

The Chaldean Oracles

1. But God is he having the head of the Hawk. The same is the first, incorruptible, eternal, unbegotten, indivisible: the dispenser of all good; indestructible; the best of the good, the Wisest of the Wise; He is the Father of Equity and Justice, self-taught, physical, perfect, and wise – He who inspires the sacred philosophy.

“The hawk,” says Horappalo, “stands for the Supreme Mind, and for the intelligent soul. The hawk is called in the Egyptian language biaeth, from bai soul, and eth heart, which organ they consider the seat or enclosure of the soul.”

Sayce, in his Religion of the Ancient Egyptians, says: “Originally it was only the sun god of Upper Egypt who was represented even by the Egyptians under the form of a hawk. This was Horus, often called in later texts ‘Horus the elder’ (Aroeris).”

This elder Horus or Aroueris, is represented by the hypotenuse of the 3-4-5 triangle, as shown in Lesson 7 of Section A. Plutarch, in Isis and Osiris, tells us, Isis and Osiris conceived the elder Horus while they were in their mother’s womb.” Spirit, the Father, Osiris, and Nature, the Mother, Isis, unite to produce Horus, which accounts for the Oracle’s declaration that the God is “physical.” For ancients did not fall into the error which has beset many who followed them. They fully understood the truth that what we call “physical” is really a self-expression of Pure Spirit.

2. Theurgist assert that He is a God, and celebrate him as both older and younger, as a circulating and eternal God, as understanding the whole number of things moving in the world, and moreover infinite through his power, and energizing a spiral force.

Theurgist assert it, please observe. They who walk in the darkness of duality cannot see the god in what they call “matter”. Thus the Bhagavad-Gita says, “The deluded despise me in human form.” The “circulating and eternal God” is the Eternal Pilgrim represented by the Fool in the Tarot.

3. The God of the universe, eternal, limitless, both young and old, having a spiral force.

Some versions of the Tarot represent the Fool as a youth. Others picture him as a bearded ancient.

4. For the Eternal Aeon – according to the Oracle – is the cause of never-failing life, of universal power and unsluggish energy.

Compare this with the attribution of Ruach to Aleph, the letter represented by the Fool.

5. Hence the inscrutable God is called silent by the divine ones, and is said to consent with Mind and to be known to human souls through the power of Mind alone.

6. The Chaldeans called the God Dionysus (or Bacchus) IAO in the Phoenician tongue (instead of Intelligible Light) and He is also called Sabaoth, signifying that He is above the Seven poles, that is, the Demiurgos.

7. Containing all things in the one summit of His own Hyparxis, He himself subsists wholly beyond.

Hyparxis is a technical term of the Gnosis. By Greek Gematria it is the number 851. This reduced, is 14, and the least number is 5. 851, moreover, is 23×37 , and so belongs to the great number of mystery-words which are multiplies of 37. Its meaning is existence, substance, goods, possessions. Thus Jesus' words, "All that the Father hath is mine," express the root-meaning of this Oracle.

8. Measuring and bounding all things.

This fragment brings out the idea that the Life-power, although free in itself, works through limitation.

9. For nothing imperfect emanates from the Paternal Principle.

The commentator says, "This implies that all imperfection are derived from a succedent emanation only." We cannot admit this. From the human point-of-view, to be sure, many things are imperfect, and this relative

imperfection is the consequence of limitation. But to the eye of the Creative Spirit, which sees all things in their true relations to each other, and understands that each specific phase of its self-manifestation is indispensable, necessary, inevitable stage of the creative process, everything is seen to have its rightful place in the expression of the spiral, progressive force. Nothing, therefore, being out of place, nothing can be imperfect.

10. The Father effused not Fear, but He effused Persuasion.

11. The Father hath hastily withdrawn Himself, he hath not shut up His own Fire in His intellectual power.

12. Such is the Mind which is energized before energy, while yet it had not gone forth, but abode in the Paternal Depth, and in the Adytum of God-nourished silence.

13. All things are sprung from that one Fire, for things did the Father of all things perfect, and delivered them over to the Second Mind, whom all races of men call First.

14. The Second Mind conducts the Empeyea World.

The Second Mind is what we call self-consciousness. All races of men call it first, because while many perceive the duality of self-consciousness and subconsciousness, few in these days, and fewer, when the Oracles were written, perceive the superconsciousness as the true First.

19. Natural works co-exist with the intellectual light of the Father. For it is the Soul which adorned the vast Heaven, and which adorneth it after the Father, but her dominion is established on high.

(N.B. The numbering of these selections is that given in the book from which these fragments are taken.)

20. The Soul, being a brilliant Fire, by the power of the Father remaineth immortal, and is Mistress of Life, and filleth up the many recesses of the Bosom of the World.

