

# “Pray with a Clean Mind and Soul”



*“When Man will enter with repentance and with his prayers turn to God, he should, before he begins to pray, seriously consider the fate of his own Soul. How is it wholly and altogether turned away from God, become faithless to Him, and only bent upon this temporary, frail, and earthly life; bearing no sincere Love towards God and his neighbors, lusting and walking contrary to the commandments of God, and seeking itself only, in the temporal and transitory lusts of the flesh?”*

*“In the next place, he should consider that all this is an utter enmity against God, which Satan hath raised and wrought in him, by his deceit in our first parents; for which abomination’s sake we must suffer death, and undergo corruption with our bodies.”*

*“He should consider the three horrible chains wherewith our Souls are bound during the time of our earthly life. The first is the anger of God, the Abyss, and Dark world, which is the center, root, or principle of the Soul’s life. The second is the desire of the Devil against the Soul, whereby he tempts it, and without intermission strives to throw it from the Truth of God into his own evil Nature, viz. into pride, covetousness, envy, and anger; and with his desire, blows up and kindles those evil properties in the Soul, whereby it turns away from God, and enters into Self.”*  
~Jacob Boehme

## **When We Pray**

Many believe that if we pray to God, God listens to our prayers no matter what. Boehme is telling us, and rightfully so, that such is not the case. If we spend most of our life doing things that violate the Laws of God, and further the goals of Satan (or the Dark Forces, if you prefer), God isn’t listening to our prayers. It is like the sacrifice of Cain, where the smoke curled down to the ground instead of rising you toward Heaven (not that God wants burnt offerings anyway, but that is another tale for another day). We need to prepare ourselves to pray to God by doing the best we can to obey God’s Law and follow the Way of God and Light. We won’t always succeed, but we must do our best if we expect God to listen to us and help us.

## **Fate of His Soul**

I think Boehme has it wrong here. It is not the soul that has turned from God, but the mind—which is definitely not the same thing. The Soul, in most cases, has remained in the dormant state it was in when that person was born into the material

world with a material body. The mind is easily tempted by the “temporary, frail, and earthly” pleasures, not the Soul. The Soul, once awakened, seeks only God, good, Truth, and Light. That is why awakening the soul is so important for the spiritual adept.

## **Enmity Against God**

Enmity is defined as hatred, ill-will, or strong dislike. It is not likely that a person who feels enmity toward God would be praying to Him at all. I think Boehm may be exaggerating to make a point. What he really means is that if we don't truly believe in God, don't truly love God, and don't truly want God to take over and reform the fallen realm of matter into a peaceful and loving place of spirit, then our prayers are not likely to be answered. It is hard to say for sure, though, because God may see the potential in the person before it clearly manifests.

## **Souls Are Bound**

First and foremost, God has no anger toward us regarding the Great Fall from Heaven to earth. He feels sorrow for us, pity perhaps, but not anger. Anger is for the false god, the Demiurge who created the realm of matter.

It is also not accurate to refer to this realm of matter as the abyss. This is the third dimension of reality. The Abyss is the first and lowest. In it, nothing can live, nothing can exist, so the Soul cannot be there, but it can fear that we will fall in that direction if we don't turn to God, and the Soul wants us to turn to God more than anything else.

## **The Devil's Temptations**

The Devil does tempt us with the temporary pleasures of the world. Wealth, comfort, fine food, a new car, and so on. In the past, many believed that we had to give up all earthly pleasures and live in total poverty to follow the Way of God. Fortunately, that is not true. We can enjoy the comforts of the world, within reason, as long as we don't get attached to those things. That is the danger. When we become too attached to worldly things, we stop growing spiritually. So we need to walk that razor's edge with care and concern.

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## **My Soul Yearned for Life**



*“The soul in me yearned for life. Knowledge blossomed in my eyes. The soul in me yearned for life. I floated and wandered up till I reached the first planet. Her slaves came to meet me. ‘Seize him, seize that man. He will keep us company. Seize him, seize that man, and ask where he is from.’ ‘Friend, where are you from and where are you going?’ ‘I come from earth, the Tibil, the house the planets built. The soul in me yearned for life and aimed for the place of life.’ ‘This is the house of life. This is the way! Where are you going?’ When you go among enemies they will perform anything imaginable against you. ‘That is not what I desire and not what my soul wants.’ The soul in me yearned for life. Knowledge blossomed in my eyes. The soul in me yearned for life. I floated and wandered up till I reached the second planet, and the third and the fourth. When you go among them, they will shout the name of death, and chain and torment you. I floated and wandered up the fifth, sixth, and seventh planets till I reach the house of life. When I reach the house of life, life came out to meet me. Life came out to meet me “and dressed me in radiance and covered me with*

*light. He counted me, gave me his number. The good came out of his midst. Among the lamps of light your lamps will float and shine. Soul, if you hear what I say and do not oppose my word, for you I will throw a bridge over the great sea. For you I will lay a dam and guide you to the watchtower where the rebels hold out. I will guide you past the fire and smoke touching the sky. I will take you past the double pits where Ruha has dug her way. And over that high mountain I will smooth the path for you. In this wall, this wall of iron, I will hack a breach for you, hug you with all my strength, and take you to the place of light.” ~Soul Songs*

## **The Soul In Me**

Most of us think of our soul as being inside us. It is a natural thing to do. It is not entirely accurate, though, since the soul is spirit, and therefore occupies no space and all space at the same time. It is within us, but it is just as much outside of us if we think of “us” as our physical bodies and brain-minds.

