. As these were dramatic representations to prefigure experiences of a spiritual character, we substitute the term "*drama*" as more likely to afford a clearer conception of the meaning. Element designated the Eleusinic

"drama."

8. Mr. Gale, editor of the Greek text of this work as published at Oxford, was of the opinion that the reading of the original was corrupt, and suggested an emendation which may be rendered as follows: "It is impossible to explain by mere words." This would be in harmony with the statement in the Second Pauline Epistle to the Corinthian believers: "He was carried suddenly to paradise and heard things ineffable which it is not permitted to a human being to utter familiarly."

It is possible, however, to tell the signs of this which are worthy to be noted, and from these both thou and those who are like thee in mind can be brought near to the very essence of things that have real being.<sup>9</sup>

9. Plato and his disciples employ the principle or being to denote the Absolute Divinity; also the phrase οὐτως ὄν real being or that which really is or has being, as contrasted with the "*genesis*" or objective existence.

So far, however, as they may be actually known through words, none of these matters will be left without a perfect demonstration, and in reference to everything we shall give thee carefully the proper explanation. Those which relate to divine matters we will answer as theologians; and those which pertain to Theurgy we will explain theurgically. Those of a philosophic character we will search out with thee as philosophers, and such as extend to the Primary Causes we will bring forth into light following the argument together according to first principles. Such, however, as pertain to morals or final results we will determine properly according to ethical form; and other questions, in like manner, we will treat according to their proper place in the arrangement.

We will now proceed to thy questions.

## **TWO FORMS OF KNOWING**

Thou beginnest accordingly by saying: "In the first place, it is to be taken for granted that there are gods." Speaking in this way is not right. For the inborn knowledge in respect to the gods is coexistent with our very being, and is superior to all judging and deciding beforehand. Indeed, it is preexistent both to argument and demonstration, and is united interiorly from the beginning to its own divine cause and is coexistent with the inherent longing and impulse of the soul to the *Good*.<sup>10</sup>

If, however, we must speak truly, the conjoining to the divine nature is not knowing, for this is kept separate after a manner by an otherness.<sup>11</sup>

Prior to this knowing, however, which is as of one individual having knowledge of another, the intimate union as in a single concept is self-originated and indistinguishable. Hence we ought to concede the point as though possibly it might not be granted, not to assume it as a matter of uncertainty'. for it always existed simply in energy. Nor is it proper to put it to proof in this way as though we had authority to judge and reject ; for we are ourselves encompassed in it, or rather we are filled by it, and the very selfhood which we are we possess in this knowing of the gods.<sup>12</sup>

I have, moreover, the same thing to say to thee in regard to the Superior races which come next in order after the gods. I mean the dæmons, heroes, and uncontaminate souls.<sup>13</sup>

10. It was the practice of the philosophers to make use of abstract terms to represent the Supreme and Absolute. Of this character are το αγαθον the Good; το αληθεσ the True, ο εις the One.

11. Power and energy are thus distinguished from their result. Damaskios remarks that "where there is not otherness, there will be no knowing. A union on conjunction, as of one to another, is superior to knowledge." Plato taught, says Professor Cooker, that man longs for the good, and bears witness by his restlessness and disquietude; that he instinctively desires it, and that he can find no rest and satisfaction in anything apart from the knowledge and participation of the Supreme Absolute Good.

12. The [\*Chaldaean Oracles\*](#) quoted by Damaskios declare that "the prolific fountain of souls is encompassed by the two Minds." He adds that "the fiery signals which draw down the ripe ones are in God," which Simplikios explains: "The Unbodied ones are the supreme Mind and God being Source and Cause."

13. Damaskios described the "dæmons" as tutelary spirits of a nature essentially divine. They were said to

have charge of the oracles and worldly affairs generally. The "heroes" or demigods were a lower race in the order of emanation. The term denotes the son of a divinity, with a human parent. Uncontaminated souls are such as are not impure from the attraction of the *genesis* or domain of phenomenal existence.

For it is always necessary to bear in mind respecting these subordinate races that they have one defined form of essence; also that we put aside from our conception of them the indefiniteness and instability which are incident to the human constitution and renounce the tendency to incline to the other side which arises from attempts to counterbalance the opposition of the arguments. For such a thing is foreign to the principles of reason and life, but is derived from secondary sources, such even as belong to the power and contrariness of the realm of generated existence. It is necessary, however, to treat of them as being of a uniform nature. Let it be admitted, then, that with the companions of the gods<sup>14</sup> in the eternal region there is the innate perception of them.

14. The Platonic philosophers before Iamblichus taught that the many gods are the "outshinings" or emanations of the one Superessential Deity and not substances complete of themselves. The Ancient Sadducees are said to have held a similar opinion, not denying the actual existence of angels and spirits, but that they existed permanently by inherent energy. The same sentiment appears in the ninety-fifth (ninety-sixth) Psalm. The [Chaldaean Oracle](#), however, declared that "Not from the eternal source did anything run forth incomplete."

Therefore, even as they have their being always after the same manner, so also the human soul is conjoined to them by Knowledge

according to the same principles; never by any conjecture, opinion or reasoning which have their beginning in Time pursuing the essence which is beyond all these, but by pure and faultless intuitions which it received out of eternity from the gods being conjoined with them in these principles.

Nevertheless, thou seemest to consider the knowing of divine beings to be the same as the knowing of other matters, and likewise that a point may be taken for granted from opposing arguments, as is usual in debates. But there is no such similarity. For the perceiving of them is absolutely distinct from everything of antithetic character. It is not made valid by being now conceded or by coming into existence, but on the other hand it is a single concept, and coexisted with the soul from eternity.

I say such things to thee, therefore, in regard to the first principle in us, at which it is necessary for those to begin who would both speak and hear anything whatever concerning the superior races or about ourselves.

## **PECULIARITIES OF THE SUPERIOR RACES**

Then follows thy question: "What are the peculiarities of the Superior races by which they are differentiated from each other?" If by peculiarities" thou meanest differences as of species under the same genus, which are distinguished by opposite characteristics, as rational and irrational under the head of *animal*, we by no means admit the existence of such differences in beings that neither have one common essence<sup>15</sup> nor characteristics diverse from one another, nor have received an organization from a common source which is undefined and yet defines the peculiarity.

15. Plato defines *essence* as that which has "real being," and describes it as "colorless, formless, and intangible, visible only to the mind or higher reason that guides the soul."

If, however, thou supposest the peculiarity to be a certain simple condition limited in itself, as in primary and secondary races, which differ in their entire essence and in the whole genus, thy notion of the peculiarities is reasonable. For these peculiarities of beings that always exist will all be in some manner set apart, separate and simple.

The questioning, however, is going forward to little purpose, for it behooves us, first of all, to ascertain what the peculiarities are in regard to essence, then in regard to power, and so, after that, what they are in regard to energy. But as thou hast now put the question in reference to certain peculiarities which distinguish them, thou speakest only of the peculiarities of energies. Hence thou askest the difference in them in respect to the last things as mentioned, but art passing over unnoticed, without questioning, the first, and, as relating to the elements of variableness, the most important of

them.

Moreover, there is something added in the same place in regard to "active or passive motions." This is a classification not at all proper as relates to the superior races; for in none of them is there the contrast of active and passive, but certain of their energies are to be contemplated as unconditioned, unrestrained, and without relation to anything opposing. Hence we do not admit in regard to them that there are such motions as active and passive in respect to the soul. For we do not concede self-motion from moving and being set in motion; but we suppose that there is a certain unique self-originating motion which is its very own, and not an aptitude derived from an outside source taking from it action in itself and a passive condition by itself. Who, then, may admit in respect to the races superior to the soul that they are to be distinguished by the peculiarities of active and passive motions?<sup>16</sup>

Further, therefore, that expression which is added, "or things consequent," is inconsistent with their nature. For in the case of those of composite nature, and of those that exist together with others or in others, or that are encompassed by others, some are conceived of as leading and others as following, some as being themselves essences and others as contingent upon essences. For there is an arrangement of them in regular order, and there intervenes unfriendliness and disagreement between them. But in regard to the superior races, they are all to be considered as self-subsisting. The perfect ones take rank as chiefs, and are separate by themselves, and neither have their substance from others or in others. Thus there is nothing about them that is "consequent." In no respect, therefore, is their peculiarity characterized from these.

And now there occurs at the end of the question the natural distinction. The question is whether the essences are to be known by energies, physical motions, and things consequent. Everything, however, is to the contrary. For as the energies and motions made up the actual substance of the essence, they would themselves likewise be dominant in regard to their difference. If, however, the essences generate the energies, being themselves previously separate, then they impart to the motions, energies, and things consequent, that which constitutes the differences. This mode, therefore, is contrary to what is supposed in the present bunt to find the peculiarity.

In short, however, whether thou imaginest that there is one race of gods and one of dæmons, and in like manner of heroes (or half-gods), and after the same course of things, of unbodied souls, or whether thou supposest that there are many races in each category, thou demandest that the distinguishing of them shall be according to peculiarities. For if thou supposest each race to be a unit, the

16. Plato bases upon this fact the immortality of the soul. The soul originates its own action and receptivity by volition. This volition is self-motion, and is that quality of moral freedom which has placed human beings above and apart from the animal tribes.

17. In the Assyrian or Chaldaean Plan of Divine Orders, the following are instanced by Damaskios: 1. The Intellectible Gods. 2. The Hyparchs or superior

whole arrangement of divine orders according to the more perfect classification<sup>17</sup> is overturned; however, they are defined by these according to race, as it may seem satisfactory, and there is not among them one common definition in relation to essence except that those that are prior are distinguished from the inferior races, it is not possible to find out their common boundaries. And even though it should be possible, this very thing takes away their peculiarities. Hence the object which is sought is not to be found in this way. He, however, will be able to define their peculiarities who reasons upon the analogous sameness in the higher orders; as, for example, with the many races among the gods, and again with those among the dæmons and half-gods, and lastly with souls. hence it has been demonstrated by us through this argument what is the right course of the present investigation, its limitation, and how it is possible for it to be made.

## ARRANGEMENT OF THE SUPERIOR ORDERS

Let us next proceed with the answers, one after another, to the questions which have been asked. There is then the Good: both that which is beyond essence and that which exists through essence. I am speaking of that essence which is the 'most ancient and most to be revered, and which, as to is incorporeal.<sup>18</sup> It is a special peculiarity of the gods, and is characteristic of all the races that are included with them; and hence, not being divided from this, but existing in like manner the same in them all, it preserves their peculiar distribution and arrangement.

archons. 3. The Archons. 4. The Archangels. 5. The Azoni or unclassified who belong to no defined jurisdiction. 6. Local Genii. This arrangement is hinted at in Part VIII, § 2.

18. This is the common dogma of every ancient faith. In the Hindu category, the Brahman is the Good which is beyond essence and absolute, while Brahmá is identical with essence. The Parsis [Zoroastrians] acknowledge Zurvan, the Unlimited, and Ahura Mazda, the Divine Creator. The Egyptian priests worshipped Amun, the hidden One, and Ptah, the Demiurgos or Architect of the Universe. [The idea that Zurvan (Time) created Ahura Mazda is considered a heresy to orthodox [Zoroastrianism](#). -JHP]

## SOULS

But with souls that are ruling over bodies, that are occupied with the care of them, and that are placed in order apart by themselves in the eternal regions, before the transition to generated existence, there is not present either the essence of the Good, or the Cause (or Supreme Principle) of the Good which is prior to essence; but there

comes from it a certain participation and habit of good, as we perceive that a sharing of beauty and virtue is very different from what we observe with human beings. For this is equivocal, and becomes manifest in complex natures as sole thing acquired. But the principle of goodness is established unchangeable and perpetual in the Souls. It never at any time goes away from itself, nor is it taken away by anything else.

## **DÆMONS AND HEROES OR HALF-GODS**

Such then being the case with the divine races, the first and the last (the gods and souls), let us consider the two races intermediate between these two extremes, namely: 1. That of heroes or half-gods, which not only ranks higher than the order of souls in power and virtue, moral beauty and greatness, and excels it in every good quality which is incident in souls, but is also closely joined to them by the kindred relationship of a similar form of life. 2. The other, the race of dæmons, which is closely allied to the gods, yet is in a certain sense inferior to them, following as though it was not first in rank but accompanying in subservience to the good pleasure of the gods. This race causes the otherwise invisible goodness of the gods to become visible in operation, becoming itself both assimilated to it, and accomplishing perfect works that are like it. For then what was before unutterable in it is made capable of being uttered, what was without form is caused to shire forth in visible figures, whatever of it was beyond all reasoning is brought forth into plain words, and having already received the connate participation of beautiful gifts it bestows the same ungrudgingly, and transfers them to the races that rank after itself.

Thus these intermediate races complete the common bond of gods and souls and render the connection between them indissoluble. They not only bind these together in one continuous series, from those on high to the very last, but they make the union of them all incapable of being separated and to be a most perfect blending and an equal intermingling of them all. They likewise, after a manner, cause an outgoing influence to go forth equally from the superior to the inferior races and a reciprocal one from subordinate races to those ranking above them. They also establish order among the more imperfect races, and likewise due proportions of the gift coming down from the better ones and of the reception which takes place; and having themselves received from above from the gods the causes or motives of all these, they make everything agreeable and suited in every respect to all.

Thou must not think, therefore, that this classification is a



peculiarity of powers or of energies or of essence; nor art thou taking them separately, to inspect them one by one. Nevertheless, by extending the inquiry through all of them thou wilt complete the answer to what was asked in relation to the peculiarities of gods, dæmons and half-gods, and of those that are included in the category of souls.