21. The channels being intermixed, she performeth the works of incorruptible Fire.

22. For not in Matter did the Fire which is in the “Beyond” first enclose His power in acts, but in Mind. For the Framer of the Fiery World is the Mind of Mind.

23. Who first sprang from Mind, clothing the one fire with the other Fire, binding them together, so that He might mingle the fountainous craters, while preserving unsullied the brilliance of His own Fire.

24. And thence a fiery whirlwind, drawing down the brilliance of the flashing Flame, penetrating the abysses of the Universe; for thencefrom downwards, all extend their wondrous rays, (abundantly animating Light, Fire, Ether and the Universe.)

28. The Mind of the Father said that all things should be cut into Three, and immediately all things were so divided.

29. The Mind of the Father said, Into Three! governing all things by mind.

30. The Father mingled every Spirit from this Triad.

31. All things are supplied from the bosom of this Triad.

32. All things are governed and subsist in this Triad.

From 28 to 32 the Oracles speak of the Supernal Triad, figured on the Tree of Life as Kether, Chokmah and Binah.

39. The Mind of the Father whirled forth in reechoing roar, comprehending by invincible Will ideas omniform; which flying forth from that one fountain issued; for from the Father alike was the Will and the End (by which are they connected with the Father according to alternating life, through varying vehicles.) But they were divided asunder, being by Intellectual Fire distributed into other Intellectuals. For the King of all previously placed before the polymorphous World a Type, intellectual, incorruptible, the imprint of whose form is sent forth through the world, by which the universe shone forth decked with ideas all-various, of which the foundation is ONE, One and alone. From this the others rush forth distributed and separated through the various bodies of the universe, and are born in swarms through its vast abysses, ever whirling forth in illimitable radiation. They are intellectual conceptions from the Paternal

Fountain partaking abundantly of the brilliance of Fire in the culmination of unresting Time. But the primary self-perfect Fountain of the Father poured forth these primogenial ideas.

40. These being many, ascend flashingly into the shining worlds, and in them are contained the Three Supernals.

41. They are the guardians of the works of the Father and of the One Mind, the Intelligible.

42. All things subsist together in the Intelligible World.

43. But all Intellect understandeth the Deity, for Intellect existeth not without the Intelligible, neither apart from Intellect doth the Intelligible exist.

44. For Intellect existeth not without the Intelligible; apart from it, it subsisteth not.

45. By Intellect He containeth the Intelligibles and introduceth the Soul into the Worlds.

46. By Intellect He containeth the Intelligibles and introduceth Sense into the Worlds.

47. For this Paternal Intellect, which comprehendeth the Intelligibles and adorneth things ineffable, hath sowed symbols through the World.

48. This Order is the beginning of all section.

49. The Intelligible is the principle of all section.

Oracles 48 and 49 show the Order is the Intelligible. It is the principle or beginning of “section” or division, because the idea of order necessitates a sequence or series. The Creative Thought seems to Provide the subsistent Unity into Three, and from those do proceed the Seven (according to the Gnosis and the Qabalah. Specialization, creation, section — these are synonyms.

A consideration of this will show you, perhaps a profounder meaning in the saying, “Order is Heaven’s first law.”

50. The Intelligible is as food to that which understandeth.

51. The oracles concerning the Orders exhibit It as prior to the heavens, as ineffable, and they add – It hath Mystic Silence.

The “Orders” are the emanations. That which is called It is the Intelligible.

52. The oracle calls the intelligible causes Swift and asserts that, proceeding from the Father, they rush again unto Him.

Compare this with Sepher Yetzirah, 1:6:

“Ten ineffable Sephiroth (intelligible causes) appearance is like that of a flash of lightning, their goal is infinite. His word is in them when they emanate and when they return; at His bidding do they haste like a whirlwind; and before His throne do they prostrate (themselves).”

56. He gave his own whirlwinds to guard the Synoches mingling the proper force of His own strength in the Synoches.

Synoché is a Greek technical term meaning rest. It is practically equivalent with Sephira, and carries with it the idea that each of the specific self-manifestations of the Life-power is a restrain or limitation. The noun Synoché may be translated anguish, or distress, and this meaning is a clue to Jacob Boehme’s use of the term “anguish,” by which he designated the third property in nature.

71. Father-begotten Light, which alone hath gathered from the strength of the Father the Flower of Mind, and hath the power of understanding the Paternal Mind, and doth instil into all Fountains and Principles their power of understanding and the function of ceaseless revolution.

72. All fountains and principles whirl round and always remain in a ceaseless revolution.

This is identical with Qabalistic teaching. Kether, the Crown, is Rashith ha-Galgalim, the beginning of the whirling motion, and all the rest of the paths are manifestations of that same whirling activity. Be careful never to picture the Tree of Life to yourself as static. See each Sephirah as a whirling

sphere or wheel. See each connection channel as containing a double current up toward Kether (with the exception of the Paths of Aleph and Beth, in which the current is always directed downward).