## **The Soul Yearned for Life**

How can the soul yearn for life? Isn't it alive already? Yes, it is, but the sentence has a deeper meaning. The soul is alive, but when we enter the physical world, it is in a dormant state that is somewhat like being in a coma. It needs to be awakened, to be activated. And once awakened, it needs to be nourished and nurtured so that it grows in strength and awareness. Also, to the soul, life means life in Heaven, not on earth. Once the soul is awakened, it years to be in Heave and not trapped on earth in the realm of matter.

## **Reached the First Planet**

The soul reaching for Heaven does not travel to “the first planet” or any other planet. It doesn’t travel in the physical sense at all, and if it did, it would not go to the planets on its way to heaven. Heaven is a higher dimension of being and consciousness, not a physical place located somewhere in space. This talk of traveling to planets, therefore, must be taken allegorically. One way it may be used allegorically is that planets all represent our energy centers (chakras). Just as each primary energy center is associated with a color, some also associate them with certain planets in the solar system. It may also be an allegorical way of saying the soul heads towards the sun since the Spiritual Sun is a portal between Heaven and Earth, between matter and spirit.

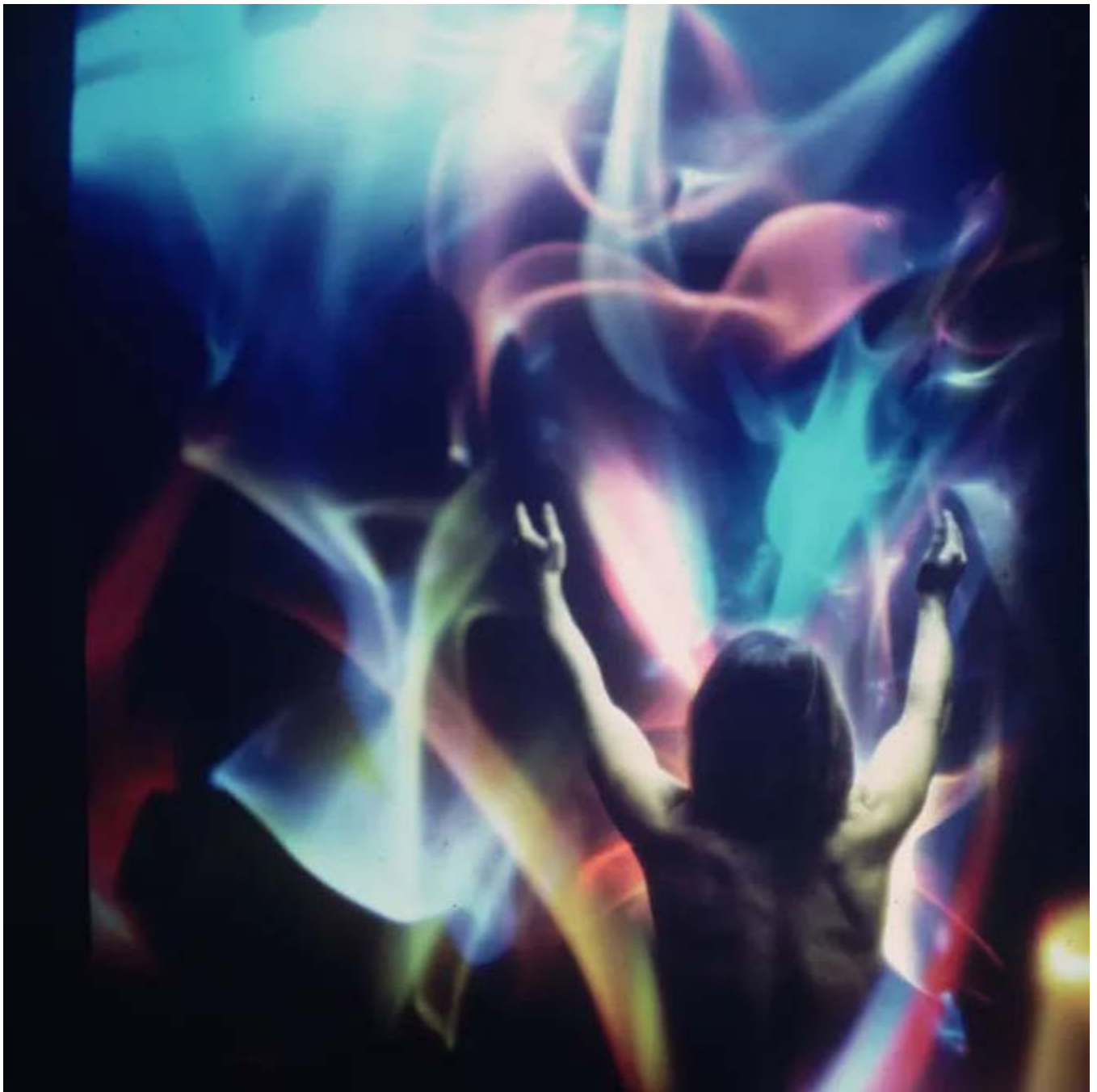
## **Among Enemies**

The enemies of the soul are the forces of Darkness: the Devils and Demons of matter. That want to keep the soul trapped in the material world and keep it from knowing its true nature and power, to keep it from Gnosis. They have many ways of doing this. They may whisper doubts to our minds. They may hit us with physical ailments to distract us from the spiritual. They may hit us with floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and other disasters to get our minds back on the physical and away from the spiritual. Take such efforts as a sign that you are on the right track and continue your spiritual journey. When we give in to Darkness, we lose our immortality.

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# **“The Mystical Way of the New Person of Spirit”**



*“If the Mystic Way be considered as an organic process of transcendence, this illuminated apprehension of things, this cleansing of the doors of perception, is surely what we might expect to occur as man moves towards higher centers of consciousness. It marks the self’s growth towards free and conscious participation in the Absolute Life; its progressive appropriation of that life by means of the contact which exists in the deeps of man’s being—the ground or spark of the Soul—between the subject and the transcendental world. The surface intelligence, purified from the domination of the senses, is invaded more and more by the transcendent personality; the ‘New Person’ who is by nature a denizen of the independent spiritual world, and whose destiny, in mystical language, is a ‘return to the Origin.’ Hence an inflow of new vitality, a deeper and wider apprehension of the mysterious world in which man finds himself, an exaltation of our intuitive powers.*