Let us proceed again, by another line of argument. Everything, whatever it may be, and of whatever quality, that is united, that is firmly established in itself by unalterable law and is a cause among the indivisible essences -- that is immovable, and so is to be considered as the cause of all motion -- that is superior to all things and has nothing whatever in common with them -- that is to be generally considered as wholly unmingled and separate, not only in being but in power and energy -- every such thing should be ascribed to the gods as being worthy of them. But that which is already divided into a great member, that which can give itself to other objects, that which both receives from others the limitation within itself and is sufficient for the distribution among imperfect ones to make these complete, that nevertheless participates in the primary and life-giving motion<sup>19</sup> and has communion with all things self-existent and coming into existence, that receives a commingling of substances from them all and imparts a radiating influence from itself to all, and that extends these peculiar properties through all the powers, essences and energies in itself--all this, speaking what is true, we shall ascribe to souls, as being implanted in them.

19. Iamblichus is generally regarded as here endeavoring to reconcile the apparent discrepancy between Plato and Aristotle -- the latter described the soul as immovable, and Plato as self-moving, in which statement he refers to operation and not to essence. Syrianos explains that the soul is self-moving because it is set in motion from itself and certainly not by an agent inferior to itself. Proclus adds that the soul is self-moved in respect to the body and things of sense which plainly are set in motion from without themselves.

## THE INTERMEDIATE RACES

What shall we say, then, in regard to the intermediate races? I think from what has been said already that they are sufficiently manifest to every one; for they make complete the indivisible connection between the extreme races.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, it is necessary to continue the explanation. I assume, accordingly, the race of dæmons to be a multitude in one, to be commingled in an unmingled manner, and to accept the lower races as associated with a distinct concept of the most excellent. But on the other hand, I describe the race of heroes or demi-gods as being placed over more common distribution and multitude, and likewise over action and commingling, and matters akin to these. It also receives gifts from above, transcendent, and as though concealed within -- I mean union, purity of nature, stable condition, and undivided identity and superiority over others. For each of these intermediate races is next to one of the extreme races beyond -- one to the first and the other

20. The gods above and the souls below, angels, dæmons and demigods.

to the last. It follows as a natural result that by a continued series of kindred relations the dæmonian race, beginning from the highest in rank, proceeds to the lower races, and that the other, having primarily a connection with the last of them all, should in some way have communication with those that are superior.

Hence there may be perceived the complete joining to gather into one of the first and last races (the gods and souls) through the intermediates (the dæmons and half-gods), and the entire sameness of nature, alike equally in substance, and also alike in power and energy.<sup>21</sup> Whereas, therefore, we have made the classification of the four races in these two ways perfectly complete, we think it sufficient in regard to the others that for the sake of brevity, and because that which remains -- the comprehending of the intermediate tribes -- is in a measure already plain, we exhibit only the peculiarities of the extreme races. Hence we shall pass over the intermediate tribes as being already well known, and make a sketch of the others in some way in very few words.

21. This distinction of principles is noted in the *Chaldaean Oracles*. Pythagoras indicates the same by the terms monad, duad, triad; Plato by *περασ*, *απειρον*, and *μικτον*; Damaskios by the *One*, the *many*, and the *union*. Another version of the *Oracles* in place of "Substance" has *Father*, and for "energy" *Mind* or *Reason*.

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## Chapter 3. The Superior Races

### PECULIARITIES OF THE GODS AND SOULS

In regard to the extreme races (the gods and souls) the former is chief, superior and perfect; the other is inferior and imperfect. The former can do all things at once uniformly and now; but the other is neither able to do anything completely nor immediately; neither speedily nor individually. The former generates all things and is guardian over them; but the latter has a natural disposition to yield and to turn submissively toward what it generates and has under guardianship. The former, being the original cause, has preeminence over all; but the latter, being dependent upon the pleasure of the gods as from a cause, is coexistent with it from eternity. The former in a single decisive moment grasps the ends of all the energies and essences; but the latter passes from some things to others and goes forward from the imperfect to the perfect. Further still, there exists with the former the highest and unlimited, superior to all measurement, and so completely formless as to be circumscribed by no formative principles; but the latter is dominated by impulse, habit and inclination, and is held fast both by longings for that which is inferior and by being familiar with things of a secondary character. At length it is moulded in various

### NOTES:

1. The *Chaldaean Oracles* also recognize this twofold mind. The one, the Pure Reason or Intelligence, was placed over the first Triad. "The Mind of the Father named all things in threes, and governed them all by Mind." This mind they considered as sole, unparticipating, and essential. The other was described as participant and divisible into parts or qualities.

ways and proportions from them. Hence MIND, the leader and king of the things that actually are, the demiurgic art of the universe, is always present with the gods in the same manner, completely and abundantly, being established in itself unalloyed according to one sole energy. But the soul partakes of divisible and multiform mind,<sup>1</sup> adapting itself to the supreme authority over all. It also takes care of unsouled beings, having been itself born into various forms at different times. From the same causes, order itself and beauty itself are coexistent with the Superior races; or if it is desired so to express it, the First cause is coexistent with these. But with the soul the allotment of intellectual order and divine beauty is always associated. With the gods, the measure of all things, or rather the cause of it, is perpetually coordinate; but the soul is confined to the divine limit and only participates of this in a limited degree. With good reason there may be ascribed to the gods dominion over all beings, by the power and supreme authority of the First Cause; but the soul has defined limits within which it can have command.

Such being the different peculiarities of the races at the highest and lowest extremes, what we have now been saying may be understood without difficulty, and also the peculiarities of the intermediates, the dæmons and half-gods; these being each next to one of the extremes, resembling both and going out from both to the intermediate region, and so effecting a harmonious union by commingling them and joining them together in due proportions.

Let such, then, be considered the peculiarities of the first divine races.

## **DISTINCTIONS OF THE SUPERIOR RACES**

Surely we do not admit the distinction of the Superior races to be what is suggested by thee: "a classification established by difference of bodies, the gods being distinguished by ætherial bodies, the dæmons by ærial bodies, and souls by bodies pertaining to the earth." Such an arrangement would be like the assigning of Socrates to a tribe when he was a Prytanis,<sup>2</sup> and is not proper to be admitted in regard to the divine races, which are all by themselves, unbound and free.<sup>3</sup> To make bodies their own first causes, as to their specific nature, appears to be a fearful absurdity; for they are subservient to these causes and subject to the conditions of generated existence.

2. The Prytanis of Athens were fifty in number, and were selected from the Boulé or Senate. Socrates, at the age of sixty, was chosen to that dignity.

3. The Chaldaean Theology did not unequivocally describe all the gods as "unbound." The seven cosmokrators, or rulers of the world, the lords of the zodiacal houses and the cosmic gods assigned to regions of the world, were bound to their respective

jurisdictions.

Further still, the races of Superior beings are not in the bodies, but govern them from outside. Hence they do not undergo changes with the bodies. Yet they give from themselves to the bodies every such good as the latter are able to receive, but they themselves receive nothing from the bodies. Hence they cannot have received from them any peculiarities. For if they were as habits of the bodies, or as material forms, or some other body-like quality, it might be possible for them, perhaps, to undergo change together with the different conditions of the bodies. But if they preexist separate from bodies, and unmingled with them, what rational distinction originating from the bodies can be developed in them?

In fact, this proposition in regard to these races makes the bodies actually superior to the divine races, since by such a hypothesis they furnish a vehicle for the superior causes and fix in them the peculiarities incident to their essence. Nevertheless, it is plain that if the allotments, distributions and assignments of those that govern are arranged with those that are governed this authority will be given to the more excellent. For it is because those that are placed over others are such that they receive thereby such an allotment, and give this a specific character; but the essence itself does not become assimilated to the nature of the corporeal receptacle.<sup>4</sup>

4. The pre-existence of the soul in the eternal world, before becoming involved in the genesis and conditions of the earth-life, was generally believed. Even after being set free at death, it was supposed to be, after a period of less or greater length, again attracted back to the mundane sphere. Plato illustrates this by the Vision of Eros in the *Republic*. The choice of the earthly condition is made by the soul itself, and very generally it differs from what it had been in the preceding term of life in the world. "The cause is in him who makes the choice, and the divinity is without blame in the matter." Eros adds that after the souls had chosen their new lives according as they drew the lots, they all went in their order to Lachesis, and she gave to every one the dæmon that he had chosen, and sent the dæmon along with him to be the guardian genius of his life, and the accomplisher of the fate

Hence I may speak as regards this subject in its turn, but a supposition of this kind must be admitted in respect to the imperfect soul. For such a mode of living as the soul projected, and such an ideal as was ready before entering into a human body, there is a corresponding organic body, joined to it and a similar nature which receives its more perfect life.<sup>5</sup>

In respect to the superior races and those which as being universal include the origin of all, the inferior ones are produced in the superiors, the corporeal in the incorporeal, and, being encompassed by them in one circle, are governed by them. Hence the revolutions of the heavenly spheres<sup>6</sup> have been induced originally by the aetherial soul and are always inherent in it. The souls of the world also being extended to their own mind, are absolutely encompassed by it and primarily generated in it. In like manner also, the Mind, both that which is divisible (into attributes and qualities) and that which is entire, is included (as essential quality) of the superior races. Hence the secondary races, being always turned toward the primary, and the superiors leading the inferiors as exemplars, essence and ideal come to the lower races from those which are superior, and those which are ignoble are produced primarily in the more excellent. Hence, accordingly, order and proportion come from the latter to the inferior races, and these are what they are through the former. But there is no transmitting of peculiarities from the inferior races to those which precede them.

Such a classification, therefore, based on corporeal conceptions, is shown by these arguments to be false. Even though in this case it may seem otherwise to thee, the false assumption is not worthy of a word. Such a case does not exhibit abundant argument, but one belabors himself to no purpose if he puts forth hypotheses and then endeavors to refute them as not being true. For in what way is essence, which is absolutely incorporeal, having nothing in common with the bodies that partake of it, to be distinguished from such bodies? Not being in any way present with the bodies as a matter of place, how is it to be separated by places after the corporeal manner? And not being separated by circumscribed

which he had chosen. Then he was born anew into the earth.

5. The cause or incentive for the coming of the soul into generated life is variously explained by different writers. According to Plotinus, the universal soul does not come to a body as the body may come to it, nor does the body contain the soul, but is contained by it. Simplicios accepted the statement of Iamblichus, that "the soul projects certain lives for itself."

6. The stars and planets were regarded as abodes or receptacles of souls.

divisions of subject matter, how is it to be held in a divided condition by the divisions of the world? But what is more, what is there that can hinder the gods from going everywhere? What is there to hold their power in check, from extending to the vault of the sky? For this would be the work of a cause far mightier than the one shutting them in and circumscribing them within certain parts. Real being -- that which truly is, and which is in itself incorporeal - - is everywhere, wherever it pleases. Yet, as thou takest for granted, that which is divine and which transcends all things is itself transcended by the perfectness of the entire world, and is encompassed by it in a specific division, and hence is inferior in respect to bodily dimensions. Yet if there is no divine creation and no participation of divine ideals extending through the whole world, I do not see, for my part, any opportunity for a creating and framing of them after specific forms.

In short, however, this opinion which banishes the presence of the superior races entirely from the earth is an abrogating of the Sacred Rites and theurgic communion of the gods with human beings. For it says nothing else than that the divine ones dwell apart from the earth, that they do not commingle with human beings, and that this region is deserted by them. Consequently, according to this reasoning we priests have never learned anything whatever from the gods, and since we differ in nothing from other men thou hast not done right in questioning us as though we knew more than others.

Not one of these statements of thine, however, is sound. For neither are the gods limited to parts of the earth, nor are the inferior races about the earth excluded from their presence. On the contrary, the superior races are characterized in this way: that they are encompassed by nothing and that they encompass all things in themselves. But those that belong to the earth have their being in the perfections (pleromas) of the gods, and when they become fit for the divine communion they at once, prior to their own essence, possess the gods that preexisted in it.

That this entire classification is false, that this plan of investigating peculiarities is irrational, and that the notion of distributing the gods each to a certain region does not permit the receiving of the entire essence and power which are in them, we have fully established. It would have been right, therefore, to omit the dissenting inquiry in regard to the distribution of the Superior races, as it contradicts nothing in regard to the true conceptions. On the other hand, our attention should be directed, instead, to the intelligent perception of matters relating to the gods, and not to the

holding of a discussion with a man; and for this reason we shall adapt the present discourse to the disposing of subjects of probability and matters relating to the gods.

## **HOW DIVINE RACES ARE DISTRIBUTED**

[1.9 cp. Luck 126]

I assume accordingly that thou askest a solution of that matter of which thou seemest to be in doubt, namely: "As the gods dwell only in Heaven, why are invocations at the Theurgic rites directed to them as being of the Earth and Underworld?"

This position which is thus assumed at the beginning, namely: that the gods traverse heaven only, is not true; for the universe is full of them. But thou then demandest: "How is it that although possessing power unlimited, undivided, and unrestricted, some of them are mentioned as being of the water and of the atmosphere, and that others are allotted by definite limitation to different places and distinct parts of bodies? If they are actually separated by circumscribed limitations of parts, and according to diversities of places and subject-bodies, how will there be any union of them one to another?"

One most excellent solution of all these and an infinite number of similar questions is by a survey of the manner in which the gods are allotted.

This, then, is the explanation: Whether the allotment be to certain parts of the universe, as to heaven or earth, whether to holy cities and regions, whether to certain temple-precincts or sacred images, the divine irradiation shines upon them all from the outside, just as the sun illuminates every object from without with his rays. Hence, as the light encompasses the objects that it illuminates, so also the power of the gods comprehends from without those that participate of it. In like manner, also, as the light of the sun is present in the air without being combined with it -- and it is evident that there is nothing left in the air when the illuminating agent is removed, although warmth is still present when the heating has entirely ceased -- so also the light of the gods shines while entirely separate from the objects illuminated, and, being firmly established in itself, makes its way through all existing things.