73. The principles, which have understood the intelligible works of the Father, He hath clothed in sensible words and bodies, being intermediate links existing to connect the Father with Matter, rendering apparent the images of unapparent natures, and inscribing the unapparent in the apparent frame of the world.

Note the use of the word “inscribing.” The idea is the same as that which is behind Tantrik philosophy and behind the Sepher Yetzirah. It is the idea that the cosmos is, in a sense, the writing of Spirit upon the pages of the Book of Space.

78. The Father conceived ideas, and all morals bodies were animated by Him.

79. For the Father of gods and men placed the Mind (nous) in the Soul (Psyche); and placed both in the body.

80. The Paternal Mind hath sown symbols in the Soul.

All symbols know to man are reflections of these symbols which the Paternal Mind has sown in the psyche. As here used, the term Soul or psyche represents the animal sentient principle, and corresponds closely to the universal subconsciousness. It is what Eliphas Levi calls “the common and instinctive life,” and of it he says:

“There are, then, in man, two lives: the individual or reasonable life, and the common or instinctive life. It is by the latter that one can live in the bodies of others, since the universal soul, of which each nervous organism has a separate consciousness, is the same for all.”

This common, instinctive life, or subconsciousness, is “sown with symbols.” Modern psychologist call them “complexes”, or groups of ideas clustered by association around a common nucleus. Hindu psychologist call them Samskaras – impressions in the mind-stuff that produce habits.

When you make yourself familiar with a well-organized system of symbols like the Hebrew alphabet and the Tree of Life, you are in a position to make use of the psychological law that every idea has a tendency to bring to the surface of consciousness the complex with which it has affinity by association. The symbols already sown in your soul by the Cosmic Mind are, so to say, attracted by these alphabetical and numerical symbols. This is why the letter Tzaddi, the fish-hook, is the letter of meditation. When you let down the hook of a symbol into to pool of the subconsciousness, sooner or later you catch the fish. You become aware of one of the greater symbols sown in the universal soul, and through that symbol you come to understand That which cannot be expressed in human words. This is the way to the self-discovery of the Great Arcanum. And is the way to the self-discovery that the first Oracle tells us that the God is self-taught.

83. The Soul of man does in a manner clasp God to herself. Having nothing immortal she is wholly inebriated with God. For she glorieth in the harmony under which the mortal body subsisteth.

84. The more powerful Souls perceive Truth through themselves, and are of a more inventive nature. Such Souls are saved through their own strength, according to the Oracle.

Magical and Philosophical Precepts

144. Direct not thy mind to the vast surfaces of the Earth; for the plant of truth grows not upon the ground. Nor measure the motions of the Sun, collecting rules, for he is carried by the Eternal Will of the Father, and not for your sake alone. Dismiss (from your mind) the impetuous course of the Moon, for she moveth always by the power of necessity. The progression of the stars was not generated for your sake. The wide aerial flight of birds gives no true knowledge not the dissection of the entrails of victims; they are all mere toys, the basis of mercenary fraud: flee these if you would enter the sacred paradise of piety, where Virtue, Wisdom and Equity are assembled.

Jesus summed up the gist of this Oracle in the Words, Judge not by appearances.” The aim of the magician is to rise in consciousness above the sphere of necessity, above the rule of precedent, above the bondage of Karma. Omens have influence upon those who believe in them. The

astrological progressions of the stars are fatal enough for one who submits to their domination. But he who has rooted his life in the center of Being behind personality can transcend what is sometimes called “the astral spirit.”

145. Stoop not down unto the darkly splendid world; wherein continually lieth a faithless depth, and Hades wrapped in clouds, delighting in unintelligible images, precipitous, winding, a black ever-rolling Abyss; ever espousing a Body unluminous, formless and void.

146. Stoop not down, for a precipice lieth beneath the Earth, reached by a descending ladder which hath Seven Steps, and therein is established the throne of an evil and fatal force.

147. Stay not on the precipice with the dross of matter, for there is a place for thy Image in a realm ever splendid.

Nos. 145, 146, and 147 may be understood as referring to the dangerous psychic practices which result from a quest for power in the region of the subconsciousness. The reference to a ladder of Seven Steps in No. 146 may be compared with the Qabalistic idea that below Malkuth is the “infernal palaces” corresponding by inversion to the seven Sephiroth below the three Supernals.

148. Invoke not the visible Image of the Soul of Nature.

149. Look not upon Nature, for her name is fatal.

150. It becometh you not to behold them before your body is initiated, since by alway alluring they seduce the souls from the sacred mysteries.

