

Arturo Reghini

COMMENTARY ON THE

MAXIMS

OF INITIATIC SCIENCE

BY AMEDEO ARMENTANO

Warning

Continuing with the re-edition of the writings of Arturo Reghini, which we began in 2006 on the website www.hyssopus.org and subsequently continued on www.lamelagrana.net, we now present in a single text this *Commentary on the Maxims of Initiatic Science by Amedeo Annientano*, the first part of which was originally published in the May and June 1924 issues of the magazine “Atanòr” (preceded by a partial publication of the Maxims themselves in the January-February and November-December 1923 issues of the magazine “Mondo Occulto”), while the second part appeared in the last issue (November-December 1925) of the magazine “Ignis.”

Reghin's commentary, which in the author's intentions was supposed to cover all fifty Maxims, stopped at the first eleven due to the suspension of Ignis, which occurred with the last issue of the magazine's first and only year of existence¹.

In this reissue, which involved a standardization revision *by d^Wediting*, which was not homogeneous in the transition from Atanòr to Ignis, we have maintained the division of the text into two parts, the first corresponding to the commentary on the first two Maxims printed in Atanòr and the second to that on the remaining nine published in Ignis.

The Editor

of www.lamelagrana.net

I

With this issue of “Atanòr,” we begin the publication of some Maxims of Initiatic Science by Amedeo Armentario.

Some of them have already appeared in issues of “Mondo Occulto,” and we thank our sister magazine for granting us permission to reprint them. Others, such as the first one published in this issue, which have remained unpublished until now, will be added to the first ones.

In “Mondo Occulto,” these maxims appeared without any commentary; however, we felt it appropriate to accompany them here in order to make the meaning and connection of the text more accessible, as it is not always easy to understand in its masterful concise expression. We ask the Master and our readers to forgive any errors of interpretation and commentary; our good intention to offer pure, fresh spring water to those thirsty for knowledge prompts us to undertake a task that perhaps exceeds our abilities.

1 — Is it possible to know?

— It is possible.

— How?

— By mastering thought, dispensing with belief, and freeing oneself from passions and fear of nothingness.

Although the text, in its lapidary conciseness, does not say what kind of knowledge it is, it is implicitly understood that the question can only refer to knowledge worthy of the name, that is, to a synthetic, integral knowledge that can be called knowledge.

Knowledge limited to a finite area bordering on an indeterminate and unknown field does not deserve the name of knowledge; and although men are generally content with knowledge of this kind and believe in the inevitability of its character, the question may be asked whether it is possible to attain a higher knowledge, a true knowledge free from all limitation and error.

Of course, this problem cannot be solved by the means that give ordinary knowledge; and it is therefore natural that it is not possible to give a logical demonstration of the accuracy of the positive answer that our text gives to this question. In fact, the assertion that knowledge is possible is already necessarily the result of an experience that transcends thought, unless it comes from religious or philosophical belief, from illusion or from conscious falsehood. But in our case, these are hypotheses that we must exclude, because the text says, immediately and categorically, that we must free ourselves from beliefs and passions and that thought must be dominated and therefore kept immune from the influences of passions and beliefs. The positive affirmation of the text is therefore the result of experience.

That it is necessary to transcend thought in order to obtain this knowledge is something that can also be understood logically. Thought, in fact, by its very nature, defines and represents, referring to and coordinating itself with sensory experiences. To understand is necessarily and etymologically to limit. The faculty of the mens is that of measuring (*mensuraf*), and therefore not only the indefinite but also the incommensurable with respect to it escapes it.

Assigning to thought, as is generally *done*, the function of knowledge, and conceiving the universe as infinite and unlimited, is equivalent to condemning oneself for two reasons to an inexorable and Spencerian unknowability. The modern mentality, which has no repugnance to limiting the universe in time and calmly accepts the various religious and scientific cosmogonies, complete with the creation and end of the world, is instead inclined to admit a spatially infinite universe, a conception that seems inevitable because a *nec plus ultra* without a spatial beyond seems logically absurd.

. And if the universe is spatially infinite, how can thought ever come to know it all? And without knowing the whole universe, can we ever truly speak of knowledge?

All this, however, is based on the human intuition of space and in particular on the concept of an indefinite straight line above which there can be neither a first point nor a last point. That is, on the implicit assumption that the conception of a three-dimensional, Euclidean external universe corresponds to reality and is indeed the only adequate and precise one. This concept of *absolute* space, which seemed so obvious, has recently been shaken by Einstein's discoveries and theories, which, among other things, lead us to accept the concept of a three-dimensional *fluid* universe. But since they imply the existence of a fourth dimension, even with Einstein's theories the problem of the finite or infinite spatial universe continues to exist; and it is only from the three-dimensional universe that it

shifts to a multidimensional universe, leaving the question unresolved and reduced to its purely abstract analytical form without any reference to the human spatial intuition of the concrete universe.

