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MONTHLY LETTER

Devoted to Spiritual and Philosophical Problems -- by Manly P. Hall

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Dear Friend:

The seventh and last department of Metaphysics deals with the Nature of Divine and Human Relationships. The term theological is generally applied to that branch of metaphysics which attempts to coordinate spiritual and physical laws.

The visible universe is regarded by mystical philosophers as the shadow or reflection in matter of the invisible spiritual universe. In the ancient writings the spiritual universe is termed the superior sphere for in it abide the Principles of all things. The term "principles" in this case infers not only the essential substance or spiritual part of every nature but also the laws and patterns by which these spiritual parts exist and unfold themselves. The antithesis of spirit is matter, and the material universe therefore is regarded as a sort of ground or earth in which the spiritual principles are sown as seed and in which each grows up according to its own law. As the physical forms of plants grow upward towards the physical sun and unfold themselves in and by its energy, so the spiritual dispositions of all creatures expand towards the spiritual sun, are sustained in and by it, and come to their perfections in its effulgency.

The initiated philosophers, in harmony with this concept of divine order, classified all knowledge under two headings—sacred and profane. They defined sacred learning as primary knowledge, and profane learning as secondary knowledge. The term "primary knowledge" infers a knowledge founded upon the understanding of spiritual causes.

Secondary knowledge infers the absence of the spiritual factor. Any system of thinking which ignores the divine foundation of life is said to be lacking in primary fact and is therefore secondary or profane.

Materialism is a comparatively modern invention of the human mind. Materialism not only ignores but actually denies the metaphysical factor in thought and action. Antiquity was dedicated to its gods. The princes of the ancient states acknowledged their vassalage to that divine kingdom which extends throughout all space and is absolute in its dominion. The modern world acknowledges no authority beyond the petty despotisms which it sets up and circumscribes with its small vision and purpose. Man has exiled himself from the empire of space and is satisfied to live without wisdom and die without hope.

One of the primary functions of metaphysics is to incline the human reason towards an intelligent consideration of man's place in the divine plan. Metaphysics seeks to establish a closer harmony between divine will and human action. Metaphysics does not infer blind faith, or the unquestioned worship of unknown gods, but rather seeks to establish a rational sympathy between heaven and earth, a conscious and intelligent cooperation between man and the laws that govern him. The numerous evils which afflict the race, the crimes and disasters from which we suffer, are most of them traceable to the absence of the metaphysical factor in education and life.

We feel that a philosophical definition of heaven, as distinct from the modern theological concept thereof, may result in a better understanding of spiritual factors. Theologians, blinded by their jot and tittle creeds, have come to regard heaven as a place, distant and formal, populated by a spiritual genus, and ruled over by a capricious anthropomorphic deity. This celestial despotism exists nowhere except in the imagination of the unenlightened.

The heaven of the wise is Space itself—an immeasurable empire extending throughout the uttermost extremities of being. This empire of Universal Life, established upon the immovable foundations of existence, is populated by a myriad of principles—"luminous energies" as the ancients called them—"gods" as they were known to the pagans.

Heaven is the empire of truth and fact. He who abides in truth and according to fact, abides in the celestial world, but he who lives in his opinions and conceits is exiled to the outer darkness. Hermes said that the law of analogy was the priceless key to divine mysteries. With the aid of this law the ancient philosophers explored the heavenly world, creating a divine science which they preserved in their temples, imparting its elements only to those whom they regarded as worthy of so noble a learning.

Though man springs like a plant from the earth and like the dying plant returns to it again, the ancients affirmed that his growth bore witness to a Divine Energy. It is not the body of man that grows, it is a life growing up within the body which causes the appearance of growth. Nor again, is death the dying of this life but rather its deflection from physical purpose. Man abides a little time in the conceit of matter and then, in the words of Homer, returns to his long lost native land—the empire of spirit. How noble then is that philosophy by the possession of which the human being prepares himself for universal citizenship!

The mystery of divine and human relationships is preserved in the mystical literature of the Greeks under the fable of the wanderings of Ulysses. As a great part of metaphysical philosophy is derived from the theology of the Greeks, it is appropriate

that we should have recourse to their mythologies for the keys to their spiritual wisdom. Homer, the greatest poet among the Greeks, is said to have been blind, but the esoteric traditions declare this blindness to have signified that Homer had been initiated into the Mysteries. His sight had been turned inward from external things so that he beheld no longer the material world but gazed into spiritual verities.