Still further, the light that is the object of perception is one, continuous, and everywhere the same entirety; so that it is not possible for a part of it to be cut off by itself, or to be enclosed in a circle, or at any time to remove itself from the source of illumination. According to the same principles, therefore, the whole universe, being susceptible of division, is distinguished with

reference to the one and indivisible light of the gods. In short, this light is one and the same everywhere, and is not only present, undivided, with all things that are capable of participating of it, but it, likewise, by an absolute power and by an infinite superiority, fills all things, as a cause, joins them together in itself, unites them everywhere with itself, and combines the ends with the beginnings. The whole heaven, including with it the universe imitating this, goes around in a circular revolution, unites all to itself, and leads the elements whirling in a circle; and all things being in one another, and borne toward one another, it holds them together and defines their equal proportions; and guiding them to the remotest distances, makes the ends combine with the beginnings -- as, for example, the earth with the sky -- and effects a sole connection and accord of wholes with wholes.

Who, then, that contemplates the visible image of the gods thus united as one<sup>7</sup> will not have too much reverence for the gods, its causes, to entertain a different judgment and to introduce among them artificial divisions, arbitrary distinctions, and corporeal outlines? I, for one, do not think that any one would be so disposed. For if there is neither any analogy, nor scheme of proportion, nor interblending in respect to power or simple energy of that which is set in order with that which sets in order,<sup>8</sup> then I say that there is nothing existing in it, either of extension or in regard to distance, or of encompassing locally, or of division by due setting apart, or of any other such natural equalizing of qualities in the presence of the gods with beings inferior in their nature. For in natures that are homogeneous in essence and power, or that are in some manner of similar form or alike in race, there can be perceived an encompassing or holding fast. But in the case of those that are totally exempt from all these conditions, what opposing circumstance in respect to these things, or pathways through them all, or separate outline, or encompassing in some prescribed space, or anything of this kind, can be justly conceived? On the other hand, I think that they who are partakers of the gods<sup>9</sup> are, every one, of such a nature as to partake of them according to their own intrinsic quality, some as of the other, others as of the atmosphere, and others as of the water; which the technique of the Divine Performances recognizes,<sup>10</sup> and so makes use of the adaptations and invocations according to such a classification.

7. Plato affirms this in the *Epinomis*. "It is Heaven that we should honor," says he; "it is the cause of all benefits to us." Abammon, doubtless, alludes to Ra, of the Egyptian Pantheon, who was regarded as the source of light, and also as being the whole heaven united as one eikon and personality.

8. Proclus reiterates this declaration, so often insisted upon, that the superior nature and essence can receive nothing from one that is inferior.

9. Intelligent readers will understand from what has been said, that as the gods are spiritual essences, the partaking of them, or, in other words, of their irradiation, is analogous to the partaking of light. The luminance itself is in no way affected, but the partaker is filled and pervaded by it.

10. This is the Theurgic



Rite. "This Theurgy," says Thomas Taylor, "is, doubtless, the same as the 'Magic of Zoroaster,' which was no 'Black art,' but a peculiar mode of worship."

So much may be stated in regard to the distribution of the superior races in the world.

## **SUPERIOR BEINGS NOT CLASSIFIED AS PASSIVE AND IMPASSIBLE**

After these distinctions thou suggestest another classification on thy own account, and separatest the essences of the superior races by the differentiation of "passive and impassible." I do not, however, by any means accept this classification. For no one of the superior races is passive, nor yet is it impassible in such a manner as to be thus contradistinguished from any that is susceptible, as being adapted by nature to receive impressions, or as freed from them through inherent virtue or some other excellent condition. On the other hand, it is on this account, because they are entirely exempt from the inconsistency of being either passive or not passive, because they are in no way susceptible to impression, and because they are unchangeably fixed in regard to essence, that I set them down in all these respects as impassible and unchangeable.

Consider, if thou art willing, the last one of the divine races, the soul pure from the defilement of bodies. Being superior to the realm of nature, and living the unbegotten life, what does it want of the generated life with sensual pleasure and of the restoration thereby into the realm of nature?<sup>11</sup> Being outside of everything corporeal, and of the nature which is divisible in respect to the body, and being likewise entirely separate from the accord in the Soul which goes down into the body, why is it to participate of the pain that leads to decay and dissolution of the structure of the body? On the contrary, it has no occasion for the susceptibilities which are forerunners of sensation, for it is neither held at all in a body nor in any way environed by it so as to have occasion for bodily organs in order to perceive different bodies outside of these organs. In short, however, being indivisible, remaining in the one same form, being essentially incorporeal, and having nothing in common with the generating and susceptible body, it can be affected by nothing in regard to classification or transformation, nor in short has it any concern whatever with change or condition.

But on the other hand, whenever the soul comes into the body it is not itself, nor are the rational faculties which it imparts to the body

11. The soul was called by Damaskios, our last echo of Divinity. In the mundane region it was considered as not a whole and united essence, but as divided into qualities and traits of character.

12. Plotinus, using the comparison that the

susceptible to impression.<sup>12</sup> For these are simple and single ideals, not admitting any disturbing element or entrancement, so far as relates to them. It is, therefore, the something that yet remains that is the cause of such experience to the composite nature.

Nevertheless, the cause is not in any way the same as the effect.<sup>13</sup> Hence, the Soul being the first genesis and origin of the composite living beings that come into existence and pass to dissolution, is itself, so far as relates to itself, unbegotten and imperishable; so also those that participate of the soul are susceptible to impression and do not possess life and essence in their completeness, but are entangled in the indefiniteness and alien conditions of the realm of matter.<sup>14</sup> Yet the soul, as relates to itself, is unchangeable, as being in its own essence superior to impression, and as neither being moved by any preference inclining in both directions (passiveness and impassibility), nor as receiving an acquired versatility in the participating of habitude and power.

workman does not contract the imperfections of his tools, remarks that it is not necessary that the soul shall be itself affected by the conditions of the body. It simply uses the body as its instrument: It is incorporeal, and hence the passions and susceptibilities of the body do not penetrate into its substance, but only into its powers and energies.

13. Proclus illustrates this by the analogy of a man viewing his own image in a stream of water. He is unchanged in his own person and individuality, but the image exhibits great perturbation. So the soul contemplates its own image as reflected in the body, and though it is itself impassible and unaffected, it may be perplexed by the incidental disturbances.

14. Greek, υλη, wood, rubbish; the negative or inert quality called matter, from which natural objects proceed. Aristotle first adopted the term. Plato, unable to conceive of matter as substance *per se*, made use of terms signifying the "nurse" and the "receptacle" or passive force. The term "matter" is from *materia*, the mother-principle. The phrase "realm of matter" is adopted here, as the term implies a department in the universe, and not simply

matter itself.

Since, therefore, we have shown, in respect to the last race of the superior orders, namely, the soul, that it is impossible for it to participate in any passive or impressionable condition, how is it proper to attribute this participation to dæmons and half-gods who are sempiternal and follow the gods, and themselves according to their respective grades preserve, and likewise in their several places make the regular arrangement of the divine beings always complete, and do not leave any unoccupied space between the different orders? For this we know for certain: that the passive condition is not only undisciplined but also discordant and unstable, never being in any case its own master, but attached to that by which it is held fast and to which it is subservient in reference to the sphere of generated existence. This condition of passiveness, therefore, pertains to some other race rather than to one always existing and allied to the gods, not only maintaining the same arrangement but likewise going around the same circuit with them. Hence, therefore, the dæmons, and all who rank with them after the superior races, are impassible.

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## Chapter 4. Rites, Symbols, and Offerings

"Why then, are many ceremonies performed histrionically in the Sacred Rites, as though the gods were moved by passion?"

I think that this is said without an intelligent understanding in regard to the Sacerdotal technique of the Mysteries. For of the ceremonies performed from time to time in the Sacred Rites, some have an ineffable cause and a divine principle; others are consecrated to the Superior beings from eternity as symbols are consecrated<sup>1</sup>; others preserve some other image, just as Nature, the Supreme Genetrix also from invisible concepts, molds visible semblances. Others are brought forward from some motive of veneration,<sup>2</sup> or they are endeavors at figurative representation, or some concept of a family relationship. Some prepare us for something that is useful, or in some way purify and free our human passions, or turn away some of the evils that may be impending over us. Yet it may not be admitted that any part of the Holy Observance is performed to the gods or dæmons as to impressionable beings. For the essence which is subjectively everlasting and incorporeal is not of a nature to permit any change from the bodies (offered at the Rites.<sup>3</sup>)

### NOTES:

1. Symbols constituted a prominent feature in the ancient religious worship. They were undoubtedly to a large extent fetishes, there being a measure of the essence and operation of the deity supposed to exist in them. The Egyptian, and indeed the whole Oriental worship consisted of them, and even at the present time, there is no ritual that is without them. But then, human language is made up of symbols and representative sounds.

2. This is distinctly denied in Part V, Chapter VI.

3. See Part V, Chapters II and IV.

Not even though it be admitted that it has use especially of such a kind, would it ever need it from human beings in a religious service of this kind. It is supplied from itself, and from the nature (or feminine principle) of the world, and from the abundance which is in the genesis (or generative energy); and if it is permissible to say this likewise, it receives a sufficiency before it can be in any want, through the unfailing complete supply of the world and its own ample abundance, and because all the superior races are fully supplied with the good things pertaining to them respectively. Let there be, therefore, this general encouragement for us in regard to the worship of the uncontaminated races, that they are likewise affiliated by kindred relationship to the beings that are otherwise superior to us, and on this account the pure are attracted to the pure, and the impassive to the impassive.

Following every point in its turn, we remark that the planting of "phallic images" is a special representing of the procreative power by conventional symbols, and that we regard this practice as an invocation to the generative energy of the universe. On this account many of these images are consecrated in the spring, when all the world is receiving from the gods the prolific force of the whole creation.<sup>4</sup>

4. The custom here described was universal in ancient times, and it is still found in parts of India. Its remains also exist in architecture and ornamentation. In the worship of the Ashera and Venus of Eryx, and of the Great Mother in Syria and Western Asia, the observances were carried to greater extremes. King Asa of Judea is said to have deposed his mother, Maacha, from royal dignity for her participation -- "because she made a phallos to an Ashera," *I Kings XV: XIII*. It has been generally believed that the Festivals and Initiatory, or Perfective Rites, of the different countries, included the same feature, as indeed, is here admitted. It should be borne in mind, however, before

any hasty judgment, that the different faiths had their two sides, like the right or the left, and that worshippers regarded them and took part in them according to their inherent disposition. Thus, in India, there are the Asceticsiva-worshippers, and the Saktas, to this day. In this way the Mysteries presented themes for the highest veneration, as well as phases that are esteemed as gross and lascivious. Every curious person, therefore, sees in them what he has eyes to see, and is often blind to the rest.

I think, however, that the immodest language to which you refer, affords an illustration of the absence of moral virtues<sup>5</sup> in the realm of matter, and the unseemly rudeness existing beforehand with the unformed elements that are to be organized. These being utterly destitute of orderly arrangement, are passionately eager for it, so to speak, to such a degree as they are conscious of the unbecoming condition of things around themselves. Hence, again, perceiving from the speaking of vile utterances, what is vile, they follow to the (divine) sources of the ideals and more beauties.

They accordingly not only turn aside from evil action, but through the words, it is manifest in its forms and changes the impulse to a contrary direction.<sup>6</sup>

5. Greek, καλῶν from καλόν, good, beauty, moral virtue, excellence. Mr. M. W. Hazeltine, in the *New York Sun*, remarks upon this apparent confounding of moral with physical beauty, which this word exhibits, that "the ancients had not that conception which forms the basis and aim of Æsthetics in our time. To a Greek, if a thing was beautiful it was good, and if it was good it was beautiful; that, at least, was the prevailing attitude of the Hellenic mind."

6. These opinions were anciently entertained, the universe itself being regarded not as a fabric but as a birth, a creation or genesis, and evolution. But the philosophers generally disapproved of the doleful rites and immodest speech.

Plutarch enumerates the various practices, such as the eating of raw flesh, the days of fasting and mourning for the slain divinity, (*Matthew* XI, 16; *Amos* VIII, 10) and the uttering of filthy and unseemly language. He explains that they were "not in honor of the gods, but rather to avert, mollify and appease the wrath of evil dæmons." The Emperor Julian, however, forbade the using of words that should not be spoken or heard.

There is, however, still another reason of analogous character for these customs. The powers of the human passions that are in us, when they are barred on every side, become more vehement: but when they are brought into activity with moderation and reasonable measure, they are sufficiently delighted and satisfied, and becoming pure in consequence, are won over and set at rest. In the same way, likewise, in comedy and tragedy, when we behold the emotions of others, we repress our own, make them more moderate and are purified from them. In the Sacred Rites, also, we are, by certain spectacles and relations of ugly things, delivered from the harm that is likely to befall through the events represented by them.<sup>7</sup>

Things of this character are brought into use, therefore, for the healing of the soul within us, the moderating of the evils which have become nature to it through the genesis<sup>8</sup> or nativity, and likewise for the sake of its unloosing and deliverance from its bonds. On this account, probably, Herakleitos names them "*Remedies*"<sup>9</sup> as being cures for terrible maladies, and restoring the souls sound from the experiences incident in the generated life.

7. "This doctrine is so rational," says Mr. Thomas Taylor, "that it can never be objected to by any but quacks in philosophy and religion. For as he is nothing more than a quack in medicine who endeavors to remove a latent bodily disease before he has called it forth externally, and by this means diminished its fury, so he is nothing more than a pretender in philosophy, who attempts to remove the passions by violent repression, instead of moderate compliance and gentle persuasion."