It is curious to note that while thought finds it absurd that a straight line drawn in space should stop at a final point, it cannot imagine anything other than segments. Therefore, if logic leads us to admit the infinity of the universe, imagination leads us to the conception of a limited universe.

We dwell on these considerations solely to show that there is no real reason to accept this postulate of the infinity of the universe.

The Pythagorean concept of the Monad, of the single and *limited* Being, is therefore not at all an *outdated* concept, to use an unfortunate but fashionable expression.

Pythagoreanly, Being is necessarily limited in its uniqueness. Unity is unique, without anything else or anyone else. Duality and multiplicity are appearances that do not destroy the uniqueness of being. Moving from unity to units, from the one to numbers, from integral unity to indefinite numbering, we move from the uniqueness of being to the infinite variety and diversity of nature. The unlimited universe in its variety is contrasted with the characteristic limitation of being; and this gives us the first *pair of Pythagorean opposites*, the fundamental duality on which all nature rests. But Pythagoreanly, the indefinite unlimitedness of nature does not lead us to infer analogically a similar unlimitedness of Being, but quite the opposite. To deduce the infinity of God from the infinity of the world is to drag the concepts of this world into the kingdom of heaven, to rely on ideas in order to understand what transcends ideas, and ultimately to claim to take flight without freeing oneself from impediments.

Those who have come to *feel* their own body *within* themselves, and who can therefore, with Plotinus, intuit that, similarly, the Macrocosm is in God as the Microcosm is in us, can also understand how one can speak of the limitation of Being and also of the Macrocosm. Dante, having reached the end of his ascent, saw that “in *its* depths it *internalizes itself*

bound with love in a volume

That which spreads throughout the Universe.

This is the *connection*, the only one, of unlimited multiplicity; and human consciousness, *connecting itself* in turn, can reach the consciousness of universal connection, and in it and through it reach knowledge.

It is an entirely interior, non-spatial connection. Exoterically, spatial geometric symbolism corresponds to and represents this connection with the *volume*, the Pythagorean *ÓAicòq* of the sphere enclosing the world spread out in the four elements, a volume that envelops the world; and it shows that only from the *center is* it possible to have a synthetic, simultaneous, global vision of the entire sphere and its volume or connection. Arithmetic, temporal, musical, and rhythmic symbolism perceives and represents this connection in *Var-monia*, which makes the world a *cosmos*, and shows that only with *Vaccordo* is it possible to harmonize with the whole and live in unison with the harmony of the spheres.

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By this we do not mean to detract from the value of thought.

The “little light” in the darkness of night can serve to prevent us from stumbling, but it would be absurd to expect it to make the darkness disappear. Indeed, those who, in complete darkness, with all lights extinguished, accustom their eyes to the night, end up obtaining a more or less indistinct perception of things near and far; while a nearby light, allowing the vision of nearby things, makes the darkness around them denser and prevents any perception of distant things. Only the sun, which dispels darkness, illuminates both what is near and what is far away. And before dawn breaks, it is wise to be content with the night vision provided by the stars without resorting to artificial light. The owl, sacred to Minerva, can see in the darkness; although it cannot compete with the eagle sacred to Jupiter, it is accustomed to staring at the sun. For our purposes, it is useless to replace the modest oil lamp with a powerful arc lamp; it will always be a light in the midst of thick darkness. Indeed, the arc lamps of our cities, by driving the stars from the sky, deprive our senses of that constant reminder of the immanence of the heavens. But thought has its function; and even the synthetic vision it achieves does not exclude or contradict rational analytical consideration, voluntarily restricted to a specific subject.

If consciousness entrusts itself, identifies itself, and binds itself to thought, never taking its attention away from the small light of reason, not only will it end up losing even the notion of the sea of darkness that surrounds it and deluding itself into seeing, but it will also place itself in a state of insensitivity to any possible dawn.

Thought must therefore renounce its dominion over human consciousness. We must renounce thought, its explanations, theories, imaginations, and *a fortiori* beliefs.

And since thoughts are provoked, determined, and dominated by passions, we must free ourselves from passions. And since human life is entirely woven from passionate and mental elements, we must in practice eliminate all attachment to life.

Nor is this elimination sufficient to place consciousness absolutely beyond the reach of the disturbances of thought. It is necessary to eradicate from consciousness the attachment to its human mode of conditioned existence, so that the impression of annihilation caused by the disappearance of this mode does not give rise, with the complicity of the organic and instinctive horror of the body, to a sudden dismay that stifles the flight at the outset and brings the daring back down to earth.

Even the idea that human consciousness has of itself is ultimately an idea, and as such must be overcome and dominated. The horror of annihilation is a feeling, and it must not be allowed to reawaken, in its own time, to agitate and disturb the consciousness. As long as consciousness remains attached to its own isolation as a necessary condition of existence and affirms individual independence, it *alters* the unity of Being; by differentiating and fragmenting itself, it denies itself the perception of unity. Self-abandonment, abdication, breaks down the barrier and makes assimilation with unity, amalgamation, indigation, and the attainment of knowledge possible.