The Iliad and the Odyssey are masterpieces of mystical allegory. No other literary achievement approaches them in wealth of symbolism. We would suggest that students of metaphysics familiarize themselves with these two works. With the exception of a short article by Thomas Taylor, which forms an appendix to his translation of Porphyry, no attempt has been made, as far as we are able to discover, to interpret the obscure symbolism of the Trojan War. The city of Troy, or more correctly, Ilion, was founded by Ilus, the grandfather of Priam, the last King of Troy. The name Ilion is derived from the word "Illus," a term anciently used by the Greeks to signify mud, that is, primordial matter, mingled with the fluidic generative principle of life. Thus the city of Ilion means the primitive ooze or slime from which all material bodies have their origins, and which even material science acknowledges to have been the source whence sprang the reptilian creations of the antediluvian world. The Iliad of Homer is therefore the mystical account of the descent of human souls (the Greeks) into the Illus or mud of generation.

In the Iliad the Greeks are referred to as foreigners, or strangers, to further indicate that they represented the spiritual principles in man which are indeed foreign to the material state wherein they are now placed. The Greeks anciently regarded themselves as of divine origin, and Homer makes use of this tradition to emphasize his point. The Trojans, on the other hand, are represented as at home in their own city, and as indigenous to the land in which they dwelt, whereas the Greeks came from a great distance in ships, over a vast ocean. According to Proclus, the Trojans represent the substances, energies and laws which are intrinsic to matter. The conquest of Troy by the Greeks therefore symbolizes that in the beginning of the creative

process the irrational sphere or Chaos (Troy) was overcome or conquered by divinely enlightened reason (the Grecians).

The armies which the Greeks led against Troy were under the leadership of seven Heroes. These are the Creator-gods of the ancient cosmogony myths. We have parallels to them in the Ammonian Artificers of the Egyptians, and the Elohim of the Jews. They are the divinities who move upon the Deep or the Illus, conquering it and bringing it into a state of order, or, as Hesiod puts it, they brought Cosmos out of Chaos. The leader of the Greek armies was Agamemnon who represents the planet Jupiter, the Archimagus of the heavenly hosts, and his companion-generals are the remaining spheres of the ancient system. Menelaus, the husband of Helen, is the Moon, the source of the generative principle of which Helen is the symbol. The abduction of Helen by Paris is another form of the myth in which she is described as falling from the Moon in a silver egg.

Achilles, the most illustrious of the warriors in his golden armor, is the Sun, the St Michael of Christendom. Diomedes, second only to Achilles in his glory, is Venus which is second only to the Sun in light. Ajax of gigantic strength and courage but slow of mind, is Mars. Ulysses, famed for his strategy and his numerous eccentric journeyings, is Mercury, the swiftest and most erratic of the planets and patron of the intellect. Last of all, aged Nestor, the councillor and sage to whom all the generals turned for deep advice, is ancient Saturn the oldest and wisest of the gods.

Under the seven leaders or planets are the armies of souls—the Grecian host. These are life-waves coming into incarnation in the material world. They are the star-born mortals who acknowledge allegiance to their father-stars. After the Trojan War was over each of these armies, under its proper leadership, returned by a different road to its own land. The various courses of these armies represent the many paths of evolution by which the waves of human souls return ultimately to their spiritual estate.

In the Odyssey we follow Ulysses, an heroic soul of the order of Mercury, along the adventurous course of evolution. He represents the human soul

which, having descended into matter and established itself in the material sphere by honorable and heroic action, now seeks to improve and perfect its condition and return to its heavenly father and eternal kingdom. Ulysses therefore enters into the cycle of initiations—magnificently represented by his wanderings. This cycle is called “a sacred year” or the Twelve Months of the Gods. It is represented, as always in the Mystery traditions, by the passage of the Sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Thus Ulysses performs his twelve labors of regeneration, becoming worthy in due time to be reestablished in his divine nature.

It is evident from the order of the “trials” or “tests” that the Odyssey in its present form dates from the time when the vernal equinox took place in the sign of Taurus, and, as Virgil says, “the bull of the year broke the annual egg with his horns.” The “adventures” of the Odyssey may therefore be arranged in the following order, according to the sacred year:

TAURUS: the adventure of the Lotophagi or the Lotus-eaters. Here Ulysses and his companions are tempted by the intoxicating pleasures of the appetites. They are invited to forget their spiritual aspirations and satisfy their souls with terrestrial luxuries. But Ulysses, under patronage of Minerva, the initiatrix, rescues his followers from the illusion and they press on to nobler action.