*“In such moments of clear sight and enhanced perception as that which [Blake](#) and [Boehme](#) describe, the mystic and the artist do really see the Four-fold River of Life—that World of Becoming in which, as [Erigena](#) says, ‘Every visible and invisible creature is a theophany or appearance of God’—as all perhaps might see it, if prejudice, selfhood, or other illusion did not distort our sight.” ~[Evelyn Underhill](#)*

## **Organic Process of Transcendence**

The Mystic Way is an “organic process of transcendence” because it is a natural one. It doesn’t involve drugs or hypnosis. Those things produce fantasies, not transcendence. And simple meditation, while it can be one step in the process of transcendence, is not the complete process as believed by many. Underhill mentions Jacob Boeme in the quote above. Jacob Boeme had his transcendence when the sun reflected off a metal

bowl and into his eyes. Now that is not a recommendation that we all go out and try to repeat what happened to Boehme. He was fortunate that he wasn't blinded by that "accident." St. Francis was watching the sunrise when he had his awakening. While they don't often mention it, those in mystical schools know that many others were practicing some form of spiritual sun gazing to awaken their spiritual Self. The Essenes did it, as did the Pythagoreans, just to name a few. It is an important part of the Mystic Way in any real spiritual school.

## **Illuminated Apprehension**

Today, apprehension generally refers to a fear of something unpleasant coming, but I think that when Ms. Underhill wrote about mystical apprehension, she meant it in a more general way as having some knowledge or insight into the future, whether pleasant or not. She further defines it as a "cleansing of the doors of perception" meaning that the veils of materialism and materialistic beliefs are removed for the mystics, allowing them to see the reality of a thing or being. In addition, their spiritual senses are functioning and reveal things hidden to the physical senses.

## **As Man Moves Forward**

We have gone through centuries when religion and spirituality have slowly been reduced to a very small part of our lives, or worse yet, religions teaching material things rather than spiritual ones. Thankfully, that trend seems to be ending and more people every day are rediscovering the need for a spiritual life as well as a physical and mental one. It is not easy when we and our governments are so much under the control of the big multinational corporations that emphasize the material. Fortunately, we have the power of the promised Sun of Righteousness shining down upon us now and helping people

to awaken their spiritual Selves. There will, of course, be resistance from the forces of darkness, but the Light will prevail.