In conclusion, in order to attain knowledge, it is therefore necessary:

1. To free oneself from passions: that is, from passivity, from servitude to the feelings and emotions provoked by the senses. One must cease to suffer their influence, to be their subject and patient.
2. Renounce all beliefs, religious, moralistic, philosophical, scientific, and pseudo-esoteric. Overcome and break down all prejudices, conventions, local and temporal superstitions, race, caste, school,

tradition, habit, vice, virtue, and temperament. Dissolve all layers and encrustations of concepts and evaluations inherent in language and in the individual and environmental *forma mentis et sentimentis*. In hermetic terminology, this is the universal solvent, *VAlkaest*, which accomplishes the *solution of the dense*.

3. Renounce oneself completely. To be born into a new life, it is necessary to die to the old one. This renunciation of oneself is necessary because the instinctive terror of annihilation could otherwise arise at an inopportune moment, at an important stage of the great work, and prevent the “fixation or coagulation of the subtle.”

4. Control your thoughts by fixing your mind and ceasing to think. The agitation of thought (Latin: *cogitare*) occupies the consciousness, binding its attention and disturbing its calm, preventing its transmutation into the superhuman mode.

This operation is terribly difficult and requires unflinching constancy and patience. Thought is by its nature as mobile as quicksilver, and fixing it is as difficult as fixing the mercury of philosophers, which is volatile and fleeting by nature. The mind must coagulate in a serene, imperturbable calm. Not even a sudden sense of annihilation must take hold of this immobility and disturb it.

The coagulation of the subtle is made possible by the solution of the dense, because the two operations allow and help each other, and as the alchemists say, “the solution of the dense is the fixation of the subtle.”

It is perhaps not superfluous to mention that as the operation progresses, certain special transcendent sensibilities are awakened and sharpened, and “hostile forces” are determined, capable not only of disturbing the serenity of the soul but even of overwhelming it; and this is particularly the case in the culminating phase of the actual operation of palingenesis. This is one of the reasons why the great work is not only difficult but also dangerous, and why it is not advisable to venture into it without having completed the preliminary catharsis, and without the guidance and assistance of a Master or without the grace of God, as the alchemists say. And it is one of the reasons for the Pythagorean and Hermetic silence that binds all the children of the art.

What we have considered so far is the preliminary and negative part of the great work. In this phase, the matter of the philosophers is subjected to a process of rectification and sublimation. A continuous aspiration maintains in the philosophical Athanor the holy fervor of asceticism, the moderate and uninterrupted fire, sufficient and necessary for the completion of the great work, since everything depends on the regime of fire. It is the sacred fire, the ardor to become the expert world that nothing could overcome in the consciousness of Dante's Ulysses.

Separating the subtle from the thick, and the dense from the subtle, with great skill; volatilizing what is fixed and fixing what is mobile; dissolving the dense and coagulating the subtle, the conversion of the elements is accomplished. The will of the craftsman brings them together and separates them, just as the central axis brings together and separates the two snakes of the Caduceus in the hands of Hermes, the winged messenger of the Gods and guide of souls.

Before beginning the positive phase of the work, it is therefore necessary for the human part to rot and die. For this reason, the first thing to appear in the philosophical Athanasial Trifecta is the black color

of the Caput mortuum, the blackest black, symbolized by the raven. What is dense, material, mortal must die, so that the gray and heavy lead can be transmuted into a more noble metal, so that Saturn, son of Cronus, may lose the power of his deadly sickle.

The uninterrupted action of fire brings about the whitening, the *blanchissage* of matter. At a certain point, the *whiteness*, *Valbedo* of Silver, of the moon or of the white doves of the naked Diana appears. And by maintaining and pushing the fire in the Athanor, bringing the matter from white to red, the *rubedo* of solar and philosophical Gold finally appears, symbolized by the purple Phoenix, which is reborn flaming and immortal from the divine flames of sulfur (Osìov = divine: Osìov = sulfur).

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2 — Contemplation gives knowledge.

The first maxim of Amedeo Armentano told us what conditions must be met in order to know. This one tells us the sufficient condition: Contemplation gives knowledge.

We can already hear some readers muttering that this is nothing new. We are perfectly aware of this; and since we do not seek to appear original, to construct new philosophical systems, or to make the usual small contribution to the edifice of Science, but only to be faithful interpreters of esoteric knowledge and tradition, this criticism leaves us indifferent. Nor do we intend to entrench ourselves or rely on any authority; there are now so many occultists who are the only, the true, the sole spokesmen, representatives, delegates, licensed patent holders (and what else?) of the true Rosicrucians, of the guaranteed Templars, of the famous White Lodge of Tibet, that we poor wretches do not even dare to enter the fray and declare ourselves the true heirs of the wisdom of this or that association or school. What we say is based solely on our experience; and, of course, verification can only be obtained through similar experience.