GEMINI: The adventure of the Cyclops, or the one-eyed giants. These are symbolical of the lower intellect with its lack of perspective. They are the primitive, mindless monsters of instinct and habit. Ulysses must overcome their irrational excesses which he does by driving a stake into the single eye by which he blinds the daemon and escapes back to his ships.

CANCER: The adventure of Aeolus the god of the winds. The winds here represent the power of phantasy and imagination by the losing of which the ship of life is blown from its course. This occurs when Ulysses is asleep and his companions (his instincts) are left without spiritual guidance.

LEO: The adventure of the Lestrigons. These are a race of giants that sink the ships of the Grecians, with the exception of one vessel upon which

Ulysses escapes. Here Leo's impulse to tyranny and ambition is represented as a race of immense destructive forces which terrorize the helpless.

VIRGO: *The adventure with Circe, the enchantress. Circe changes her victims into swine even as Dellilah, the Virgo of the Cabbalists, destroyed the strength of Samson. She is the illusion of materiality and the power of the senses. By the use of the sacred "moly" branch which was carried in the initiation ceremonials, Ulysses was able to overcome the enchantments of Circe and rescue his companions (impulses) from the spell of worldliness.*

LIBRA: *The adventure of the descent into the underworld. With Libra the first half of the Zodiacal mystery is completed. The Sun descends into the underworld in the mystery of winter. In Hades Ulysses beholds the rewards of evil and receives instruction in the karmic justice of the gods.*

SCORPIO: *The adventure with the Sirens or temptresses. Here Ulysses and his companions fall under the spell of the carnal emotions. They are lured from their course by the magic song of the animal soul. Ulysses protects himself by lashing his body to the mast of his ship. The mast is principle or truth, and the ropes that tie him are self-control.*

SAGGITARIUS: *The adventure in judgment. This sign is the original Trojan horse containing within it the army of small stars by which the city of Troy is finally overcome. The wanderings of Ulysses consist of this intrepid mariner steering the course of his vessel safely between the rocks of Scylla and Charybdis. This represents the equilibrating of the mind in which the extremes of thought and action are balanced. All excess must be avoided by the wise.*

CAPRICORN: *The adventure of the Trinacrian Isle. Here while Ulysses is asleep (that is while the soul is obscured by material impulse) his comrades kill some of the sacred cattle of the Sun. This is the lesson in the sacredness of all life. Even as the dead skins of the cattle moved upon the ground, so evil deeds live on to convict us. Here also Calypso, the possessive instinct, is overcome.*

AQUARIUS: *The adventure of the Phaeacians. This represents the domain of reason and the For-*

tunate Isles. Here Ulysses sees Minerva disguised as a maiden with a vessel of water on her shoulder. Ulysses is tempted to dwell in the land of the wise and the happy, but he seeks a still higher goal and continues on beyond any good which can be achieved in the material world.

PISCES: *The adventure of the anger of Neptune. In this allegory Neptune represents the lord of the generating world, and when Ulysses attempts to ascend to the gods which are above, Neptune is depicted as attempting to prevent this escape by creating storms of material problems to deflect the divine adventurer from his purpose.*

ARIES: *In this cycle the end is achieved in the sign of Aries. Ulysses, disguised as a beggar, to signify that he has discarded all material attachments, has finally come back to his own land. He is alone for all the attitudes and opinions (his companions while in the material state) have been lost upon the way. Ulysses reveals himself to his son Telemachus who represents truth in its divine and unconditioned state. Telemachus is the son of Ulysses, the rational soul, in union with Penelope, the personification of the Mystery School, or, as Homer indicates, divine philosophy.*

The suitors of Penelope who are attempting to steal away her husband's kingdom, represent the corruptions which have sought to destroy the sacred institutions and pervert the spiritual philosophies. Ulysses, who returns as an Hierophant of the Mysteries, destroys the suitors as Jesus scourged the money-lenders from the temple steps. Thus, after long struggling in the material state, Ulysses, the neophyte in metaphysical philosophy, accomplishes his final reunion with the sacred wisdom from which he went forth in his cycle of experiences. Homer invites all students of the spiritual philosophies to follow this course, exclaiming:

*"Haste, let us fly and all our sails expand,
To gain our dear, our long lost native land!"*

Yours sincerely,

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