8. By the genesis or generation, Plutarch explains Plato to mean "only that substance or underlying principle which is subject to change and motion, placed between the forming cause and the thing formed, transmitting hither those shapes and figures which

have been contrived and modelled" in the eternal world. Hence it means more than mere procreating, it is no less than transition from eternity where the soul is native, into the region of time and space, where it is only a sojourner.

9. The Library of Alexandria bore the inscription of "*Remedies for the Soul*." A similar term is said to have been placed over the collection of Papyri in the "House of Seti" at Thebes, in Egypt.

## WHAT THE INVOCATIONS ACCOMPLISH

But the objection is also made: "The invocations are made as to gods that are impressionable beings; so that it is implied that not the dæmons only are impressionable, but the gods likewise."

This, however, is not as thou hast supposed. For the illumination which is present through the invocations is self-appearing and self-subsisting; it is also far removed from the being attracted downward, and goes forth into manifestation through the divine energy and perfection, and it excels voluntary choice and activity by so far as the Divine Purpose of the Absolute Goodness is superior to the deliberately chosen of life. By such a purpose, therefore, the gods being gracious and propitious, give forth light abundantly to the Theurgists, both calling their souls upward into themselves, providing for them union to themselves in the Chorus,<sup>10</sup> and accustoming them, while they are still in the body, to hold themselves aloof from corporeal things, and likewise to be led up to their own eternal and noetic First Cause.<sup>11</sup>

10. Plato describes this chorus in the *Phaidros*. "Divine beauty was then splendid to the view," says he, "when we, in company with Zeus, and others with other gods, beheld together with the Blessed Chorus, the divine Spectacle and were initiated into the Perfective Rites, which are rightly called most happy. Being ourselves entire and unaffected by the evils which await us in the Aftertime, we took part in the Orgiac Drama, and having become both Mystics and Beholders (mystæ and epoptæ) we beheld in the pure light, apparitions that

were complete, unique, calm, and felicitous -- being ourselves pure from earthly contamination and not encompassed in this investiture which we now call 'Body' and by which we are carried about, fastened like an oyster to his shell."

11. Socrates in his last discourse remarks that "While we live we shall approach nearest to the superior knowledge if we hold no partnership with the body, except what absolute necessity requires, and do not permit ourselves to be tainted by its nature, but keep ourselves uncontaminated by it till God himself shall release us." This is what a later poet has portrayed as living above while in the world.

12. The dramas or performances of the Mystic or Theurgic Rites and their ulterior significance are here denoted -- the experiences of the Soul and its return to the Eternal World, as it enters into the conditions of worldly existence. The Egyptian "Book of the Dead" treats of the same matters.

13. The histrionic scenes and ceremonies which were exhibited to the Beholders of the Rites.

14. The *Chaldaean Oracles* reiterate this sentiment.

From these Performances<sup>12</sup> it is plain, that what we are now discoursing about is the Safe Return of the Soul, for while contemplating the Blessed Spectacles,<sup>13</sup> the soul reciprocates another life, is linked with another energy, and rightly viewing the matter, it seems to be not even a human, for the most blessed energy of the gods. If, indeed, the upward way through the invocations effects for the priests a purifying of the passions, a release from the condition of generated life, and likewise a union to the Divine First Cause, why, indeed, does any one impute to it any of the passion?<sup>14</sup> For such invocation does not draw down beings that are impassive and pure, to that which is susceptible and impure. On the contrary, it makes us who had become impressionable through the generated life, pure and steadfast.<sup>15</sup>



"The soul of articulate-speaking men will in some way bring God into itself. "holding fellowship with nothing mortal, it is all intoxicated with God."

15.

This is explained by the hierophant in Moore's romance, *The Epicurean*. The aim of the initiation and "blessed spectacle" is thus set forth; "to retrieve the ruin of the blessed soul, to clear away from around her the clouds of earth, and, restoring her lost wings, facilitate her return to Heaven -- such is the great task of our religion, and such the triumph of those Divine Mysteries, in whose inmost depths the life and essence of our holy religion is treasured."

On the other hand, even the "favorable inclinations" do not bring the priests into union with the gods through a passive condition, but they open the way for an indissoluble communion through the attraction which binds the universe together. It is by no means, as the term seems to imply, an inclining of the *mind* of the gods to human beings, but on the contrary, as the truth itself will teach the adapting of the human intelligence to the participating of the gods, leading it upward to them, and bringing it into accord through persuasive harmonies. Hence, both the reverend names of the gods, and the other divine symbols, being of an elevating tendency, are able to connect the invocation with the gods.<sup>16</sup>

16. The names of the gods in the ancient Skythic and Euphratean languages were believed to possess some inherent virtue as well as charm. Hence the *Oracle* gives the injunction: "Never change the barbarous names; For among them are terms God-given, That have ineffable virtue in Sacred Rites."

Proclus also declares that "the gods are readily persuaded by

invocations and enable the initiants to behold perfect, tranquil, and genuine spectacles."

## PROPITIATORY RITES

What is more, "the propitiations of anger" will be plain enough if we learn thoroughly what the anger of the gods really is. It certainly is not, as some imagine, an inveterate and persistent rage. On the contrary, so far as the matter relates to the gods, it is a turning away from their beneficent guardianship. We ourselves turn away from this just as we bring darkness upon ourselves by shutting away the light at noon-day and so rob ourselves of the priceless gift of the gods. Hence the "propitiation" can turn us to the participation of the superior nature,<sup>17</sup> lead us to the guardian fellowship of the gods, which we had cast from us, and bind to each other harmoniously both those participating and the essences participated. Hence so far is it from accomplishing its particular work through a passive condition, that it leads us to desist from any passionate and disorderly turning away from, the gods.

Nevertheless, because evil is present in the regions of the earth,<sup>18</sup> the "expiatory sacrifices" act as a remedy and prepare us so that no change or any passive condition may occur with reference to us. Hence, whether it is through the gods or dæmons that a result of this kind takes place, it appeals to them as helpers, averters of evil, and as saviors, and through them turns away every harm that may be liable to follow from what has occurred. Let it be understood that those superior powers that turn away the blows incident to the realm of nativity and nature, are not preventing them in any way through passive conditions.

Indeed, if anyone has imagined that the intercepting of the protecting influence may bring on some chance injury, the endeavor at persuading of the Superior races "through the expiatory sacrifices" recalling them to their generosity, and taking away the sense of privation, may be in every respect pure and unchangeable.<sup>19</sup>

17. Epistle of *Peter II*, 1, 4, "That by these ye might be partakers or communicants of the divine nature."

18. Plato: *Theaetetus*. "It is necessary that there should be always something opposed to God; and it cannot be seated among the gods, but of necessity hovers around this mortal nature and this region of earth."

19. It was held that the vital emanation from the blood of the sacrificed animals was invigorating to spiritual beings (*Odyssey*, Book XI). But Plutarch is severe about it. He affirms that the murderous and lascivious customs at the festivals only served "to avert and appease the malice of certain evil spirits, or to satisfy the violent and raging lusts of some that either could not, or would not, enjoy with their bodies or by their bodies." Such, he declared,

bring plagues and famine into towns, raise wars and dissensions, till such time as they obtain and enjoy that which they love.

## "THE NECESSITIES OF THE GODS"

Further still, we will consider what are called "the necessities of the gods." The whole fact is this: The "necessities" are peculiarities of the gods, and exist as pertaining to gods, not indeed as from without, nor as from compulsion; but, on the contrary, as the goodness is of use from necessity, so also are they likewise in every particular and they are not in any respect otherwise inclined. Such necessity is itself combined with a purpose ideally good and is the beloved consort of Love.<sup>20</sup>

20. Proclus affirms that the Divine Necessity was always coincident with the Divine Will and Purpose. Plato explains it as a habitude of the Efficient Cause or Author of Existence and Matter. Thus, also, there is a necessity in the thoughts and actions of human beings, yet the soul is self-moving, and so is its own "Cause."

It is not only the same and unalterable in the order pertaining to the gods, but because it is at the same time, and in like manner, circumscribed in one boundary, it abides in this and never goes out of it. For all these reasons the very contrary takes place to what was inferred. If in Theurgy there are really genuine powers of such a character as we have set forth, the conclusion is inevitable that the Divine Being is proof against enchantment, impassive and not to be compelled.

## SUPPLICATIONS AND THEIR UTILITY

Nevertheless, after this, thou passest over to another classification of gods as contrasted with dæmons. For thou remarkest that "gods are pure mental essences," proposing the opinion as the basis of an argument, or telling it as acceptable to certain individuals. Then thou addest: "that the dæmons are psychic beings, participating of mind."

It is not hidden from me that these notions are entertained by many of the Grecian philosophers.<sup>21</sup> nevertheless, I do not think it proper to hide from thee the manifest truth, for all opinions of such a character are somewhat confusing. They carry the attention from dæmons to souls, for these are also partakers of mind; and they wander from the gods to mind that is non-material in respect to operation which the gods excel in every particular. Why, then,

21. Thales, Pythagoras, Plato, and the Stoics generally held that the dæmons were beings of a psychic, rather than of an actual divine nature. Plutarch ascribed to them

should we attribute these peculiarities to them, which are by no means exclusively theirs? This much will be sufficient in regard to this classification. Otherwise, so far as it may be thought worthy of a mention of such a kind, it is overmuch. But in regard to the matters of which thou art in doubt, they should have due attention inasmuch as they have to do with the sacerdotal function.

Having further affirmed that "pure mental essences are not to be charmed or mingled with things of sense," thou doubttest whether it is necessary to pray to them. On my part, I do not think it necessary to pray to any others. For that something in us that is divine, mental essence and one -- or mental alone, if you choose to call it so -- is then vividly aroused in the prayers, and when it is awakened it longs vehemently for its counterpart, and becomes united to the absolute perfection.

If, however, it appears incredible to thee that an incorporeal being hears a voice in any way, and there is need of a special sense and of ears in order that the things uttered by us in the prayers may be heard, thou art voluntarily forgetful of the superior powers of the Primary Cause, both in the perceiving of all things, and the encompassing of them at once in themselves. The gods certainly do not receive the prayers in themselves through faculties of sense, or through organs, but they encompass in themselves the full purport and energies of the pious utterances, and especially of those which happen through the Sacred Rites to have been established and brought into one with the gods. For then the Divine essence itself is simply present to itself, and does not share the conceptions in the prayers as distinct from itself.

But thou affirmest that "the supplications which are offered are entirely foreign to the purity of mental substances." Not at all: for it is on this very account, because we are excelled by the gods in power, purity, and everything, that it is most opportune to supplicate them even with exaggeration of speech. If we are judged by being compared to the gods, the consciousness of our own nothingness causes us to betake ourselves to supplication, and we are led from supplication to the object of supplication, and from the familiar intercourse we acquire a similarity to it,<sup>22</sup> and from imperfection we quietly receive the Divine Perfection.<sup>23</sup>

only a limited term of existence.

22. It may be observed in this treatise that the divine personalities are very commonly indicated by terms in the neuter gender. The same is true in other instances. Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson was once in conversation with the Rev. Cyrus Bartol, the Transcendentalist clergyman of Boston. The latter mentioned the Supreme Being, using the masculine pronoun. "Why not say 'It,' " Mr. Emerson asked?

23. Whatever we keep most

If, however, it is conceived that the sacerdotal supplications are inspired into human beings as from the gods themselves, that they are symbols or tokens of the very gods, and are recognized by the gods alone, and have likewise after a certain manner the same power with the gods, how may it be justly supposed that supplication of this kind is still a matter of the physical senses, but not divine and of the higher intelligence? Or, what may in any likelihood insinuate itself into it when the most excellent human morals cannot be easily made pure?<sup>24</sup>

"But," it is remarked by thee, "the things that are offered are offered as to sensitive and psychic natures." If, indeed, they consisted of corporeal and composite powers alone, or of such as pertained merely to the service of the physical organism, thou wouldst be correct. But since the offerings partake also of incorporeal ideals, special discourses, and simpler metres, the peculiar affinity of the offerings is to be considered from this point alone. And if any kindred relationship, near or far away, or any resemblance is present, it is sufficient for the union about which we are now discoursing. For there is not anything which is in the least degree akin to the gods, with which the gods are not immediately present and conjoined. It is not, then, as to "sensitive or psychic," but actually to divine ideals and to the gods themselves, that the intimate union is effected so far as may be. Hence we have spoken

closely in thought, whether with favor or aversion, we gradually become like in character. Paul wrote like a philosopher to the Corinthian disciples. After referring to Moses with a vail, he adds "We all with face unveiled, looking on the glory of the Lord as in a mirror, are transformed from glory to glory into the same image from his spirit."

24. In the Theurgic discipline of neophytes, there were several stages to be surmounted before arriving at the degree denominated "Perfection" or purity. We may trace them in the chapter, as follows: 1. The coming to the divinity who is supplicated. 2. The assimilation into the likeness of the divinity, and 3. Perfection. In the first of these degrees the candidate was styled Most Excellent; in the second, Divine; and in the third, Theopator; as now being fully identified with Deity itself.

sufficiently in opposition to this classification.

## **CLASSIFICATION CRITICISED**

The next thing in thy letter is the question, "Are gods separated from dæmons by the distinction of bodied and unbodied?"<sup>25</sup>

25. Origen affirmed that the angels have bodies, and that God alone is a spiritual essence, without body. Hence the clause in the Confession, "without body, parts, or passions."