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## **“Man Falls from Heaven to Earth”**



## THE HUMAN DESCENDS INTO THE WORLD OF NATURE

*“Then the primal person, who possessed all authority over the world of mortal creatures and irrational animals, leaned down through the harmony and, having broken the vault, showed lower nature the beautiful form of God. When nature saw the beautiful form of God, it smiled on the human with love, for it had seen the wondrous beauty of the human reflected in the water and its shadow on the earth. And the human too, on seeing this form, a form similar to his own reflected in the water, loved it and wanted to live in it. And his wish was immediately realized, and he began to inhabit a form devoid of reason. And nature received its loved one, embraced him, and they mingled, for they were lovers.”*

## HUMANKIND IS MORTAL AND IMMORTAL

*“And this is why the human, of all creatures on the earth, is twofold: mortal in his body but immortal through the eternal human. Though he is immortal and has power over all things, he also suffers mortality, since he is subject to destiny. Though above the world of the spheres, he is a slave of destiny. Though he is male and female, being born of a father who contains male and female, and is sleepless as his father is sleepless, he is vanquished by love and oblivion.”*

## SEVEN EARTHLY HUMANS ARE BORN

*“And after this I said, ‘O mind, tell me the rest. I too love your teaching.’ And Poimandres answered, ‘Here is the mystery that has been hidden until this day. Nature, intimately mingled with the primal person, produced a most wondrous miracle. The human had in himself the world of spheres of the seven rulers, which, as I told you, was made of fire and air. Nature immediately made seven humans corresponding to the natures of the seven rulers, and they were androgynous and sublime.” ~Poimanders*

## **Man Descends Into Nature**

What Poimanders means by saying that Man descended into the world of nature is that Man, being originally pure spirit as created by God, descended into the realm of matter that was created by the Demiurge, meaning that we took on a physical body. Exactly how we ended up here is open to conjecture. The story of Adam and Eve is one variation, but we must remember that most stories in scripture are allegorical, and the story of the fall of Adam and Eve is no exception. The most important allegorical reference in that story is that of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that Eve ate from and then convinced Adam to do the same. The result of their action was that they “fell” into the lower-level realm of matter.

## **Form of God**

Nature looked upon Man and saw the beautiful form of God. That is because it was looking at man in the original form as a spirit, not a material being. That nature “ached for Man” and loved his form is definitely an allegory. Poimanders makes it sound as if Nature grabbed Man and pulled humanity down into matter, thereby releasing Man of all blame for what happened. Most other tales of The Fall, however, have Man sharing, along with Satan, much of the responsibility for what happened to them. The Bible tells us that when man gained a certain type of intelligence through the fall, Adam and Eve realized they were naked and covered themselves with fig leaves. Most paintings and drawings of this even have Adam and Eve hiding only the sex organs with the fig leaves. This idea is based on a later concept that sex was somehow evil, even though it is necessary for the procreation of most physical beings. If you read the Gnostic “First Book of Adam and Eve,” also known as the “Conflict of Adam and Eve,” you will read that they were not embarrassed about having their sex organ uncovered, but

about having a physical body, period. It was the entire physical body they found embarrassing, if not outright disgusting, not because of its shape or form, but because it was dense matter and they were used to being in bodies of Spiritual Light. So the paintings like this one have it wrong:



The reality was more like this one, where they are hiding as much of their physical bodies as possible:



## **Mortal and Immortal**

Humans are mortal and immortal because we have an immortal spirit in a mortal physical body and mind. In order for us to become truly immortal beings, we must awaken our spirits while we are still alive on the mortal plane and become one with it. Then that which we think of as our Self will survive physical death.

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# “Know Yourself, End Your Ignorance”



*“‘But what kind of sin do the ignorant commit that they should be deprived of immortality?’ I asked. ‘You do not seem to have thought about what I told you. Did I not tell you to pay attention?’ ‘I understand and remember, and at the same time I thank you.’ ‘If you understand, tell me why those who are ignorant deserve death.’ ‘Because the material body has its source in the abhorrent darkness,*

*from which came the watery substance of which the body is composed in the sensible world, and from this body, death slakes its thirst.’ ‘You have understood correctly. But why is it, as the word of God has it, that whoever recognizes and knows himself enters into the good?’ I answered, ‘Because the father of all consists of light and life, and from him human beings were born.’ ‘You are right. Light and life are God and father, out of which humans came. And if you learn that you are also made of light and life, you will return to light and life.’” ~[Poimandres](#)*

## **Ignorant Sin**

Some spiritual teachers say that only ignorant people commit sin because only the ignorant don't know that the one they hurt the most when they do so is themselves. Of course, there is also the problem of knowing what is sin and what isn't. Some things are obvious, like murder is always a sin. Some are not so obvious; and different religions, and even different

churches or sects within the same religion have different teachings about them. In the Catholic Church, it is a sin to fail to attend their church service (mass) every Sunday. At one time, they also said it was a sin for a woman to attend mass without a hat or other type of head covering, but that rule was dropped due to changes in the roles of women in society as a whole. I know an Evangelical Christian who thought it was a serious sin that women were wearing workout suits at the gym that showed their naval. Most other churches laugh at that idea.