The recognition of the inability and inadequacy of thought to attain knowledge raises the question of the means to be employed for this purpose. From Indian yoga practices and Taoist, Buddhist, and Christian asceticism to mystery ceremonies, from Plotinian ecstasy to illuminating grace, from the Pythagorean assimilation to God to Bergson's intuition, there is a whole range of different designations and more or less accurate and precise conceptions of the path to follow.

To us, the word contemplation seems the most appropriate to designate the means of attaining knowledge.

It has nothing to do, we repeat, with reasoning. To speak of rational contemplation is to fall into a contradiction. The contemplation we mean is not meditation, it is not absorption in thought, nor is it an insistent concentration on a particular thought. Nor is it prayer, sentimental exaltation, or devotion. Contemplation places the consciousness of the contemplator in communication and communion with undifferentiated consciousness. There is assimilation, identification.

Our consciousness becomes the consecrated Temple, of which pagan, Christian, Templar, and Masonic temples are the image and outward symbol. In this temple, all limitations disappear; it is the symbol of the universe. For this reason, the Masonic temple extends ritually from East to West, from North to

South, and from the dark depths of the Nadir it rises to the heavenly heights of the Zenith. In the same way, the Etruscan augur circumscribed and consecrated a *tempulum* on the ground with a purely ideal separation from the remaining space. And the *beautiful and angelic temple* (*Parad. XXVIII, 57*) which Dante reaches as he rises from the earthly Nadir, and where the *contemplators* dressed in *white Templar stoles* are found.

According to the Pythagorean cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, the temple built by Solomon in Jerusalem is the vision of God. “*For the temple built there by Solomon was nothing other than the place for the vision of the Gods, which the prince of priests consulted, where the responses of the prophets were kept in writing, from which the priests investigated occult things*” (Niccolò da Cusa, *Opera*; Basel 1505, p. 632).

This temple of Cusano is therefore not for reciting prayers or celebrating services, but for performing the mystical wedding *telV* “*of the zealous soul, who is chosen as bride for the son of God, who dwells in immortality, that is, heavenly incorruptibility*” (Cusano, *ibidem*), the alchemical wedding of the King and Queen, the Sun and the Moon, Gold and Silver.

All this must be done with the same calm and impersonal serenity with which a mathematician integrates a system of equations and a chemist works on his reagents. This is real art or science, not mysticism. The Christian language lends itself as well as any other to expressing the conditions and stages of the operation, but unfortunately Christian readers are usually inclined to misunderstand spiritual matters and to confuse the practices of hermetic science with those of devotion.

And this is a huge mistake! Because if it is true that contemplation is not achieved through thought, it is equally true that it is not achieved through feeling, and even less so through the womb.

Sentimental hysteria and spasms of love for Jesus are feelings, passions, pathologies. Not only are they useless, but we have seen that they are harmful and obstructive, and must be eliminated.

The grace of God that Sendivogius, Filalete, and others say is necessary, if there is no guidance from a Master, has nothing to do with Christian charity and love of neighbor; and in general, all hermetic terminology avoids the danger of degenerating into mysticism. With it, it is clear that we are dealing with science and not religion, initiation and not mysticism, experience and not belief, contemplation and not devotion, sublimation and not humiliation of consciousness.

We could quote countless passages from ancient sages who reveal a practical awareness of these things. Plotinus, Bruno, Campanella, and Cusano are veritable mines in this regard. But to give an example of Christian terminology used wisely, we will quote a page from an alchemist and spagyric physician of the early 1700s, a page that must be read with equal wisdom, and in which it would be a mistake to see anything other than one of the usual mystical outbursts based on love and devotion, with a mixture of the usual expressions and consecrated and venerated platitudes that no one bothers to understand.

Here is the passage we translate from Oswald Crollio's *Basilica Chymica* (Frankfurt 1608), specifically from page 105 of the *praefatio admonitoria*:

"Whoever does not unite himself by adherence to this most united Source and unique unity, must perish eternally, and by the second death be separated from the Light and Life, and be cast into the outer

Darkness of the Murky World, which absence from the presence of God is the most bitter of all punishments.

