

The Magical Evocation of Apollonius of Tyana

by Eliphas Levi

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WE have already said that in the Astral Light, the images of persons and things are preserved. It is also in this light that can be evoked the forms of those who are no longer in our world, and it is by its means that are effected the mysteries of necromancy which are as real as they are denied.

The Cabalists, who have spoken of the spirit-worlds, have simply related what they have seen in their evocations.

Eliphas Levi Zahed (these Hebrew. names translated are Alphonse Louis Constant), who writes this book, has evoked and he has seen.

Let us first tell what the masters have written of their visions or intuitions in what they call the light of glory.

We read in the Hebrew book, the "Revolution of the Souls", that there are souls of three kinds: the daughters of Adam, the daughters of the angels, and the daughters of sin. There are also, according to the same book, three kinds of spirits: captive spirits, wandering spirits, and free spirits. Souls are sent in couples; there are, however, souls of men which are born single and whose mates are held captive by Lilith and Noemah, the queens of Strygis; [A word applied by the Valaginitians and Orientals to a certain kind of unprogressed, elementary spirits. [Editor]] these are the souls which have to make future expiations for their rashness, in assuming a vow of celibacy. For example, when a man renounces from childhood the love of woman, he makes the spouse who was destined for him the slave of the demons of lust. Souls grow and multiply in heaven as well as bodies upon earth. The immaculate souls are the offspring of the union of the angels.

Nothing can enter into heaven except that which is of heaven. After death, then, the divine spirit which animated the man returns alone to heaven, and leaves upon earth and in the atmosphere two corpses. One terrestrial and elementary; the other aerial and sidereal; the one lifeless already, the other still animated by the universal movement of the soul of the world (Astral Light), but destined to die gradually, absorbed by the astral powers which produced it. The earthly corpse is visible: the other [Page 16] is invisible to the eyes of the terrestrial and living body, and cannot be perceived except by the influences of the astral or translucid light, which communicates its impressions to the nervous system, and thus affects the organ of sight, so as to make it see the forms which are preserved and the words which are written in

the book of vital life.

When a man has lived well, the astral corpse or spirit evaporates like a pure incense, as it mounts towards the higher regions; but if man has lived in crime, his astral body, which holds him prisoner, seeks again the objects of passion and desires to resume its course of life. It torments the dreams of young girls, bathes in the steam of spilt blood, and hovers about the places where the pleasures of its life flitted by; it watches continually over the treasures which it possessed and concealed; it exhausts itself in unhappy efforts to make for itself material organs and live evermore. But the stars attract and absorb it; it feels its intelligence weakening, its memory is gradually lost, all its being dissolves,..... its old vices appear to it as incarnations, and pursue it under monstrous shapes; they attack and devour..... The unhappy wretch thus loses successively all the members which served its sinful appetites; then it dies a second time and for ever, because it then loses its personality and its memory. Souls which are destined to live, but which are not yet entirely purified, remain for a longer or shorter time captives in the astral body, where they are refined by the odic light which seeks to assimilate them to itself and dissolve. It is to rid themselves of this body that suffering souls sometimes enter the bodies of living persons, and remain there for a while in a state which the Cabalists call embryonic.

These are the aerial phantoms evoked by necromancy. These are the larvae, substances dead or dying, with which one places himself in *rapport*; ordinarily they cannot speak except by the ringing in our ears, produced by the nervous quivering of which I have spoken, and usually reasoning only as they reflect upon our thoughts or dreams.

But to see these strange forms one must put himself in an exceptional condition, partaking at once of sleep and death; that is to say, one must magnetize himself and reach a kind of lucid and wakeful somnambulism.

Necromancy, then, obtains real results, and the evocations of magic are capable of producing veritable apparitions. We have said that in the great magical agent, which is the astral light, are preserved all the impressions of things, all the images formed, either by their rays or by their reflections; it is in this light that our dreams appear to us, it is this light which intoxicates the insane and sweeps away their enfeebled judgment into the pursuit of the most fantastic phantoms. To see without illusions in this light it is necessary to push aside the reflections by a powerful effort of the will, and draw to oneself only the rays. To dream [Page 17] waking is to see in the astral light; and the orgies of the witches' Sabbath, described by so many sorcerers upon their criminal trials, did not present themselves to them in any other manner. Often the preparations and the substances employed to arrive at this result were horrible, as we have seen in the chapters devoted to the Ritual; but the results were never doubtful. Things of the most abominable, fantastic and impossible description were seen, heard and touched.