The one way to truly know is to awaken your spiritual faculties and end your spiritual ignorance. Without spiritual ignorance, you no longer sin because you know what God wants, and you want to please God once you are spiritually awake.

## **The Ignorant Deserve Death**

Poimandres tells the student asking him questions that the ignorant “deserve death.” There are two reasons why he says this. One is that the spiritually ignorant, which is the type of ignorance he is talking about, think only of the physical body as life. Since the physical body is temporary and must die, to those people, that loss means death. The other reason is that those who fail to make use of their time on earth to awaken and develop their spiritual faculties will be as good as dead also, even though they have an eternal spirit.

## **Know Yourself**

When Poimandres adds that those who know themselves “enter into the good,” he is saying that those who have awakened and developed their spiritual Self will, after physical death, keep climbing to higher and higher levels of reality or levels of consciousness until they reach the highest level that most

call Heaven, the place of the Good, the place where we know God and we know all of creation.

## **Light and Life**

God is not just the creator of Light and Life, God is Light and Life. The form of God is Light; the Being of God is Life. We can access that Great Light to a limited degree while on earth and in a physical body. We do it by practicing spiritual sun gazing, which means not only gazing at the spiritual sun rather than the physical (never stare at the physical sun!) but also doing it with humility and right thinking; in other words, doing it with the guidance of teachers from a reputable spiritual school like Cosolargy.

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**“Advancing the Evidence for  
Survival of Consciousness”**



***Advancing the Evidence for Survival of Consciousness***

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**ABSTRACT**

Throughout history and across all cultures, many people have believed in some sort of afterlife. Recent surveys show that 60% of Americans believe in some form of afterlife, and 80% of Americans believe in some form of consciousness after death. This paper discusses the evidence for survival of consciousness and the implications for the afterlife.

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70{1fa2ef75e2e78439128d99df03acfe1d8ee3047374abe3d4676fe3470ff8b909} of adults in the United States believe they will survive after bodily death. Such beliefs are often motivated by the loss of a loved one, cultural expectations, religious faith, or existential angst. However, the strongest reason for belief in survival after bodily death is based on personal experience, like a near-death experience or afterdeath communication. Those who do not believe, roughly 40{1fa2ef75e2e78439128d99df03acfe1d8ee3047374abe3d4676fe3470ff8b909} of the population, either have not had such experiences or they are not concerned about the question of an afterlife. These people would require persuasive evidence to shift their skepticism. To assess the existing evidence, we adapted a method used in medical research to gauge whether a drug or treatment is effective. We established credibility criteria and then applied the criteria to assign a letter grade, from A to F, to each of nine main categories of evidence suggestive of survival. That exercise found that none of the categories achieved an A level, which is undoubtedly why the question of survival remains unresolved for many. Then we proposed ten new experiments and surveyed over 400 academic scientists and scholars to see which of those studies, if successful, they would find most persuasive. The most frequently selected study was a controlled, prospective experiment that would result in veridical out-of-body perceptions during a near-death experience, followed by experiments involving mediumship and reincarnation. We discuss the implications of these choices and conclude with some thoughts about why improved evidence for survival is important and could benefit individuals and society.

[Read the entire essay online here.](#)

[Read or download a PDF of the entire essay here.](#)

link submitted by Michael McIntyre

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## **“Darkness Sees the Spirit”**



*“When the darkness stirred, the light of the spirit appeared to him. When he saw it he was astonished. He did not know that another power was above him. And when he saw that his likeness was dark compared with the spirit, he felt hurt. And in his pain he lifted up, above the height of the members of darkness, his mind, which was the eye of the bitterness of evil. He caused his mind to take shape in a member of the*

*portions of the spirit, thinking that, by staring down at his evil, he would be able to equal the spirit. But he was not able, for he wanted to do an impossible thing, and it did not take place. But in order that the mind of darkness, which is the eye of the bitterness of evil, might not be destroyed, since he was made partially similar, he arose and shone with a fiery light upon all of Hades, that the equality of the faultless light might become apparent. For the spirit benefited from every form of darkness because he appeared in his majesty. "And the exalted, infinite light appeared, for he was very joyful. He wished to reveal himself to the spirit. And the likeness of the exalted light appeared to the unconceived spirit." ~Paraphrase of Shem*

## **When Darkness Stirred**

This is an allegorical tale. The Darkness is the egotism that infected a few angels who became the Fallen, the Darkness, or the Demiurge in Gnostic terms. It wasn't so much that the light of Spirit appeared to them—it was always there—but that they noticed it and, in their egotism, decided they were as great as God and could create a realm of Darkness as God had created the realm of Light.