*To know that God Himself is the Creator of all things, and to pass into Him with the complete image of His likeness or with a certain essential contact without bond, by which God Himself is transformed and fulfilled, is precisely the true and solid philosophy. Therefore, the minds of the Adept philosophers, whose JioMiSDga is in heaven due to the maturity of their earthly life, for whom one is all in all, and all things are one in one; who always see these transitory things with the left eye, and heaven with the right, the minds of these were always long removed and alien from higher sophistry. For, leaving behind the world placed in evil, with calm and religious meditation, awakened from the tomb of their bodies or from the dead works of darkness with the cooperation of divine grace, they were able to open the eyes of their hearts and, by separating their minds from earthly obstacles, they were able to delight in God in the Sabbath of their hearts, and with most blessed vision, that is, with a single and simple intuition from within, with a kind of essential contact with the Divinity, they were able to see all things in one, and in the light of God, as in a mirror of eternity, they were able to contemplate the beauty of the Supreme Good, incomprehensible to the Old Creature, and they considered misfortune *that which is the dwelling place in this valley of misery and ignorance: For our heart is restless until, leaving behind the beautiful nothingness (that is, the region of Darkness and Dead Shadow), we return to the Being of Beings (from whence we wander), as the predetermined goal of every desire and will, for which every creature yearns and sighs. Therefore, stripped naked and abandoned by every creature, they abandon themselves and come out of themselves completely, despising all things corporeal and incorporeal, and hasten with sighs to the one and perfect, whose knowledge and contemplation (which the most wise Hermes, venerable in his gray hair and most pious forerunner of the philosophers of nature, and first prophet in his pure Monad, also knew) is the sacred, heavenly, and occult silence, the quiet of the senses and of all things, where finally, having fulfilled the task of miseries, labors, and wanderings, with unanimous friendship, all men in one Mind, in a certain ineffable way, deeply one, arrive. Intimate vision of God and intuitive knowledge of God, which also exists in this world for the soul separated by the light of grace, if anyone alone wishes to free himself and become a subject of God. Thus many holy men, by virtue of the deifying spirit, tasted in**

noUTEupa: association, corporation, or government (Note by the Editor of <http://lamelagrana.net>).

this life the first fruits of the Resurrection, and they tasted the flavor of the heavenly homeland. That is, the spiritual death of the saints (which the Jews call Mortis osculimi/ precious in the sight of God, if death must be called the fullness of life. One must die to the world, to the flesh, to the blood, to the whole animal man, whoever wants /'excessum of the mind to enter these inner sanctums of secrets, and enter Paradise. The living man of mind alone, like an angel, evades; and with his whole breast (so to speak) in a certain way, God conceives.

This is what is found in a book apparently dedicated to medicine. But the medicine in question is the spagyric medicine of Paracelsus, of whom Crollio is a follower. And according to Crollio, this is precisely how spagyric medicine capable of giving long life must be understood. This, says Crollio, is Paracelsus' elixir of long life.

And on page 106 he adds: “These most secret of secrets were always hidden from the masses of philosophers, especially after men began to abuse the Wisdom that God had granted them for their health and benefit, turning it to evil.”

II

In the January-February and November-December 1923 issues of the magazine “Mondo Occulto,” some of Amedeo Armentano's initiatory maxims saw the light for the first time. We began reprinting them in the now defunct magazine “Atanòr,” which preceded “Ignis,” of which “Ignis” is the continuation. Thus, the first two maxims appeared, accompanied by extensive commentary, in the May and June 1924 issues of Atanòr. We are now publishing a few more, grouping them together according to their subject matter, preceded by the two maxims already published in Atanòr and followed by commentary. For commentary on the first two, please refer to the aforementioned issues of Atanòr.

1 — Is it possible to know?

— **It is possible.**

— **How?**

— **By controlling your thoughts, dispensing with belief, and freeing yourself from passions and fear of nothingness.**

2 — Contemplation gives knowledge.

3 — To contemplate, you must be free in your senses.

4 — To be free in the senses, use the senses freely.

5 — Do not deny or blaspheme the senses, they accompany us from the first to the last day... Listen to their voice and obey only wisely.

6 — What are the senses?

— **A link between animal life and life.**

7 — To be able to consider pleasure is the same as possessing the abstract truth of it: the same law applies to pain.

8 — Renunciation deprives us of the spiritual truths contained in the things we renounce.

9 — Things are elements of experience, and those who renounce them blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

10 — We must renounce the false self, not things.

11 — What is to be understood by false self?

— **The dominion of the senses over the self.**

In the commentary on the first two maxims, published in “Atanòr,” we saw what was to be understood by knowledge, and then that it was possible to attain knowledge. First, it was necessary to satisfy certain necessary (but not sufficient) conditions. Specifically, it was first essential to free oneself from all beliefs, prejudices, feelings, passions, and fear of nothingness, that is, fear of annihilation. We also

saw that it was necessary to control one's thoughts. This preliminary purification, which has nothing moralistic about it and is depicted and accompanied by cathartic rites in initiation ceremonies, is technically indispensable, and once accomplished, it makes possible the contemplation that gives knowledge.

by the cathartic rites of initiation ceremonies, is technically indispensable, and once accomplished, it makes possible the contemplation that gives knowledge.

Amedeo Armentano, with his third maxim, now tells us that in order to contemplate, it is necessary to be free in the senses.

The senses in question are all the senses, all the bonds that unite our animal life to life. They are the five ordinary senses of man, which correspond to anatomical organs known to all, and they are the other less common and less defined senses, more difficult to refer to and locate to specific anatomical organs; and they are also the senses of sensuality, from which the pleasures and pains of the senses originate.