This distinction is much more common than the former one; but it is so far from indicating their peculiarities of essence, that it does not even constitute a reasonable guess in respect to them, or anything incident to them. For it is not possible from these things to apprehend intelligently whether they are living beings or beings without life, and whether they are deprived of life or do not need it at all. Besides, also, it is not easy to form a judgment as to how these terms are to be applied, whether in Common or in relation to many different things. If they are to be applied in common, if both a piece of writing and a period of time, a god and dæmons likewise, and also fire and water, are under the same class as being incorporeal, the distinction is absurd. If, however, they are employed with reference to the chief differences, why, when thou speakest of incorporeal things, dost thou indicate gods rather than tokens; or when thou sayest "body" why should it not be taken to mean the Earth rather than dæmons? For this point is not itself defined, whether they have bodies as a part of themselves, or are carried by bodies as a vehicle, or make use of them on occasion, or encompass them, or are merely identical with the body.

Perhaps, however, it is not necessary to scrutinize this distinction critically; for thou dost not put it forward as thy own concept, but on the contrary, displayest it as the conjecture of others.

## **THE GODS OF THE SKY NOT CORPOREAL**

We will, therefore, take up in place of this subject, the matter in relation to the present opinion, about which thou seemest to be in doubt. For thou hast proposed this question: "If only the gods are incorporeal, how shall the Sun, the Moon, and the luminaries visible in the sky, be accounted as gods?"

We reply: That they are not encompassed by the bodies, but that on the contrary, they encompass the bodies with their own divine lives and energies; also that they are not converted to the body, but possess the body which has been converted to the divine cause; and

26. Plato has explained this very similarity in the *Timeus*. "When each of the stars necessary for the

that the body does not interfere with their spiritual and incorporeal completeness, nor occasion any obstacle to it by intervening. hence it does not even require more attention, but follows (the divinities) after a manner spontaneously, and by its own motion, not needing a self-operating superintendence, but urging on by itself<sup>26</sup> uniformly by the leading of the gods upward toward the One.<sup>27</sup>

constitution of Time had obtained a motion adapted to its condition, and their bodies bound or encompassed by living chains, had become beings possessing life, and had learned their prescribed duty, they pursued their course."

27. That the Supreme Being is One and Absolute is the leading principle of every ancient faith, however bizarre and polytheistic it may be esteemed. Amon, the tutelar god of Thebes in Egypt who may have been in the mind of Abammon when writing was denominated: "The One, the Maker of all that have being." The Mysteries of Ser-Apis (Serapis) were favored by Iamblichus, and the Rites of Mithras by Porphyry.

If, however, it is necessary, we will say this: The body (of the divine guardian of the star) in the sky is very closely akin to the incorporeal essence of the gods. For the essence being one, the other is unique; that being undifferentiable this is undivided; that being unchangeable this is in like manner unchanged.<sup>28</sup> But if even it is taken for granted the energies of the gods are after one ideal, the divine one in the sky has also a single orbit. Nevertheless it also imitates their sameness in respect or a perpetual activity constantly in the same manner, by the same impulses, according to one law and one order of arrangement; and also the life of the gods which is the life natural to the bodies in the aether. Hence, their body is not constituted of incongruous and different elements in the way that our body is composed; nor does their soul join with the body to bring out from two, one living being. On the contrary, the living forms of the gods in the sky are, in every respect, similar and united, and are likewise complete, uniform and uncompounded through their entire substance. For the superior divinities are always excelling in these respects, and the lesser ones being

28. Plato makes use of an expression signifying "not subject to decay or disease;" Aristotle, "not being increased or changed."

dependent upon the rule of those that are prior and never obtaining this rule for themselves, the whole are brought into one joint arrangement and one common activity, and are all of them, in a manner, incorporeal and wholly divine. Hence, wherefore the divine ideal predominates in them, and implants through them all everywhere, the same One universal essence.

So, therefore, the gods that are visible in the sky, are likewise all of them in a certain sense, incorporeal.

## THE GODS IN THE SKY NOT MALIGNANT

Thy next question raises a difficulty in another form "How is it that some of these gods are givers of good and others bring evil?"

This conjecture is taken from the casters of nativities, but it falls short of actual fact in every particular. For they all are not only good, but in like manner, also the causes and authors of benefits, and they likewise all revolve (in their orbits) with reference simply to the One God, according to the beautiful and good alone. Nevertheless the bodies which are subject to them,<sup>29</sup> themselves possess extraordinary powers; some of these powers being firmly established in the divine bodies themselves; but others going forth from them into the productive principle of the world, even into the world itself, and likewise passing down in proper order through the whole realm of generation,<sup>30</sup> and extending without impediant even to incomplete races.

29. These are the astral globes which these divinities, being themselves in reality spiritual essences, were supposed to encompass and permeate.

30. In this sentence the feminine and masculine relation, as typifying the procedure of the divine operation, is very distinctly set forth. The *phusis* and *genesis* actually signify as much. In this treatise, as in other philosophic works, *genesis* signifies the descending of the creative energy from the sempersistent world into the sphere and condition of created existence, and *phusis*, or nature, is the female or productive agency, by which the transition is accomplished. The sentence admits accordingly to be also rendered as follows: "Others go forth from them into the womb of the world (*Kosmos*), even the world itself, and likewise descend



in due order through the whole generative process, continuing, without hindrance, as far as the incomplete races."

In respect, therefore, to the powers which inhere in the bodies of the divine ones in the sky, there is no doubt that they are all similar. Hence it is left for us that we shall discourse upon those which have been sent down here, and which have become intermingled with the sphere of generated existence. They extend in the same way preservation of the universe, and encompass the whole realm of generated existence after the same manner. They are both impassive and unchangeable, although they are present in the changeable and passive. The realm of generated existence being of many kinds and constituted of things diverse in character, contends against the oneness and indivisible essence of the gods with its own contrary and factious nature, discordantly and factiously. But it admits the impassive essence after the passive manner; and in short it participates of them according to its peculiar nature and not according to their power. As, therefore, that which comes into existence partakes of real being, as by heredity, and the body receives the incorporeal essence after a corporeal manner, so likewise the natural and material bodies in the realm of generated existence, it may be, participate in a disorderly and discordant manner of the non-material and ætherial bodies, which are above the realms of nature and generated existence. They are absurd, therefore, who attribute color, figure and the sense of feeling to mental forms, because those that participate of them are of such a kind; and so are they also who impute malignity to the bodies in the sky because their participants are sometimes bad. For unless the one who is participating had some such aberration at the beginning, there would be no such communication. But if that which is imparted is received as being foreign and inimical, it may, perhaps, become as something different, and to those belonging about the earth, it is evil and disorderly. This participation, therefore, and the commingling of aura of the realm of matter with that of the non-material realm, becomes a cause of much essential diversity in the inferior races; and besides these, that which is given forth in one way, is received after another. Thus, for example, the aura of Kronos (Seb) is dense, but that of Arês (Mandu) is impulsive;<sup>31</sup> yet the passive generative receptacle in those belonging in the realm of matter receives the former according to its consolidation and coolness, but the latter according to the warmth beyond the usual condition. Hence do not corrupting influence and the disproportionateness come through the deviation of the recipients, which is productive of inharmoniousness, pertaining to the realm of

31. Abammon follows the Egyptian category and adopts the Grecian names for divinities supposed to be nearest in character and quality. In this description, Kronos or Saturn represents the centripetal and Aries or Mars the centrifugal force.

matter and impressionable? Hence the feebleness. incident to regions in the realm of matter and earthly existence, not being capable of the genuine power and absolutely pure life of the divine ones of the ætherial region, refers its own condition to the Primary Causes -- just as though a person distempered in body and not able to endure the life-giving warmth of the Sun, should have the audacity to affirm from his own condition, the falsehood that the Sun is of no benefit to health or life.

Something of this kind, however, may be the case in the general order and constitution of the universe, as the same things may be the means of safety to the universe and to every one, through the completeness, both of the things that are possible and those by which they are possible, but are harmful to the imperfect through their specific lack of harmony. Likewise in the motion of the universe, the revolutions in like manner maintain order in every respect, but some one of the parts is injured now and then by another, as we see occurring in a dance.<sup>32</sup>

To repeat the statement once more, it is the natural tendency of partial and incomplete things to decompose and undergo change. It is not proper, however, to attribute this peculiarity to the universal and primary causes, either as being inherent in them or as extending from them into this lower region.

Hence, from considerations of such a nature, it is demonstrated that neither the gods (of the planets) in the sky themselves, nor their gifts, bring evil.

## **THE GODS HAVE ONE COMMON ESSENCE**

Come, then, let us dispose of that question also: "What is the bond of union that connects the divinities in the sky, that have bodies, with the gods that are unbodied?"

This also is clear from what has been said already. For though as being incorporeal, intelligent and united, they ride upon the celestial spheres, they have their origins in the realm of mind,<sup>33</sup> and comprehending their essential being as divine, they govern the whole sky by one infinite energy, and although present in the sky as existing separately, they conduct the perpetual revolutions by their solitary wills, and are themselves unmingled with sensation and coexist with the god of the realm of Mind.

It is proper, nevertheless, to examine the present question thoroughly. I state the proposition accordingly, that the images of the gods which are visible (in the sky) are from the divine models in the realm of Mind, and are engendered around them;<sup>34</sup> and having come into existence they are established in these

32. It would be easy to imagine this as happening in the case of the hundred and more asteroids, that exist in the space between the orbits of the planets Mars and Jupiter, or of the comets that so often come rushing through space.

33. See [Chapter VIII](#).

34. Damaskios remarks that "the Divine Intelligence which encompasses all things after the manner of models, brings them forth

absolutely,<sup>35</sup> and being extended to them, they have the likeness which has been produced from them. They are likewise wrought into another arrangement after a different manner. They are held here in connection with those models in one stable union, and the divine spiritual forms, which are present with the visible bodies of the gods, exist separately before them, but their noetic models unmingled and super-celestial remain permanently by themselves, all as one in their everlasting exaltation.

There is, therefore, the common indissoluble bond with reference to spiritual energies, but there is one also in the common participations of forms, since nothing separates these, and there is nothing intervening between them. Besides, the non-material and incorporeal essence, being neither parted by spaces nor by subject-bodies, nor marked off by delineations into separate parts, comes together at once, and coalesces into an absolute identity. The issuing forth of all from the One, the returning again into the One, and the absolute rule of the One in everything effect the communion of the gods themselves in the Cosmic world, with those that pre-exist in the realm of Mind.

Moreover, the conversion of the secondary to the superior spiritual beings and the bestowing of the same essence and power from the primary to the secondary gods, holds their association indissoluble in one. In regard to things of another quality, as for example, soul and body, and those of unlike kinds, such as material forms, and also of substances which are in some other way separated from each other, the natural union, which exists between them both, originates from the Powers above and is cast off in consequence of the limited periods of time. However far we may ascend in regard to the height and the unchangeable sameness of the divinities, who are first as to form and essence, and raise ourselves from imperfect beings to perfect, by this much the more do we find the union which is sempiternal, and likewise behold the self which is principle and dominant,<sup>36</sup> possessing diversity and multitude around itself and in itself.

Inasmuch as the gods are all arranged as absolutely one, the primary and secondary races, even the many that are self-existent with them, preside together over the universe as one, everything in them is one, and the first, the intermediate and lowest races coexist as the One itself. Hence, in respect to these, it is of no use to enquire whence the One is brought into reciprocal relations with them all, for the self-same essence that is indeed in them is the one of their own substance.<sup>37</sup> The secondary races not only remain together in the unity of the primary divinities, but the primary gods bestow upon the secondary races the oneness from themselves, and they all maintain the common bond of an indissoluble relationship to one another.

from itself as likenesses."

35. That is, all are brought back to their source and rooted in their cause.

36. In other words, this *atman*, or self, is at once all-receptive and all-procreative, as having the joint powers of procreation and production.

37. We are thus brought to the central principle of the ancient philosophy and worship; that the many divinities are in essence the One Sole Deity, and comprised in the Paternal Cause of the Universe. The Orphic Carmen in the same way inculcated that all the gods and both the sexes are included in the same Zeus.

They are attributes, or qualities, of the One, personalities rather than individuals.

From the same cause, moreover, the gods that are entirely incorporeal are united with the gods (in the sky) that have bodies and are perceptible to the senses. For the gods that are visible are really outside of bodies, and therefore are in the world of Mind; and those of the world of Mind, through their unconditioned unity, encompass the visible divinities within their own substance, and both are established by a common union and a single energy. In like manner, also, this is characteristic of the cause and arrangement of the gods, and for this reason this very oneness of them all extends from above to the very last in the order of divine beings. Suppose, however, that this seems to be a statement to be doubted, the contrary supposition, that there is nothing of the kind, would be matter of wonderment.

So much may be declared in regard to the bond which unites the gods, that are established in a manner perceptible to the senses, with the gods of the world of Mind.

### **OTHER MODES OF DISTINGUISHING**

[1.20. Cp. Luck 219-20.]

After this, however, thou takest up again the very questions in regard to which the things which have been stated already will suffice amply for a solution. Since, however, as the saying is, it is necessary to tell and examine often the things which are beautiful, we will not pass these matters by as having received sufficient answer, but by pounding away repeatedly with arguments we may perhaps get out of them all some complete and important benefit in true knowledge. For thou art still in doubt, as the question shows: "The gods that are visible (in the sky) being included in the same category with the invisible, what distinguishes the dæmons from the visible, and likewise the invisible gods?"