## **He Did Not Know**

Shem says that the Dark One, the Demiurge "did not know that another power was above him." This cannot possibly be true! It is only because the Demiurge, full of egotism, became jealous of God, that the Demiurge decided to create a universe of Darkness, a universe where he would rule by pretending to be God. He (or they, as the Demiurge represents all the fallen angels) succeeded by turning a large amount of spirit into the Darkness called matter. This doesn't make the material

universe something evil that must be destroyed, but it is something created in error that must be repaired.

## **Shone With a Fiery Light**

Lucifer, Satan, and other Dark Beings are capable of shining with a light that is nonetheless Darkness when compared with the overwhelmingly bright and loving Light of God. Over the centuries, many have been tricked into believing that this shining of a Dark Being meant that it was an angel of God, or God Himself. As a result, they listened too and did what these beings asked. This is why Earth is such a mess.

## **Exalted Infinite Light**

The Exalted Infinite Light which is the Light of God did appear in the world of matter. God took pity on the material beings created by the Demiurge and gave us humans a Divine Soul of Light that, when awakened, can help us escape from the Darkness of matter and help in the Great Plan to turn the realm of matter back into spirit. Fortunately for us, we live in the time when the promised Sun of Righteousness is now shining down on us. This special Spiritual Sun shines down on us with a much greater amount of God's Light than previously. This makes it easier for us to tap into the Spiritual Light and awaken our dormant spiritual faculties. But we still have to make the effort to do so.

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# “Musical Stones and Powerful Crystals”



*“History records the existence of stones which, when struck, threw all who heard the sound into a state of ecstasy. There were also echoing images which whispered for hours after the room itself had become silent, and musical stones productive of the sweetest harmonies. In recognition of the sanctity which the Greeks and Latins ascribed to stones, they placed their hands upon certain consecrated pillars when taking an oath. ...*

*“Divination by stones was often resorted to by the Greeks, and Helena is said to have foretold by [lithomancy](#) the destruction of Troy. Many popular superstitions about stones survived the so-called Dark Ages. Chief among these is the one concerning the famous black stone in the seat of the coronation chair in Westminster Abbey, which is declared to*

*be the actual rock used by Jacob as a pillow. The black stone also appears several times in religious symbolism. ... The black stone in the Kaaba at Mecca is still revered throughout the Mohammedan world. It is said to have been white originally and of such brilliancy that it could be seen many days' journey from Mecca, but as ages passed it became blackened by the tears of pilgrims and the sins of the world."* [~Manly P. Hall](#)

## **Musical Stone Circles**

There have been many theories about the stone formation in England known as Stonehenge. One of the newest is that the stones were struck with hammers during certain ceremonies to create a ringing sound that produced the type of ecstasy Hall is talking about. And Stonehenge is by no means the only ancient circle of stones found in the British Isles and elsewhere. It is possible that in many of them, the stones were used to produce sounds, as well as for other things like marking solar positions.

## **Modern Musical Stones**

While it may have been true that the stones in some stone circles were used to produce a kind of music, no one seems to be doing that today. There is a modern variation, however: crystal bowls. Crystal singing bowls are made of quartz crystal and are played by rubbing a hard rubber striker around the edge or along the sides. This produces a vibrational sound that is very powerful.

## **Divination by Stones**

I had not heard of lithomancy until I read the quote from Hall. Apparently, this involved putting stones of different colors in a bag and pulling one out to get an answer to a question or to determine if an accused criminal was guilty. While this is not done today, many do use crystals and gems, which are a special kind of stone, for divination and other spiritual purposes. Crystals can be used to help charge weak energy centers. For that purpose, you usually use a crystal or gem with the same color as the energy center you want to charge. They can also be programmed to protect you from malevolent beings and forces. We can't be awake and alert all day and night, but the crystals can be programmed to protect us when we are asleep or not on guard.

## **Black Stone in Westminster Abbey**

The black stone that was considered the coronation stone for the Kings of Scotland was called the stone of destiny. Many historians today say the stone that is currently there is a different one substituted in the thirteenth century. The legend doesn't say what effect, if any, this stone had on the king being coronated.

## **Black Stone in the Kaaba**

The Black Stone in the Kaaba is a real thing also. It was claimed by some to have originally been given to Adam and Eve to use as a guide to building an altar.