It is clear that in order to contemplate, it is necessary not to be dominated by the senses, because those who are slaves to them or simply incapable of abstracting from them cannot absorb themselves in contemplation. This third maxim, however, adds something more, which is far from superfluous or tautological, saying that this freedom must be conquered by remaining within the senses, and not by fleeing from them; by accepting them and not fighting them; by using them and not denying them.

The distinction is of the utmost importance and reflects the abyss that separates esotericism from mysticism, as well as paganism from Christianity. Christianity, in fact, realizing that the subjection of consciousness to the senses was an obstacle to spiritual liberation, placed all the blame on the senses and saw no other solution than to attack them and their organs. Both Matthew and Mark, without the slightest hesitation or discretion, express themselves clearly, categorically, and violently on this point. Here is what Matthew says (18), faithfully echoed by Mark (9): "If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life crippled or maimed than to have two hands or two feet and be thrown into eternal fire. *And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out and throw it away. It is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into the fire of hell.*" Now, let us not talk about esoteric interpretations, this way of looking at the question is brutally simplistic; it is, worse still, grossly materialistic in its view of both the obstacle and the remedy. Attention is paid to the outside, to the body, to matter, and not to the inside, to consciousness. And, without stopping to examine whether there might be other methods, we throw ourselves onto this supposedly only path, trusting that it is practicable and that it leads to the goal.

Having established this horizon, this arbitrary antagonism between the spirit and the senses, poisoned and magnified by absurd and morbid beliefs about sin, temptations, the devil, hell, etc., Christianity claimed to apply its soteriological methodology indiscriminately to all, based on the democratic postulate of the equality of our fellow men and our neighbors, and other persuasions that Jesus had come to redeem all, to make the specifics of salvation available to all. In practice, Christian believers were careful not to follow the practical advice of the two evangelists (^), and Christianity succeeded only in replacing the serenity and sincerity of paganism with its moral prejudices and the hypocrisy

characteristic of Western moralism, with all the accompanying evils, infamies, disorders, and follies, so serious and

^ In practice, the “*servite Dominum in laetitia*” often prevailed. To limit ourselves to the past, the depravity of the church people, especially in convents, could be reported from the texts of the Fathers of the Church themselves, and abundant material can be found for those who are curious in the fundamental work of Vilfredo Pareto. The customs of priests and friars were such as to deserve to be painted and branded by Boccaccio, Rabelais, and many others, and to give impetus to reform and Puritanism; but all this does not detract from the fact that in the theory and practice of Christian asceticism, the antagonism between spirit and body was fundamental, and it was considered indispensable and almost sufficient to despise mistreating the flesh in order to elevate the spirit was considered indispensable and almost sufficient. For our part, we consider the consequences of this *technical error* to be far more serious than all the unbridled greed and sensuality. We find a hint of paganism in St. Francis, for whom the earth ceases to be a valley of tears and the sun and moon become brother sun and sister moon. St. Francis said to the body: “Rejoice, brother body, for now it is time to satisfy your desire”; and if the thesis put forward by Emilio Gilardi in his *L'Evangelo sconosciuto di Gesù* (The Unknown Gospel of Jesus) (Florence - 1916; Libreria della Voce) is well-founded, the preaching of the Gospel itself would have been completely misunderstood on this point.

This is not, as far as we know, the only sign of a return to sanity, a return that we cordially hope for, since we do not want the death but the return to sanity of the non-sinner (Note by A. Reghini).

so widespread that it has even given rise to the formation of a special science (psychoanalysis), which studies and deals with part of it. And it has added an additional obstacle to the many that in the “wild forest” block the way to the “delightful mountain,” the obstacle of moralism, which must be overcome in a double battle: externally, by resisting and yielding to the pressure of external impositions, which are exercised through the enormous social force of prejudice, and internally, by recognizing, unraveling, confronting, and silencing within ourselves the prejudice of Christian morality, unconsciously shared by everyone, skeptics, materialists, spiritualists, theologians, Freemasons, and so deeply rooted that it is mistaken for the voice of conscience when it is nothing but foreign rubbish; we must disinfect ourselves by eliminating “moralizing” and overcoming the feeling of “bad conscience,” as Nietzsche called it.

Inapplicable to the masses, the Christian method proves spiritually ineffective, especially with certain temperaments in which sensuality seems to draw ever greater vigor from the repression it undergoes. St. Jerome, who had retired to the desert, fought in vain against his sensuality: “In the company of scorpions and wild beasts, I was often harassed by the chorus of girls. *My face grew pale from fasting, and my mind burned in my cold body; in the already dead flesh of a man, only the fires of lust raged*” (D. Hieron., *De custodia virginitatis*, Ep. XXII, t. I, p. 141). St. Jerome could thus see the futility of his efforts and perhaps meditate on the truth of Horace's saying: *naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret*².