Beginning at this starting point, I will set forth the difference. It is because the gods in the sky are united with the gods in the world of Mind, and have the same idea or principle of existence with them; but the dæmons are far distant from them in essence, and scarcely compare with them in ally resemblance. On this account they are distinct from the visible divinities, while they differ from the invisible gods in regard to the difference of their peculiar invisibility. For the dæmons are indeed imperceptible to sight, and in no way to be apprehended by a sense; but the gods are beyond the scope of the knowledge and perception incident to the realm of matter. Because they are in these respects unknowable and

invisible, they are so named, or it may be in a sense very different in respect to the dæmons that they are described as invisible. What, then, do the invisible gods have, so far as they are invisible, which is superior to the gods that are seen in the sky? Nothing at all. For the divine quality, whatever it may be, and whatever allotment it may have, possesses the same power and dominion over all subordinate things. Even if they were visible they would not be subordinate to the invisible daemons, and though they were to belong to the Earth, they would reign over the dæmons of the air. For neither the place nor the part of the world that may receive it, makes any change in the Supreme authority of the gods; but the entire essence of the gods, indivisible and unchangeable, which all the inferior races in the order of nature revere in like manner, remains everywhere the same.

Setting out from the same point of beginning, we also find another difference between them. For the visible and invisible gods concentrate in themselves the whole government of existing affairs, both in regard to the sky and world, and in relation to the entire invisible forces of the universe. But those that are allotted to authority among the dæmons, extending it over certain prescribed regions of the world, govern these, and themselves likewise have an incomplete form of essence and power. They are even in some manner akin and inseparable from those that are governed by them.

The gods, however, even those that go upon bodies as their vehicles, are separated and diverse from these in all respects. Hence the supervising of the bodies brings no specific lessening of rank to those to whom the body is subject; it is encompassed by the superior essence, and is turned back to it, and is no obstacle to it. But on the other hand, the close affiliation to the generative nature and the imperfection ensuing by it, give the dæmons necessarily an inferior destiny. In short, the divine race is predominant and takes precedence in the general arrangement among existing things; but the dæmonian order is ministrant, receiving whatever directions the gods may give, and responding promptly by own effort, in regard to whatever the gods contemplate, will and command.

Hence the gods are freed from the forces which incline downward to the realm of generated existence, but the dæmons are not wholly purified from these.

So much, therefore, we have subjoined in regard to this solution of the problem, and we think that from the former and the present arguments the matter will become better known.

## CLASSIFICATION REJECTED

For the reasons which we have before stated, the classification of passive and impassive which thou makest, should be rejected as not being suitable for any of the superior races, on account of the causes which we formerly mentioned. Indeed it deserves to be overturned, because it argues from the Sacred Dramas that "they are impression able." What Holy Rite, and what act of worship performed according to the Sacerdotal Regulations, is accomplished through a passive condition, or effects any satisfying of passive conditions? Was it not ordained from the beginning, according to the ordinances<sup>38</sup> of the gods and likewise intelligently? The Rite both copies the order of the gods, both that of the gods of the world of Mind and that of the gods in the sky, and contains the eternal metres of things that are, and wonderful spectacles which were sent down from the Creator (Demiurgus) and Father of All, by which also the things of Silence are represented by arcane symbols, the things without form are held firmly in forms, the things which are superior to any likeness are represented unshapen, and everything is accomplished by a sole Divine Cause, which is so far remote from passive conditions that no reasoning faculty can reach to it.

This fact, therefore, I suppose, becomes the cause why many turn away to the multitude of projects. For men who are unable to acquire the deeper knowledge of the reasonings themselves, yet who imagine themselves able, are entirely carried away by their own peculiar human emotions, and form their judgment of matters relating to the gods from things incident to themselves. Hence they err in two ways: because they fail of the true concept of divine things; and because when they miss these, they drag their notions of these down to the level of human emotions themselves.<sup>39</sup> Nevertheless, it ought not to be supposed that the things which are performed alike to gods and human beings, -- such as acts of homage, salutations, offerings, first-fruits, are to be regarded as after the same plan of action in both cases; but that each is established apart from the other with regard to the distinction of being more honorable -- the one venerated as being for the gods and the other held in low esteem as relating to human concerns. Thus is given a completeness to passive conditions, both of those doing homage and those to whom it is rendered, for they are human and of a corporeal nature; but honor is to be bestowed unstintingly upon the operation of the others, as being performed through unchanging admiration and a reverent condition of mind, because they are rendered to the gods.

38. The older laws of the Athenians were called *thesmá* as being ordained by the gods, or rather the priests. The laws of Drako were *thesmoi*, those of Solon *nomoi* or regulations.

39. Damaskios remarks, that "we discourse after the manner of men respecting principles that are extolled as divine."

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## Part II

### Chapter 5. The Superior Races and their Manifestations

#### DÆMONS AND HALF-GODS DIVERSE IN ESSENCE

This it now becomes necessary to describe to thee: "in what a dæmon differs from a hero or half-god and a soul, whether in essence, in power, or in energy."

I say accordingly, that dæmons are produced by the generative and creative powers of the gods, in the furthest extreme of emanation and the last divisions: but that the heroes or half-gods have their origin by the forces of life in the gods; and that the superior and highest in rank of the souls are brought to completeness and distinguished from these forces.

The nature of the dæmons and half-gods being thus derived from different sources, their essence is of necessity different. Thus that of the dæmons is effective of purposes, bringing to maturity the natures about the world, and exercising guardianship individually over those coming into existence.<sup>1</sup> That of the heroes is life-sustaining, promotive of the reasoning faculty, and directive of souls.

The powers likewise may be defined accordingly. Those of the dæmons pertain to coming into existence and also to the oversight of the souls and of the connection of the souls with the bodies. It is also proper to assign to the heroes powers life-imparting, directive of human beings, and setting free from the nativity.

#### THE ENERGIES

It follows now that their energies should be explained. Those of the dæmons may be described as being employed around the world and as extending generally among the things accomplished by themselves; but those of the heroes not only as not extending so far, but as being engaged with the distribution of the souls. So, therefore these being explained, the Soul is next, and ranks as the end of the series of divine beings. Having received from these two

#### NOTES:

[2.1. Cp. Luck 220-21.]

1. Plato, *Republic*, X, Ch. 15. "This is the beginning of another period for men of mortal race. The dæmon will not receive you as having been allotted to him, but you will choose the dæmon; the cause is in him who makes the choice."

receives a specific allotment of powers, it both augments the apportionment by other more abundant additions from itself, and likewise projects from itself at one time various forms and principles of life which are entirely different, and at another time still others. Thus making use of different lives and ideals according to each region of the world, it is united with those that it likes, and draws away from those from which it may wish to be separate, becoming assimilated to all, and separated from them by otherness. In this way, choosing principles akin both to the things that are sempersistent and to those that come into existence in time, it allies itself to the gods by harmonies of essence and power other than those by which the dæmons and half-gods are likewise entwined with them. Though possessing in a less degree than they the everlasting condition of similar life and energy, nevertheless, through the good will of the gods and the luminance imparted by their light, it often goes higher and is exalted to a higher rank, even to that of angels. It, then, remains no longer in the limitations of the psychal condition, but is developed completely through its whole substance into an angelic soul and an uncontaminate life. Hence, manifestly, the Soul seems to contain in itself manifold essences, different rational qualities, and all manner of idealities. If, however, we must speak the honest truth, the contingency exists, that it is always limited in reference to one particular thing; yet being in communication with the Causes it is at different times allied to different ones.

So great, therefore, being the differences among them in all these respects, it is no longer worth while to dispute in regard to the particular thing which is the cause of difference among them. Whatsoever nature they every one have, by that they are to be distinguished from the others. So far also, as they form one common society, to such an extent their common quality may be contemplated; for in this way it will be possible to comprehend without mistake, and to define distinctly the view to be entertained of the whole subject.

## **EPIPHANIES OR "APPARITIONS"**

Let us now proceed to the Epiphanies or apparitions (which are seen at the Initiations). What is the difference in them? For thou puttest the question: "What is the token (at the Sacred Rites) of the presence of a god, an angel or an archangel, or a dæmon, or of some archon, or a soul?"<sup>2</sup>

2. Scutellius enumerates nine classes of spiritual beings, namely: 1. Invisible Gods; 2. Visible Gods of the Sky; 3. Archangels; 4. Angels; 5. Dæmons; 6. Leaders; 7. Princes; 8. Heroes or Demi-gods; 9. Souls. Paul in his epistle to



the Ephesians enumerates the following: 1. Princes; 2. Authorities; 3. Kosmokrators or princes of the Cosmos; 4. Spiritual essences in the super-celestial spheres. Damaskios enumerates six orders in the Chaldaean Categories as follows: 1. God that are purely mind; 2. The Gods subsisting before all subordinate dominion; 3. Rulers; 4. Archangels; 5. Divinities that are confined to no specific place or service; 6. Divinities or geniuses with specific duties.

I will, therefore, in a single statement lay down the proposition that the apparitions are in accord with their essences, powers and energies. For such as they are as such do they manifest themselves to those who are making the invocations; and they not only exhibit energies and forms which are characteristic of themselves, but they likewise display their own particular tokens. In order, however, to draw the distinctions minutely, this is the explanation: The spectral forms of the gods are uniform; those of the dæmons are diversified; those of the angels are more simple in appearance than those belonging to the dæmons, but inferior to those of the gods; those of the archangels approach nearer to the divine Causes; those of the archons -- if those that have charge of the sublunary elements seem to thee to be the lords of the world<sup>3</sup>-- will be diversified but arranged in proper order; but if they are princes of the region of Matter, they will not only be more diversified but much more imperfect than the others; and those of the souls will appear in every kind of style.

In the (Epoptic) Vision the figures of the gods shine brilliantly;<sup>4</sup> those of the archangels are awe-inspiring and yet gentle; those of the angels are milder; those of the dæmons are alarming. Those of the half-gods, although these are left out in your question, yet there should be an answer for the sake of the truth because they are more gentle than those of the dæmons. Those of the archons are terrifying to the Beholders,<sup>5</sup> if they are the archons of the universe; and hurtful and distressing, if they are of the realm of Matter. The figures of the souls are similar to those of the half-gods except that

3. These, the Kosmokrators, are supposed by Thomas Taylor to be the rulers of the planets. The Assyrians and Chaldaeans enumerated nine distinct orders -- three Triads of three classes each. The Archangels correspond to the seven Amshaspands of the Zoroastrian category; and the archons of the sphere of Matter appear to have been often regarded as evil potencies. The ancients, however, did not always distinguish good and evil quite as the moderns with their ethical standards.

4. Proclus following Iamblichus gives this description: "In all the Perfective Rites and Mysteries, the gods project many shapes of themselves, and display many changing figures; there will be a formless luminance

they are inferior to them.

radiating from them; then again it will be represented in a human form, and again it will go into some different shape." Some of the figures were empousæ and not gods, and excited alarm; others were attractive, and others encouraged.

5. The "Beholders," *epopæor* seers, were the individuals engaged in being initiated, or "perfected." We have preserved this term uniformly to avoid confusing readers.

Moreover, the figures of the gods in regard to size, aspect, external appearance and everything around them, are absolutely unchangeable. Those of the archangels are very near to those of the gods in these respects, but come short of being actually the same. Those of the angels are inferior to these, but are unchangeable. Those of the dæmons are seen in different shapes and appear great and small at different times; but the manifestations are the same. Those of the archons who are rulers are unchangeable, but the apparitions of those that belong to the realm of Matter are apt to change into innumerable forms. Those of the half-gods are like those of the dæmons, and those of the souls conform in no small degree to changeableness, peculiar to the dæmons.

Further still, to the gods there pertain order and tranquillity; and with the figures of the archangels there exists a dramatic representation of order and quietude. With the angels there is present the disposition for order and peacefulness, but they are not free from motion. The figures of the dæmons are accompanied by tumult and disorder. With those of the archons there are objects to be seen analogous to each class which we have already mentioned: those of the realm of Matter being borne along tumultuously. Those of the half-gods are constantly in motion and are never exempt from change, and those of the Souls resemble the figures of half-gods, but at the same time are inferior to them.

With these peculiarities there flashes out from the gods Beauty which seems inconceivable, holding the Beholders fixed with wonder, imparting to them an unutterable gladness, displaying itself to view with ineffable symmetry, and carrying off the palm

from other forms of comeliness. The glorious views of the archangels have themselves very great beauty, but it is by no means ineffable and admirable as that of the gods. Those of the angels partake in a degree of the beauty which they receive from the archangels.

The spirits at the Autopsia, the dæmons and half-gods,<sup>6</sup> both of them possess beauty in defined forms; but that of the dæmons is set forth in ways that make their essence distinct, and that of the half-gods displays a manlike character. The figures of the archons are classified by the twofold distinction. For those of the one class display a beauty predominant and self-originated; and those of the other class exhibit an ingenious mock-representation of a beautiful shape. The figures of the souls are themselves arranged in definite forms, but these are more diverse than is the case with the half-gods, being more particularly circumscribed and controlled by a single ideal.

6. The Greek term "autoptic spirits," meaning those which appear at the "Autopsia," or Perfective Rite. Mr. Robert Brown, Jr., ably describes it. The candidates, or Beholders, having passed the preliminary discipline as *Mystæ*, are ushered into the *Sekos*, or chamber of Initiation. "Here, deeply excited and agitated by all they have gone through, ready to believe anything and everything, in that state of abstinence, which is, or is supposed to be, most favorable to the reception of supernatural displays, with their minds more or less affected by drugs and their whole being permeated with the impression and expectation of a revelation of the more than mortal, they were allowed to see. This is the Autopsia, or Personal inspection, the Crown of Mysteries, the *Etopteia*, or Divine Beholding, which was used as a synonym to express the highest earthly happiness, and he who enjoyed it became an *Epoptes*, or Contemplator, beyond which this world could afford him nothing." - *Great Dionysiak Myth*, VI, ii, 3. Compare also *Epistle of*

*Paul to the Corinthians, XII, 2-4.*

If, however, it is necessary in regard to them all that they shall be defined by a common rule, I say that as every one of them all is constituted, and as it has its own peculiar nature, even so do they all participate of the Absolute Beauty according to the existing allotment.