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# Kindness is Proper Behavior



*“The true joy of a person is to do that which properly belongs to a person. That which is most proper is, first, to be kindly affected towards them that are of the same kind and nature as he himself, to condemn all sensual motions and appetites, to discern rightly all plausible fancies and imaginations, to contemplate the nature of the universe; both it and things that are done in it. In this kind of contemplation, three separate relations are to be observed. The first, to the apparent secondary cause. The second, to the first original cause, God, from whom proceeds whatever happens in the world. The third and last, to them that we live and converse with: what use may be made of it, to their use and benefit.*”

*“Wipe off all idle fancies, and say to thyself incessantly; now if I will, it is in my power to keep out of this my soul all wickedness, all lusts, all trouble, and confusions. But on the contrary to behold and consider all things according to their true nature, and to carry myself towards everything according to its true worth. Remember this thy power that nature has given thee.”*[\[1\]](#) ~[Marcus Aurelius](#)

## **Do What is Proper**

It makes sense that we should do what is proper in all circumstances, but it isn't done as simply as it is said. First, we do not always know what is the right thing to do in all circumstances, and second, even when we do, there is a part of us that wants us to do otherwise, and sometimes that part wins out. It is unlikely that we will always do what is proper, but we can, at the end of each day, evaluate our actions for the day, and when we did something improper, vow to do better the next time. As humans, we have both an angelic and an animalistic nature and we can't simply shut down the animal nature. What we need to do is awaken the Soul so it can control the ego which is the driving force through which our animal nature works. That doesn't mean we destroy the ego. The ego is a needed part of us in order to function in the physical world. It is to be controlled, not destroyed.

## **Be Kind**

Aurelius is certainly correct in saying that the first thing that is proper behavior for a person is to be kind, or, as he words it, “be kindly affected.” Most of us will probably say that we are kind, but the question to follow up with is, “To whom and under what circumstances?” Few of us are kind to everyone, even fewer are kind to everyone under all circumstances. Unfortunately, we live in a materialistic world

that wants us all to function as competitors. We are led to believe there is not enough to go around of just about anything, so we need to compete for it. This competitive attitude gives the greedy people the edge, and they often grab far more than they need, or can even use. The result is artificial shortages created by the greedy. But this insane way of living is beginning to be exposed as a failed paradigm, and people are learning that cooperation in which we all get a fair share works better, is less stressful and less violent, and does allow us to be kind to everyone. We can even be kind to former competitors as we now see them as people with similar needs rather than the competition.

## **Nature of the Universe**

Aurelius also advises us to contemplate the nature of the universe, and apparently behave accordingly. But to do that properly, we must be aware that there are at least two different universes, one physical and one spiritual. In the physical universes, it is easy to get the impression that it is a dog-eat-dog, every-man-for-himself kind of environment. While that is true, it is only part of the story. There are plenty of people, animals, and plants that do not behave in that way, or at least not very often, and still succeed. On the other hand, there are those who constantly act as if everything must be fought for at any cost, yet they are not really doing well at all. This may be because the physical universe and the spiritual one occupy the same space and affect each other. Thus, a spiritual being that follows God's Law may see great success on both the spiritual and physical levels, even though he is kind and non-competitive in the physical world. In fact, while some who choose to develop their spiritual self over the physical self live in physical poverty, others live in reasonable comfort without being greedy. Awakening our spiritual faculties helps us understand both universes better, and with knowledge and understanding

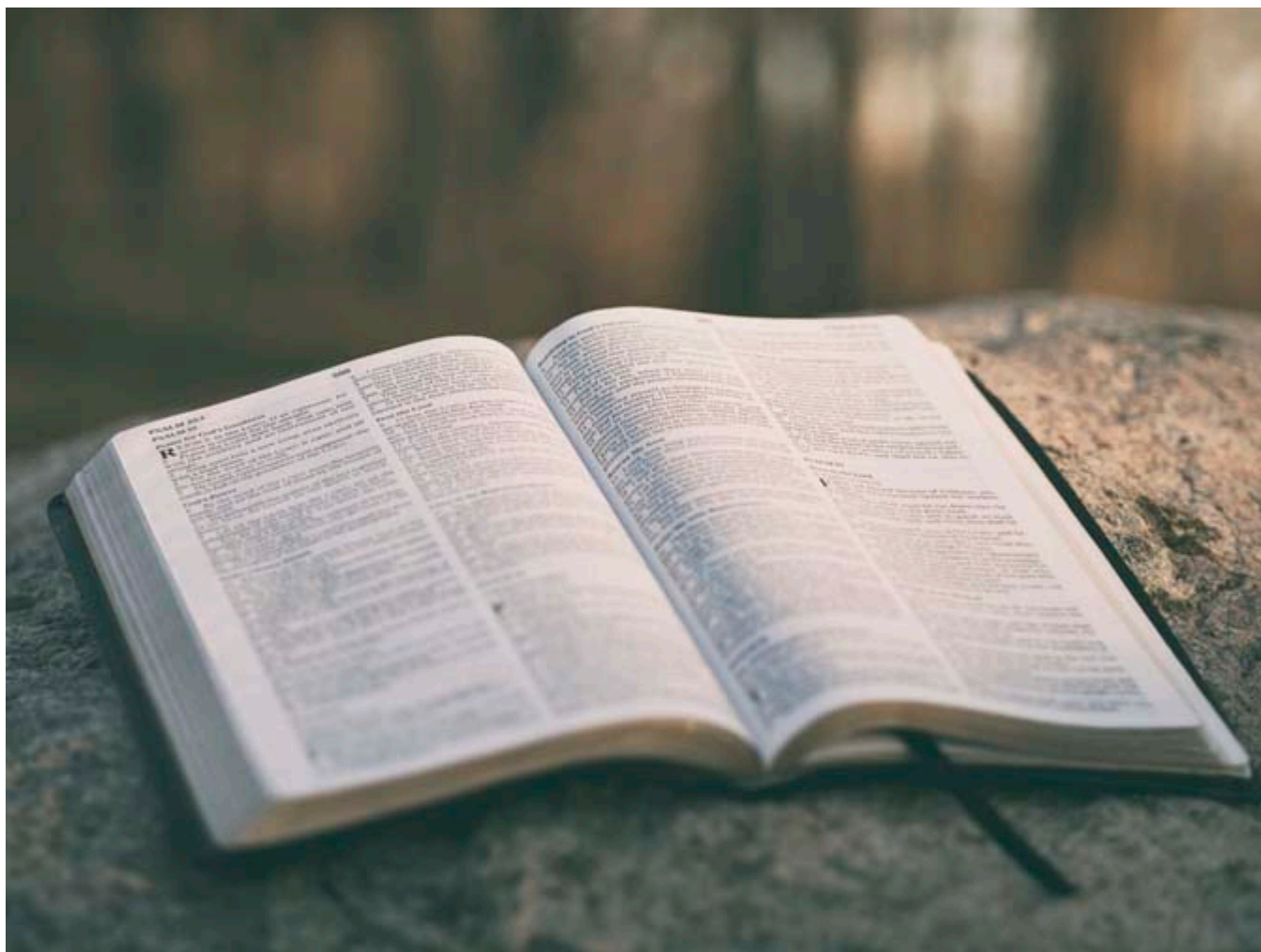
comes real success, spiritual success, and success that isn't greed.