It is therefore futile to try to act on the senses to put an end to their dominion over the conscience; and all that remains is to work on the other end of the relationship: all that remains is to work on ourselves. We must free ourselves in the senses, not from the senses. The fourth maxim tells us how to be free in

the senses: use the senses freely. This, let us be clear, does not mean unrestrainedly, madly; but it means using the senses without allowing their activity to disturb the serenity of consciousness. It means preserving, while using them, the indifference and independence of the spectator and also of the actor who, while playing his part, knows and does not forget that it is only a part, and that, even in the interest of the performance itself, it is good to remain always conscious and in control. One must observe and consider what is perceived, felt, and experienced, just as one can calmly observe and consider the beating of one's heart; one must immerse oneself in the sea of the senses, even if the waves are rough, with the water perhaps up to one's throat, but always keeping one's head above the water and its agitation.

In Masonic symbolism, this inner attitude is expressed by the ritual attitude of the Free Mason Apprentice who stands *in order*. And the five symbolic journeys that the Free Mason Apprentice must ritually undertake in order to learn about the Blazing Star and the letter G, that is, to become a Free Mason Companion and to learn about geometry, the fundamental science of spiritual edification, are the symbol, as is well known, of the experiences gained through the use of the five senses and the wisdom attained in using them and through using them.

The senses are a treasure of the human condition, and those who are blind or deaf are at a disadvantage, not a privilege, in acquiring knowledge of things and gathering experience, because they lack one of the links between animal life and human life. To deny the senses is to blaspheme the Holy Spirit. For it is not they that hinder contemplation and prevent the attainment of knowledge, but our subjection to them. They are a treasure of human life, and there is no need to deny them, even for the sake of transcendence. Nor, if it were convenient to do so, would it be enough to give knowledge. Instead, it is necessary and sufficient to know how to take the right position in relation to them, and then the existence and activity of the senses *allow* contemplation.

To violate nature by renouncing things is therefore to deny God's grace; it is a vain, useless, and even dangerous action. One must renounce oneself, the false self, not things. It is useless to renounce the world and its pomp out of fear of hell or out of selfish desire for one's own salvation; the false self, which loves and hates, which thinks of itself, which identifies itself, differentiates itself, limits itself, worries and defends itself, continues to exist and hold its ground.

The senses must live on their own, as the heart beats on its own, and conscience must not allow itself to be entangled by them, disturbed, upset, and distracted by identifying itself with them. The senses must live on their own, as the heart beats on its own, and consciousness must not allow itself to be ensnared by them, disturbed, upset, or distracted by identifying with the false self, with the miserable human animal that vibrates in unison with the senses, feels their repercussions, and suffers their domination. But, by abstracting oneself, by placing oneself inwardly apart, one must watch the unfolding of external and internal life with Olympian detachment, considering pleasure and pain serenely, recognizing and grasping imperturbably the spiritual truths contained in things. To do this is to possess the spiritual truth of pleasure and pain.

There are therefore no spiritual reasons that can justify the method advocated and followed by Christianity to free oneself from the domination of the senses. And the pagan attitude, which does not deny the senses, is exquisitely and wisely spiritualist, while Christianity, in considering the problem of

“liberation,” remains grossly materialistic. This is not surprising, and other examples of this crudeness of attitude and conception could be adduced. It could easily be shown how Christians, and with them many who call themselves and believe themselves to be spiritualists, are nothing but materialists, who do not even suspect immateriality, who do not even have a hint of incorporeality. And with such flaws and deficiencies, Christianity dares to condemn the pagan attitude, accusing it of irreligiousness and immorality. As if, even admitting the justice of the reproach, one could resort to reasons of a social and moral order, that is, external and contingent, to invalidate a process of inner spiritual technique. We say that spiritual maturity is and must be completely independent of all morality and immorality; we say that moral norms are not only perfectly useless and ineffective in the spiritual realm, but that one cannot transcend humanity while continuing to drag along the human baggage of morality. One need only think of the mutability and limitation in time and space of such impediments to see their contrast with initiatory universality. As for the immorality of paganism, it suffices to recall that it is absurd to claim to judge one morality by the prejudices of another; it is not permissible to leave the right of judgment to the party concerned. And in general, the very fact of appealing to one's own faith and morality, taking a question out of its proper sphere, is already an indication that good reasons are lacking.

Furthermore, it seems to us a singular form of strategy for freeing oneself from the domination of the senses over the self to bind oneself with the constraints of morality.

As long as one is forced to deal with the senses, even as a jailer or sentinel guarding prisoners or as their servant, one is not free, but a slave to the senses. To achieve liberation from the senses, to be able to contemplate, morality is useless. It is not a question of morality but of virtue; of *virtue* as understood by the Romans, that is, of capacity, power, virtuosity, and not of virtue as understood in the distorted sense assumed by the beautiful Latin word thanks to the deleterious action of Christianity.