In the spring of the year 1854 I went to London to escape from certain family troubles and give myself up, without interruption, to science. I had introductory letters to eminent persons interested in supernatural manifestations. I saw several, and found in them, combined with much politeness, a great deal of indifference or frivolity. Immediately they demanded of me miracles, as they would of a charlatan. I was a little discouraged, for to tell the truth, far from being disposed to initiate others into the mysteries of ceremonial magic, I have always dreaded for myself the illusions and fatigues thereof; besides, these ceremonies demand materials at once expensive and hard to collect together. I, therefore, buried myself

in the study of the High Cabala, and thought no more of the English adepts until one day, upon entering my lodging, I found a note with my address. This note contained the half of a card, cut in two, and upon which I recognised at once the character of Solomon's seal, and a very small bit of paper, upon which was written in pencil: "Tomorrow, at three o'clock, before Westminster Abbey, the other half of this card will be presented you". I went to this singular rendezvous. A carriage was standing at the place. I held in my hand, with seeming indifference, my half of the card; a servant approached, and opening the carriage door, made me a sign. In the carriage was a lady in black, whose bonnet was covered with a very thick veil; she beckoned to me to take a seat beside her, at the same time showing me the other half of the card which I had received. The footman closed the door, the carriage rolled away; and the lady having raised her veil I perceived a person whose eyes were sparkling and extremely piercing in expression. "Sir", said she to me, with a very strong English accent, "I know that the law of secrecy is very rigorous among adepts; a friend of Sir Bulwer Lytton, who has seen you, knows that experiments have been requested of you, and that you have refused to satisfy their curiosity. Perhaps you have not the necessary things: I wish to show you a complete magic cabinet; but I demand of you in advance the most inviolable secrecy. If you do not give this promise upon your honour I shall order the coachman to reconduct you to your house". I promised what was required, and I show my fidelity in mentioning neither the name, the quality, nor the residence of this lady, whom I soon recognised as an initiate, not precisely of the first degree, but of a very high one. We had [Page 18] long conversations, in the course of which she constantly insisted upon the necessity of practical experiments to complete initiation. She showed me a collection of magical robes and instruments, even lent me some curious books that I needed; in short, she decided to try at her house the experiment of a complete evocation, for which I prepared myself during twenty-one days, by scrupulously observing the practices indicated in the 24th chapter of the *Ritual*.

All was ready by the 24th of July; our purpose was to evoke the phantom of the Divine Apollonius and interrogate him as to two secrets, of which one concerned myself and the other interested this lady. She had at first intended to assist at the evocation, with an intimate friend; but at the last moment her courage failed, and, as three persons or one are strictly required for magical rites, I was left alone. The cabinet prepared for the evocation was arranged in the small tower, four concave mirrors were properly disposed, and there was a sort of altar, whose white marble top was surrounded by a chain of magnetized iron. Upon the white marble was chiseled and gilded the sign of the Pentagram; and the same sign was traced in different colours upon a fresh white lambskin, which was spread under the altar. In the centre of the marble slab there was a little brazier of copper, containing charcoal of elm and laurel wood; another brazier was placed before me, on a tripod. I was clothed in a white robe, something like those used by our Catholic priests, but longer and more full, and I wore upon my head a crown of verbena leaves interwoven in a golden chain. In one hand I held a naked sword and in another the *Ritual*. I lighted the two fires with the substance requisite and prepared, and I began at first in a low voice; then louder by degrees, the invocations of the *Ritual*. The smoke spread, the flame flickered and made to dance all the objects it lighted, then went out. The smoke rose white and slow from the marble altar. It seemed to me as if I had detected a slight shock of earthquake, my ears rang and my heart beat rapidly. I added some twigs and perfumes to the brazier, and when the flame rose I saw distinctly, before the altar, a human figure, larger than life-size, which decomposed and melted away. I recommenced the evocations, and placed myself in a circle which I had traced in advance of the ceremony between the altar and the tripod; I saw then the disk of the mirror facing me, and behind the altar became illuminated by degrees, and a whitish form there developed itself, enlarging and seeming to approach little by little. I called three times upon Apollonius, at the same time closing my eyes; and, when I re-opened them, a man was before me, completely enveloped in a shroud, which seemed to me rather gray than white; his face was thin, sad and beardless, which did not seem to convey to me the idea, which I had previously