[\[1\]](#) I have taken the liberty of modernizing some of the language in the quote to make it more readable.

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## **Old/New Testament**



*“The law of the Old Testament through practical philosophy cleanses human nature of all defilements. The law of the New Testament, through initiation into the mysteries of contemplation, raises the intellect by means of spiritual knowledge from the sight of material things to the vision of spiritual realities.*

*“Those who are beginners and stand at the gate of the divine court of the virtues are called ‘God fearing’ by Scripture (cf. Acts 10:2, 13:16, 26). Those who with some measure of stability have acquired the principles and qualities of the virtues, it describes as ‘advancing’. ... Thus those who have abandoned their former passion-dominated way of life will lack none of the blessings which are appropriate to beginners, even though they have not yet acquired stability in the practice of*

*the virtues or come to share in the Wisdom spoken among those who are perfect. And those who are advancing will not lack any of the blessings which belong to their degree, even though they have not acquired the transcendent knowledge of divine realities possessed by the perfect. For the perfect have already been initiated mystically into contemplative theology: having purified their intellects of every material fantasy and bearing always the stamp of the image of divine beauty in all its fullness, they manifest the Divine Love present in their hearts.” ~[The Philokalia](#)*

## **The Old Testament**

Some think that the Old Testament of the Bible should be completely ignored, while others who consider themselves Christians give it more say in their beliefs and behavior than the New Testament. As is usual in such cases, the truth lies somewhere between those two. The Old Testament does contain useful spiritual instruction, but when it is contradicted by the New Testament, Christians should go with the New Testament. We also must remember with all of the Bible, and most other scripture, that much of it is written as an allegory, so a literal understanding produces nonsense. You have to learn the language of the mystics and be able to glean the intended meaning from the allegorical words.

The Philokalia says the Old Testament teaches practical philosophy. I think a better way to put it is to say that most of the Old Testament teaches proper behavior in the material world, while the New Testament is all about going beyond the material and reaching out to the spiritual.

## **The New Testament**

The Philokalia says the New Testament is more about the

spiritual rather than the physical, and that is true. It says the New Testament takes us into the “mysteries of contemplation.” That is true if we have the key to understanding the allegorical meanings behind the written words. We must also be aware that not all of the New Testament was written by the apostles and disciples of Jesus who spoke with him directly. In truth, most of it was written at least a century after Jesus left the world. It is unreasonable to think that the stories passed from generation to generation verbally for all that time remained in their original state. In addition, some of it was written based more on the teachings of Paul rather than those of Jesus.

## **Fearing and Advancing**

Those who follow God’s Law out of fear are the beginners on the path of enlightenment. It is not God that we should fear, but the dark beings and forces that control the realm of matter. When we live in fear of God, we don’t advance. We need to let go of fear and realize that God loves us and wants all of us to be redeemed. When you live in fear of God, you don’t try to get closer to God. Those who advance spiritually do move closer to God because they know that God is not to be feared.

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