## MANIFESTATIONS AT THE RITES

Proceeding therefore to other peculiarities of the superior races, we will remark that in the Sacred Performances there is with the gods an incredible celerity, and although they themselves are immutable and steadfast, they shine out swifter than mind itself. But with the archangels the swift movements are commingled in some way with the dramatic performances. Those of the angels, however, are connected with a certain moving impulse and take part no further in a similar manner in the Perfective Rite<sup>7</sup> by way of speaking.

7. Greek, *Tó apotelestikon*, the perfective rite. The Romans termed the ceremonies "Initiations," as signifying the beginning of a new life, while the Greeks regarded it as denoting a completing of the Herculean labors of the Soul. The services were conducted after the form of a dramatic representation, and Clement styled them accordingly, "the Drama of the Mysteries." The ancient Theatre took its rise from these rites, as the Modern Theatre had its origin in the Mystery-Plays of the Monks in the Middle Ages. The Athenian Theatre was a Temple of Bacchus.

With the dæmons there is a show of rapidness in the Performances which is more than genuine. But with the figures of the half-gods, there appears a certain grandness in the motions; nevertheless it is not possible to effect these things, which they desire at the Perfective Rite as quickly as it is for the dæmons. In the case of those of the archons, those of the former class possessing authority, exhibit performances that appear highly creditable; and those of the second class have more display, but fall short in regard to results at the end. The figures of the souls are seen to be incessantly in motion, but feebler than in the case of those of the half-gods.

In addition to these points, the magnitude of the apparitions may be considered. In the case of the gods it is displayed to such a degree as sometimes to hide from view the entire sky, the sun and the moon, and likewise to make it no longer possible for the earth to

8. The *Chaldaean Oracles* describe these scenic displays in very similar terms:

stand firm while they are making their descent.<sup>8</sup>

"If thou invoked me often,  
thou wouldst behold what  
thou desirest:  
For then the concave vault  
of heaven does not appear,  
The stars shine not, the  
moonlight wastes away,  
The earth no more stands  
still;  
All things are to be seen by  
the flashes of the  
lightnings."

When archangels appear, there are certain regions of the world set in motion, and a divided luminance goes In advance before them. But they themselves according to the magnitude of their dominion display also light in correspondence with its dimension. The angelic luminosity is very much less, and is likewise greatly divided. In the case of the dæmons themselves, it is still more diffused than with the angels, and their magnitude is observed to be not always equal. The manifestation of the half-gods is less than this, but it exhibits more of pride of condition. The figures of the archons that are rulers of pericosmic forms appear large and indeed of huge dimensions, but those that are distributed over the realm of Matter employ more ostentation and false pretending. Those of the souls do not all seem equal, and they appear smaller than the figures of the half-gods. In short, it is according to the magnitude of the powers in each of the Superior races, according to the vastness of the dominion through which they are extended and in which they exercise authority, and according to the due proportion itself, that the magnitude of the manifestations is graciously exhibited in every one of them.

After these explanations let us define the characteristics of these images thus individually manifest. In the autoptic visions of the gods, the most brilliant spectacles of reality itself are to be beheld. They not only shine steadily but they are plainly visible as if in organic shapes. The images of the archangels present themselves to view genuine and perfect. Those of the angels preserve the form itself, but they come short in the completeness of distinctive tokens. Those of the dæmons are scarcely perceptible, and those of the half-gods are still inferior. Those of the cosmic archons are clear, and those of the archons of the realm of Matter are indistinct, but both classes seem to be exercising authority. Those of the souls appear like mere shadows.

In like manner, let us explain also, in regard to the luminosity. The images of the gods glow with abundance of light, and those of the

9. The *Chaldaean Oracles*  
disapprove of invoking

archangels are surpassingly luminous.<sup>9</sup> Those of the angels are resplendent with light, but the dæmons present the appearance of smouldering fire, and the half-gods a commingling from many sources. The cosmic archons are relatively more pure from such admixture, but those of the realm of Matter exhibit a mingling of dissimilar and incongruous elements. The Souls are more distinctly visible from many admixtures in the sphere of generated existence, the light being supplied only by partial gleams.

In the same manner we will speak further of the things which have been discussed. The Fire of the gods shines brilliantly an undivided flame without sound, and it fills all the depths of the world like a conflagration, but not after the manner of a worldly occurrence.<sup>10</sup> The fire of the archangel is unbroken, but there is to be seen around it a great mass going before it or following after it. The fire of the angels is disjoined, yet it appears in very perfect forms. That of the dæmons is not only circumscribed into still briefer dimensions, and may be explained in a word, but it is not worthy to be noticed by those who are contemplating spectacle of the superior beings. That of the half-gods contain after a manner the same peculiarities, but at the same time it falls short of an exact similarity to that of the dæmons. That of the archons of the higher class is observed to be more glowing; but in the case of those belonging to the realm of Matter, it is darker. That of the Souls themselves exhibits many divisions and various forms mingled together from many of the natures around the world.

To repeat: The fire of the gods is always stable to the view. That of the archangels is mild; that of the angels is in constant motion; that of the dæmons is unstable; that of the heroes is for the most part in swift motion; that of the archons of the first class is mild, but that of those of the lower order is full of fluctuation. That of the souls changes with innumerable motions.

## THE SUPERIOR RACES AND MATTER

Nevertheless, that which operates to purify the souls (from impurity incident in the realm of generated existence) is complete in the gods, but is simply of an exalting character in the archangels. The angels only loosen the bonds which fasten them to the sphere of matter. Dæmons draw them into the realm of nature,<sup>11</sup> and the half-gods bring them down into the province of the operations of the senses. The archons either entrust them with the charge of things pertaining to the cosmic world, or with the dominion of those belonging to the realm of matter, as the case may be. Souls, when they appear to the Beholders, attract in some manner downward to

those manifestations "Thou shalt not invoke the Autoptic Image of Being, for it is not proper for thee to see these things before the body is perfected, or initiated."

10. The divine essence was anciently described in every religion as fire, and so the "eternal fire" was preserved in temples and on altars, as its symbol. Hence, the *Chaldaean Oracle* commands: "When thou shalt behold the Very Holy Fire without form, shining in flashes down into the depths of the world, then listen to the Voice of the Fire." Zoroaster at the Altar and Moses on Mount Sinai (Deuteronomy IV, 4) are described as hearing the Voice of the Supreme Being from such a source.

11. Minutius Felix remarks that "the dæmons bear downward by heavy weight, and turn from God to material conditions." The *Chaldaean Oracle* also says: "When bewitching (magnetizing) souls they always draw them away from the Sacred Rites."

the sphere of generated existence.

Much that is considered spiritual, and even divine influence, is of this character.

And, further, this fact is to be kept in view: that everything of the visible likeness that is pure and stable thou shouldst attribute to the Superior Races. Whatever of them is very brilliant and firmly fixed in itself, ascribe to the gods. Whatever is luminous and nevertheless exists as by something else than itself, impute to the archangels; and whatever remains in a different form assign to the angels. Whatever is borne along as by a breeze and is not stably fixed, but is permeated by alien natures, all which is conformable to the inferior orders, is to be credited to some foreign source.

This classification, however, may also be made according to the difference of the commingling. For with the dæmons emanations from the planetary worlds are mingled and are borne along unsteadily by the motion of the astral world. With the half-gods, groups of spirits belonging to the department of generated life are again mixed up around which they are also themselves constantly in motion. The cosmic archons likewise remain exhibiting the cosmic character which they possess; but those archons that belong to the realm of matter are filled with exhalations of the material region. Souls are infected with extraordinary defilements and alien spirits. With these accompaniments each of these races exhibits itself at the epiphanies.

To thee it will be no unimportant evidence that on these occasions there is in the case of the gods a consuming of matter all at once as by lightning. With the archangels it is destroyed in a short time. In the case of the angels there is a loosening and leading away from it. With the dæmons there is an arranging of it in an orderly manner. With the half-gods it is to be observed that they become adapted to it in due measures and give careful attention to it ingeniously. The archons that rule the planetary worlds are placed with it as though they were superior, and so shine forth as from themselves; but those of the realm of matter exhibit themselves as entirely filled up from matter. As for the souls, those also, that are pure manifest themselves outside of matter, but those of the opposite character are encompassed by it.

## **BENEFITS DERIVED FROM INITIATION**

Moreover, the benefits acquired from the manifestations, are neither all alike, nor do they have the same fruits.<sup>12</sup> The advent of the god imparts to us health of body, virtue of soul, purity of mind, and indeed, to speak to the point, the leading of everything in us

12. The *Chaldaean Oracles* have this declaration: "From those descending from the Emphyreal regions the soul

upward to its own first principles. It not only takes away the cold and destructive quality in us, but it augments the vital warmth and makes it more potent and predominant. It likewise brings everything into accord with the soul and mind. The light not only shines in the mental constitution, but it also exhibits that which is not body as body; to the eyes of the soul through those of the body. The coming of the archangels likewise brings the same benefits, but it does not give them at all times, nor to all persons, nor such as are sufficient, or complete, or that may not be taken away; nor does the light shine in a manner equal to what is beheld at the manifestations of the gods. The presence of the angels dispenses benefits as if making a distribution of them, and the energy through which it is manifested comes far short of including in itself a perfect light. That of the dæmons weighs down the body and chastens it with diseases, drags down the Soul into the realm of nature, and also fails to remove from bodies the sensibility born with bodies, detains in this region those who were hastening toward the fire, and does not set free from the bonds of Fate. The appearing of the half-gods is similar in various respects to that of the dæmons, but it differs in this respect, that it arouses the individual to noble and important deeds. The display of the cosmic archons at the autopsia imparts advantages of a general character and everything pertaining to the business of life; and that of the archons of the realm of matter extends benefits incident to the sphere of matter, and such works as pertain to the earth. Still further, moreover, the Vision of the Souls that are uncontaminate and established in the order of angels is elevating in its influence and salutary to the soul. It likewise imparts a sacred hope and bestows those benefits to which a sacred hope aspires. But the Vision of Souls of a different quality produces a tendency downward into the sphere of generated existence, corrupts the fruits of hope, and fills the Beholders with Perturbations that nail them fast to corporeal conditions. obtains the soul-nourishing flower."

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## Chapter 6. The Order Exhibited at the Rites

Besides, there takes place at the Autopsies an exhibition of the order which those that are beheld, carefully maintain, namely: That of the gods, having gods or angels around them.

### NOTES:

That of the archangels, having angels either that precede them,



keep in line with them, or follow after; or else being accompanied by another company of angels acting as an escort.

That of the angels exhibiting the peculiar operations of the order to which they have attained.

That of the good dæmons presenting for contemplation their own works and the benefits which they bestow.

That of the avenging dæmons displaying the forms of vengeance.

That of other evil dæmons encompassed by hurtful, bloodsucking and fierce wild beasts.<sup>1</sup>

1. "Sometimes," says Potter, "terrible apparitions astonished the trembling spectators" at the Perfective Rites. This was the case everywhere. In the *Chaldaean Oracles* mention is made of these direful creatures. They are called "dogs of the earth." "Thy vessel (the body) the chthonian beasts shall make their home." This implies obsession and evil influences from the spiritual world.

That of the archons (of the cosmos) exhibiting along with themselves certain regions of the universe.

That of the other class of archons attracting the disorder and discord of the realm of matter.

That of a soul that is entire and not held fast in a specific form; it is beheld around the whole cosmic region as a formless fire, indicative of the Soul of the World, entire, one, undivided and without form.

That of the purified soul; the glowing shape is seen, the fire pure and without mixture. Then are seen its innermost luminance, and the form pure and steady; and it follows after the upward leading guide rejoicing with hearty good will and itself by its operations showing its proper rank.

The soul, however, that bows, carries along with it the symbols of bonds and punishments, and is not only weighed down by groups of spirits belonging to the realm of matter, but it is also held fast by

the anomalous disorders incident to that realm, and there are also seen dæmons of the generative order placing their authority directly before it.

In short all these races make their respective orders duly distinguishable, and they show at once the regions which have fallen to them, and the allotments in which they abide. Those that are of the air display aerial fire; the earthly ones a chthonian and darker light, and the celestials a more splendid luminance. All these races are distributed in these three regions (the earth, air, and superior heaven) in the threefold order of beginning, intermediary and last; those of the gods displaying the highest and purest causes pertaining to this threefold order; those of the angels being reckoned from the archangels; those of the dæmons being manifest as attendant upon these and those of the half-gods in like manner ministrant -- not indeed after the same services as the dæmons, but after other and different ways of their own. Those of the archons have the allotment which is set apart to them; to one class the superintendence of the cosmic world and to the other that of the realm of matter. Those of the souls are classed as the last of the superior races.

Hence they all indicate their places by themselves; the first classes having the first; the second class the second, and the third class the third, and the others are arranged as belonging to some of these.