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It was our intention to continue the publication of Amedeo Armentano's Initiatory Maxims and their commentary next year; but, as we said at the beginning of this issue, we must put an end to the publication of “Ignis.” Reserving the right to continue this work in another way, we are publishing, without commentary, the following maxims by Armentano:

1 — To communicate with things, it is necessary to identify with them.

2 — How is identification achieved?

— **By identifying oneself.**

— **How does one identify oneself?**

1 Last issue, since we cannot take into account the ephemeral resurrection of Ignis with its single issue in 1929, which was in fact essentially dedicated to and instrumental in the controversy with Julius Evola that arose after the editorial initiative of the magazine *Ur* (1927-1928) and the publication of Evola's essay on *L'Imperialismo Pagano* (1928). Regarding the magazines “Atanòr,” “Ignis,” and “Ur,” as well as the disagreements with Evola, see the two biographies of Reghini: DI LUCA N. M., Arturo

Reghini. *Un intellettuale neo-pitagorico tra Massoneria e Fascismo*, Atanòr, Rome, 2003, pp. 79-123; Sestito R., *Il figlio del Sole. Vita e opere di Arturo Reghini filosofo e matematico*, Associazione Culturale Ignis, Ancona, 2006², pp. 168-212.

Regarding the figure of Amedeo Rocco Armentano (1886-1966), in addition to the two biographies by Reghini mentioned above, which deal with him extensively, see the entry [http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amedeo Rocco Armentano](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amedeo_Rocco_Armentano) and ARMENTANO A. R., *Massime di scienza iniziatica*, Ignis, Ancona, 1992 (with writings by R. SESTITO, G. ARMENTANO and L. ARMENTANO).

2 *Naturam expellas furca, tamen usque recurret*: “Even if you drive nature away with a pitchfork, it will always return” (Horace, *Epist.*, I, 10, 24) - Note by the editor of <http://lamelagrana.net>

The Maxims

- Through experience and contemplation of experience.

14) We and other phenomena are individualized manifestations of the same life, and if we do enough to remove from our minds the part that distinguishes us, nothing divides us from the whole.

15) Who am I?

- The immanent considered in three times: yesterday, today, tomorrow.

16) Only by accepting present truths is the meaning of things eternal.

17) Just as night is a phenomenon of the single day, equally divisible into nights and days by the movement of the sun and the earth, so form and thought, and the succession of forms and thoughts, are a phenomenon of immanence manifested and unmanifested in time and space.

18) The immanence of phenomena escapes us as the perpetual day escapes us, which, while sensibly eclipsed, continues to exist far from us until its return.

19) Sophia, what are you doing?

- I am distinguishing.

- I abandon you, I contemplate.

20) One cannot know except synthetically.

21) Truth swallows analysis as water swallows lead.

22) What is the absolute?

The immanent sum of causes and effects in immanence.

23) The principle of causality is negative for the purposes of knowledge.

- 24) The nature of causes excludes the possibility of a first cause.
- 25) The chain of causes and effects is foreign to the metaphysical idea of causa causarum.
- 26) The concept of causa causarum is a principle of theological expediency.
- 27)
- Who is God?
 - The conceivable.
 - What are the limits of the conceivable?
 - The indefinable conceived.
- 28) Silence is the virtue of God.
- 29) God is indefinable, and in order to have a sense of his indefinable reality, it is not at all necessary to resort to interpretations.
- 30) Thought, when faced with the mysteries of being, is either satisfied or diverges.
- 31) As long as you are human, since you do not understand, live for yourself alone, live your life in joy without questioning.
- 32) Distant things are the closest, oh! Eternity incarnate in meaning!
- 33) The necrophilia of prophets and philosophers has created the hundred myths of death.
- 34) Is there a problem of death?
- The living are life and concern themselves with life: only the dead think about death.
- 35) If you want to know about death, abandon dreams.
- 36) It is enough for us to know that if there is conscious continuity after death, this continuity cannot be in opposition to life.
- 37) Humanity is infected with hypotheses.
- 38) It is better to know that you do not know than to believe.
- 39) The ancients believed that the center of the universe was the earth (so they say), we believe in progress!
- 40) To progress is the same as not to be.
- 41) It seems incredible that men are so naive as to delude themselves that they can achieve order by aiming at progress!
- 42) Where there is order, there can be no progress.
- 43) Knowing what you are is the only possible happiness.
- 44) What lives in you from the beginning is yours.

45) What passes through you is not yours.

46) Wisdom is inversely proportional to imagination.

47) As long as the search for truth is based on reasoning, paroxysm is the only reasonable philosophy.

48)

- What is the difference between philosophers and us?
- Philosophers do not care about knowing, they only care about reasoning. We, on the other hand, are interested in knowing and do not care about reasoning.

49) Speaking without contradicting is a quality that says nothing for or against the affirmation of truth.

50) Thought, by its very nature, cannot separate the pure spirit of things, for it sees all things in two aspects.