formed of Apollonius. I experienced a sensation of extraordinary [Page 19] cold, and when I opened my mouth to question the phantom, it was impossible for me to articulate a sound. I then put my hand upon the sign of the Pentagram, and I directed towards him the point of the sword, commanding him mentally by that sign not to frighten me but to obey. Then the form became confused and suddenly disappeared. I commanded it to re-appear; upon which I felt pass near me, like a breath, and something having touched the hand which touched the sword, I felt my arm instantly stiffened as far as the shoulder. I thought I understood that this sword offended the spirit, and I planted it by the point in the circle near me. The human figure then reappeared, but I felt such a weakness in my limbs, and such a sudden exhaustion seize hold of me, that I took a couple of steps to seat myself. As soon as I was in my chair, I fell into a profound slumber, accompanied by dreams, of which, upon returning to myself, I had only a vague and confused remembrance. For several days my arm was stiff and painful. The apparition had not spoken to me, but it seemed that the questions which I wished to ask it answered themselves in my mind. To that of the lady an interior voice replied in me, "Dead!" (it concerned a man of whom she wished to have some intelligence). As to myself I wished to know if reconciliation and pardon would be possible between two persons, of whom I thought, and the same interior echo answered pitilessly, "Dead!"

I relate these facts exactly as they happened, not forcing them upon the faith of anyone. The effect of this first experiment upon me was something inexplicable. I was no longer the same man.....

I twice repeated, in the course of a few days, the same experiment. The result of these two other evocations was to reveal to me two Cabalistic secrets, which might, if they were known by everyone, change in a short time the foundations and laws of the whole of society..... I will not explain by what physiological laws I saw and touched; I simply assert that I did see and touch, that I saw clearly and distinctly, without dreaming, and that is enough to prove the efficacy of magic ceremonies.

I will not close this chapter without noticing the curious beliefs of certain Cabalists, who distinguish apparent from real death, and think that they seldom occur simultaneously. According to their story, the greatest part of persons buried are alive, and many others, whom we think living, are in fact dead. Incurable insanity, for existence, would be, according to them, an incomplete but real death, which leaves the earthly body under the exclusive instinctive control of the astral or sidereal body. When the human soul experiences a shock too violent for it to bear, it would separate itself from the body and leave in its place the animal soul, or, in other words, the astral body; which makes of the human wreck something in one sense less living than even an animal. Dead persons of this kind can [Page 20] be easily recognized by the complete extinction of the affectional and moral senses; they are not bad, they are not good; they are dead. These beings, who are the poisonous mushrooms of the human species, absorb as much as they can of the vitality of the living; that is why their approach paralyzes the soul, and sends a chill to the heart. These corpse like beings prove all that has ever been said of the vampires, those dreadful creatures who rise at night and suck the blood from the healthy bodies of sleeping persons. Are there not some beings in whose presence one feels less intelligent, less good, often even less honest? Does not their approach quench all faith and enthusiasm, and do they not bind you to them by your weaknesses, and enslave you by your evil inclinations, and make you gradually lose all moral sense in a constant torture?

These are the dead whom we take for living persons; these are the vampires whom we mistake for friends !

EDITOR'S NOTE.—

So little is known in modern times of Ancient Magic, its meaning, history, capabilities, literature, adepts and results, that we cannot allow what precedes to go out, without a few words of explanation. The ceremonies and paraphernalia so minutely described by Levi, are calculated and were intended to deceive the superficial reader. Forced by an irresistible impulse to write what he knew, but fearing to be dangerously explicit, in this instance, as everywhere throughout his works, he magnifies unimportant details and slurs over things of greater moment. True, Oriental Occultists need no preparation, no costumes, apparatus, coronets or warlike weapons; for these appertain to the Jewish Kabala, which bears the same relation to its simple Chaldean prototype as the ceremonious observances of the Romish Church to the simple worship of Christ and his apostles. In the hands of the true adepts of the East, a simple wand of bamboo, with seven joints, supplemented by their ineffable wisdom and indomitable will-power, suffices to evoke spirits and produce the miracles authenticated by the testimony of a cloud of unprejudiced witnesses. At this *séance* of Levi's, upon the reappearance of the phantom, the daring investigator saw and heard things which, in his account of the first trial, are wholly suppressed, and in that of the others merely hinted at. We know this from authorities not to be questioned.