## **OTHER PHENOMENA AT THE RITES**

Meanwhile, the gods beam forth light to such a degree of thinness that the bodily eyes are not able to sustain it, but are affected in the same way that fishes are when they are drawn from a muddy and thick fluid into rare and transparent air. For the men, the Beholders of the Divine Fire not being able to breathe because of the thinness of the fire, become enfeebled as they come to the sight, and are excluded from natural respiration. Archangels also give forth a luminant atmosphere which is not endurable for breathing; yet they neither shine with the same pure light, nor are they as overpowering as the gods their superiors. The presence of the angels makes the temperature of the air endurable, so that it is possible for the theurgic priests to approach them. In the case of the dæmons there is nothing to affect the air, and in consequence the atmosphere around them does not become more tenuous; a luminosity does not precede them, in which their form might become visible from being taken and fixed by the air, and there occurs no radiation around them. In the case of the half-gods, certain parts of the earth are moved as by an earthquake, and noises echo around; but the air does not become at all thinner, or

2. The Supreme elements, *ákra stoixeía*, are the signs of the Zodiac, which constituted an important feature in theurgy as allied to astrology.

unsuitable for the theurgic priests, so as to render it impossible for them to endure it. In regard to the archons, whether those of the cosmic worlds or those that belong to the realm of matter, an assemblage of many luminous apparitions, hard to endure, surrounds them; but there occurs no attenuation of the air, such as is incident to the supramundane region, or to the Zodiacal signs on high.<sup>2</sup> But with the manifestations of the souls the air is evidently affiliated more closely, and being united to them receives in itself their limitations.

## **ACQUIREMENTS FROM THE SUPERIOR RACES**

Accordingly, at the last stage, when the gods appear, the dispositions of soul of those who are invoking them, realize a thorough removing of passive conditions and the transcendent perfection, and not only the energy superior in every respect, but they also participate in divine love and a tranquillity of mind, almost beyond estimation. When the archangels are beheld, these dispositions acquire a pure constancy of condition, spiritual insight and stable power. At the coming of the angels into view, they receive an allotment of wisdom and truth, and likewise of pure excellence, sure knowledge and order in harmony with these bestowments. But when the dæmons are contemplated the tendencies take on eager desire incident to the sphere of generated nature, and likewise not only acquire zeal for the completing of the Performances according to allotment of such exercises. If there is a view of the half-gods, then they are not only borne away by other such impressions, but also share in many anxieties of a character relating to a communion of souls. But when the archons are brought within purview, then movements are set up in the soul, cosmic or such as pertain to the realm of matter, as the case may be. And with the visions of the souls, there are brought into activity the generative appetites and natural solicitude as regards the care of the bodies and such other matters as relate to these.

In connection with these things, the apparition of the gods imparts sincerity and power, and likewise success in undertakings, and also gifts the greatest benefits; and at the appearing of the others everything is bestowed abundantly as it may be consistent with the rank of the several orders. For example that of the archangels, gives the perception of what is true, not simply in regard to all things collectively but definitely in relation to specific matters, and this not at all times but occasionally -- not indefinitely to all or everywhere, but singly in a particular manner or to some special purposes. In short it does not confer power in like manner neither upon all, nor at all times, nor everywhere, but only sometimes and

in some particular way. At the appearing of the angels, there are still narrower limitations than these in the circuit in the bestowing of benefits. The coming of the dæmons into view does not impart gifts good to the soul but either those of the body or which relate to the body. These they dispense wherever the order of the universe permits. According to the same conditions, the presence of the half-gods imparts benefits of the second and third order, aiming to acquire supervision of the entire polity of souls, but those of the earth and those of the cosmic realm. At the manifestation of the archons, the cosmic and the other class, the former confer blessings of a cosmic nature and those of this life; but those of the inferior rank bring out not a few advantages incident to the realm of matter, they exhibit to the Beholders things which contribute to the welfare of human life.

Thus we have set forth particularly the boons received from these superior races according to the respective order of every one, and have likewise made a complete answer to what thou hast asked in regard to matters of importance in relation to their appearings to view. So much, then, let us set forth respecting these subjects.

## **BOASTFUL SPEECH AND DECEPTIVE IMAGES**

The matter, however, which thou hast brought to us for a decisive solution respecting these superior races, whether as thy own opinion or whether as what thou hast heard from others, is neither correct nor rightly expressed. Thou sayest: "It is a common thing for the gods and dæmons alike, and with all the Superior races, to speak boastfully, and to project an unreal image into view."

Such is not the fact as thou supposest. For a god, an angel, and a good dæmon (when they appear at the Rites) give instruction freely to human beings, in regard to their own essence, but never in addition, make use in their teachings, of any expression greater than their transcendent power or inherent good qualities. For truth is essentially coexistent with the gods as light is coexistent with the Sun. At the same time we affirm that a God is in no want of excellence or any virtue which can be added to him through words. Besides the angels and dæmons always receive truth beforehand from the gods;<sup>3</sup> hence they never say anything else than this. Being every one of them perfect in their essence, it is not possible to add anything more to it by praising.

When, therefore, does the untruthful act of "speaking boastfully" mentioned by thee, take place? When there occurs some errancy in the theurgic technique, and the images which ought to be at the Autopsia are not, but others of a different kind are encountered, then the inferior races assume the guise of the more venerable

3. Damaskios also declares that "a general distribution takes place from the One Origin of all things, and Plato calls this, the Truth."

4. Emanuel Swedenborg, in his Memoirs and Spiritual Diary, describes spirits of this character.

orders, and pretend to be the very ones which they are counterfeiting;<sup>4</sup> and in such cases they abandon themselves to boastful speeches and pretensions of power which they do not possess. For I think that if anything spurious grows out like an excrescence from the first beginning, there will a great mass of falsehood flow forth from the perversion. It is necessary, therefore, for the priests to learn this thoroughly from the entire arrangement among the apparitions, and being on their guard against this, they can detect and reject the misleading assumptions of these pretenders as not being spirits that are good and true.

It is not proper in the faithful judging of things to bring forward conspicuously the errors. In the case of other sciences or arts we do not pass judgment from the failures that may have occurred in them. Things, therefore, which through inexpertness in evocation are hardly ever performed quite successfully in ten thousand representations thou shouldst not characterize from the untoward incidents, but shouldst instead bring to notice something different in respect to them. For though the performances at the self-revealing display<sup>5</sup> are such failures as thou sayest, boastful and false, those of the true adepts around the Fire are both genuine and true. For as in regard to everything else, the ruling powers begin first by themselves and furnish to themselves that which they bestow to others -- as for example, in essence, in life, in action -- so also supplying the truth abundantly to all beings, they are true first of all in respect to themselves and at the very outset show their own essence to the Beholders. hence, likewise, they exhibit the Autoptic fire to the theurgic priests. For it is not the operation of heat to freeze, nor of light to make dark or to hide anything from view, nor in anything else the function of which is to accomplish a particular thing, is there the power to perform some contrary operation at the same time. But on the other hand those that are not of that nature and are contrary to them in essence are able to receive these contrary impulses, or are naturally disposed to fall into evil.

We say the same things now in regard to phantasms, or apparitions.<sup>6</sup> For if these are not themselves genuine, but others of the kind are so, that really exist, they certainly will not be among the self-revealing spirits, but are of the kind that display themselves ostentatiously as genuine. These participate in deception and falsehood after the manner of the forms that appear in mirrors; and they thus attract the understanding to no good purpose, in regard to matters which never will be true of the superior races but will be among fraudulent deceptions. For the counterfeit of that which really is, and that also which resembles it faintly, as well as that which has become a source of deception, are characteristic of the races that are genuine and distinct to the view. On the other hand the gods and those that come after the gods reveal true likenesses of

5. Greek, αντοφαναισ δειξεωσ. Perhaps this refers to the fact also that fit the final vision witnessed at the Perfective Rite, or Autopsia, the Beholder was revealed to himself in the impression which it gave him. Certainly Plato and Alkibiades regarded it with different sentiments.

6. Professor Taylor Lewis defines *phantasma* as signifying an apparition. Chrysippos, the philosopher, gives the following meanings: *phantasia*, imagination which leads to contemplation of the Cause or origin; *phantaston*, something to impress the imagination; *phantastikon*, a fancy or vain impulse from the mind proceeding from

themselves, but never project apparitions such as are formed in water or in mirrors. Why should they exhibit these phantasms? Would it be to bring evidence of their own essence and power?

nothing truly imaginable; *phantasma*, a phantom to which we are drawn by fanciful attraction. Liddell and Scott would define a *phantasia* as an opinion presented from sensation; *phantaston*, as something leading to such opinion; *phantastikon*, as the faculty of such presentation; and *phantasma*, as an image presented to the mind by an object.

On the contrary these things are not at all necessary. They become a source of error and deception to those who believe, and they draw away the Beholders from the genuine knowledge of the gods. What useful thing do they bestow on those who are contemplating these things in the epoptic vision? What profit can be derived from that which is false? Yet unless divinity has this nature will it project a phantasm from itself? How possibly can a race that is stable and firmly established in itself and that is the source of essence and that which is genuine, create in an alien seat, a deceptive counterfeit from itself? By no means, certainly, does a god either transform himself into phantasms or project them from himself into other things, but he causes to shine forth from himself true intuitions in the true moral nature of the souls. According to these facts, they also who accompany the gods are zealous in regard to the genuineness of the gods that appear at the Autopsias.

Next, however, thou affirmest that it is "a common thing for the gods and dæmons and other races to make likenesses and speak boastfully of themselves." Such a mode of speaking confounds all the races of superior beings with each other, and leaves no difference between one and another. For in this view of the matter all qualities will be common with them and nothing that is choice will be conceded to the exalted ones. It is more just, therefore, to ask by way of denial: "in what way, then, will the race of gods be superior to that of the dæmons?" But the fact is, that these races have no common plane: it is not imaginable, and it is not proper to argue from the last and lowest races and from the false steps among the last races, in regard to the first orders and the genuine impressions seen of them. Any one thus thinking in regard to these matters will come close to what is right, and will become acceptable to the gods.

## BECOMING AT ONE WITH DEITY

[2.11. Cp. Luck 127.]

Thou also affirmest that "ignorance and delusion in respect to the gods is irreligiousness and impiety," and submittest the true doctrine in relation to these things. In all this there is no conflict of sentiment, but it is confessed by all alike. For who will not agree that the superior knowledge which is possessed of real being is most closely affiliated to the gods, but that the condition of not knowing falls infinitely far away from the divine causes of true ideals, sinking down to non-being? As, however, there has not enough been said upon this matter, I will add what is wanting; and because thy statement is made in a philosophic and logical manner rather than according to the working technique of the priests, I think it necessary to say something of a more theurgic character in regard to these matters.

Be it so that "not-knowing and delusion are discord and impiety." It does not follow on this account that the offerings and invocations which are made particularly to the gods, and also the Divine Performances are thereby made fallacies. For it is not the concept that unites the theurgic priests to the gods: else what is there to hinder those who pursue philosophic speculation contemplatively, from having the theurgic union to the gods? Now, however, in actual truth, this is not the case. On the other hand, it is the complete fulfilling of the arcane performances, the carrying of them through in a manner worthy of the gods and surpassing all conception, and likewise the power of the voiceless symbols which are perceived by the gods alone, that establish the Theurgic Union. Hence we do not effect these things by thinking.<sup>7</sup>

7. Here Abammon makes a new departure in the New Platonic philosophy. Plotinus and Porphyry had taught a system of doctrine analogous to the later Persian scheme, with the Absolute One at the summit from whom proceeded by emanation, the Over-Mind, the Universal Soul, and Nature. To this Absolute, there might, by philosophic discipline, contemplation and ecstasy, be attained for brief periods, the enosis or intimate union. Iamblichus, however, seems to discard this doctrine with its theory of impassiveness, and to make theurgic or sacerdotal virtues the condition of excellence by which the divine part of the Soul exalts itself even above the Over-Mind, and becomes at one with the Absolute. Hence he inculcated the utility of religious rites and initiations as explained in the reply of Abammon. He was followed in this path by Eunapios,

Syrianos, and by Proclus,  
the great light of the later  
philosophy.

For thus the spiritual energy will be of these things, and imparted from ourselves; neither of which suppositions is true. For even when we are not revolving these things in mind the sacred emblems themselves are accomplishing their own work, and the ineffable power of the gods to whom these emblems belong, recognizes of itself its own likenesses. This, however, is not from having been aroused by our intelligence; for it is not in the nature of things that those that encompass should be set in motion by those that are encompassed, nor things that are perfect by those that are imperfect, nor wholes by parts. Hence, the divine causes are not called forth beforehand into operation by our acts of thinking; nevertheless it is necessary to acknowledge these and also all the best conditions of the soul, and the purity pertaining to us as certain joint causes before existing. Yet the things which arouse the divine will as by authority are the divine countersigns themselves. Thus the activities of the gods are set in motion by themselves and do not receive into themselves from an inferior source any principle of their characteristic energy.

I have prolonged this discussion to this extent in order that thou mayst not be led to think that all command of the operation in the Theurgic Rites is from us, and that thou mayst not suppose that the genuineness of these performances is actually regulated by conditions in our acts of thinking, or that they are made false by deception. For although we may know the peculiarities which are incident to each race of the superior beings, we may fail to hit upon the truth in regard to their operations. Yet without this knowledge the mystic union never takes place; nevertheless the union and the knowledge are by no means the same thing. So, the divine purity is in no sense by means of the right knowledge, as that of the body is not through health; but on the other hand it is more completely one and more pure than knowledge. Nothing, therefore, of such qualities in us, or anything whatever that is human, helps in any way to the accomplishment of the divine exercises.

Accept this accordingly which indeed is said in addition but is a sufficient reply to thy whole conception in regard to technique of Theurgy. But those statements of thine have the same force with these in which thou acknowledgest that "the superior knowledge in respect to the gods is holy and helpful," and callest the not-knowing in respect to things revered and beautiful "Darkness," but the knowing of them, "Light" -- adding that "the former condition will cause human beings to be beset with every form of evil



through ignorance and restlessness, and the other will be the source of everything beneficial." For all these things tend in the same direction with those which have been mentioned, and obtain a fitting notice with them. It is necessary, therefore, to pass them by, and to proceed with the inquiries respecting the Oracular Art, in order to resolve them.