151. Bring her not forth, lest in departing she retain something.

Nos. 148 to 151 indicate a subtle danger — that of investigating phenomenal relations before the mind is opened to the influx of Spirit, which alone can rightly interpret those relations.

152. Defile not the Spirit, nor deepen a superficialities.

A superficies, or surface, is an appearance. To deepen a superficies is to ascribe to appearances a profundity which is not theirs, and this false judgement defiles Spirit. Never so much as in those systems of error which give power to appearances by asserting that 'matter', or the sum-total of appearances, has a power which is inimical to Spirit.

153. Enlarge not thy Destiny.

A Hindu philosopher would give the same advice thus: "Do not generate unnecessary restrictive Karma."

155. Change not the barbarous names of evocation, for there are sacred names in every language which are given by God, having in the sacred rites a power ineffable.

157. Let fiery hope nourish you on the angelic plane.

158. The conception of the glowing Fire hath the first rank, for the mortal who approacheth that Fire shall have light from God; and unto the persevering mortal the Blessed Immortals are swift.

159. The gods exhort us to understand the radiating form of light.

160. It becometh you to hasten unto the Light, and to the Rays of the Father, from whom was sent unto you a soul (psyche) endued with much mind (nous).

161. Seek Paradise.

Paradise is the superconsciousness, the mystical 'Garden', which is in Hebrew GN=53=ABN, the Stone of the Wise=ChMH, the Sun of the alchemists, which is in the sixth Sephira.

162. Learn the Intelligible for it subsisteth beyond the Mind.

163. There is a certain Intelligible One whom it becometh you to understand with the Flower of Mind.

Paradise is the consciousness of that Intelligible One which subsists beyond the Mind, That One Is what Herbert Spencer mistakenly calls the Unknowable. It is not to be grasped by Mind, whose highest aspect is the expression of self-consciousness in abstract mathematical ideas. It may

nevertheless be known, and the knowing, or understanding, is the result of the unfoldment from the highest development of self-consciousness of something beyond Mind – the Flower of Mind. But it is to be noted that as flowers do not appear upon a plant until it has reached its perfection in stalk and branch, so the Flower of Mind does not open upon the stalk of self-consciousness until the latter has reached the limit of its development. That limit, as just indicated, is in certain forms of abstract mathematical (particularly geometrical) reasoning. This is why so much importance attaches to numbers and geometry in occult writings, including the books of the Old and New Testaments.

164. But the Paternal Mind accepteth not the aspiration of the soul until she hath passed out of her oblivious state, and pronounceth the WORD, regaining the memory of the pure paternal symbol.

Note here the importance of the Word and its pronunciation. See, too, that the enlightenment ensuing is a recollection, or “not-forgetting” (Aletheia, in Greek).

165. Unto some He gives ability to receive the Knowledge of Light; and others, even when asleep, He makes fruitful from His own strength.

The “Knowledge of Light” is a technical term of the Mysteries, Light in Greek is ΦΩΣ, by Greek Gematria the number 1500 = ΕΝΔΥΜΑ ΚΥΡΙΟΥ, Endyma Kyriou, the Robe of the Lord. The word ΕΝΔΥΜΑΤΑ, Endymata, Robes, is 601, which is the value of Α plus Ω, Alpha and Omega, and also the value of ΠΕΡΙΣΤΕΡΑ, Peristera, the Dove. The Dove is the symbol of the Holy Spirit, or Ruach. The Robes, of which three are mentioned in the Pistis Sophia, are practically the same as the three veils of the Absolute (1. Ain, 2. Ain Soph, 3. Ain Soph Aur). They are robes of Lights.

The Greek word for Light, ΦΩΣ, Phos, is written with letters which are variants of the Hebrew P, O, and Sh. The Phos is the Mouth (Ph) or Utterer, the Seer (Omega, literally “Great O,” or “Great Eye”), and the Devourer (“Shin”, Tooth, associated with Fire.)

Note, too, that the Greek Gematria of ΦΩΣ, Phos, is related to the Hebrew Divine Name, Jah (IH), since Phos or Light is 1500, and IH=15.

Note also the last part of this Oracle, and compare with what is said of Sleep in Course A, in connection with the letter Qoph.

166. It is not proper to understand that Intelligible One with vehemence, but with the extended flame of far-reaching Mind; measuring all things except that Intelligible. But it is requisite to understand this; for if thou inclinest thy mind thou wilt understand it, not struggling; but it is becoming to bring with thee a pure and enquiring sense, to extend the void mind of thy Soul to the Intelligible, that thou mayest learn the Intelligible, because it subsisteth beyond Mind.

In some editions the word here translated “struggling is given as “earnestly,” but the original Greek means “contending.” The purport of the whole passage is of the same tenor as the words of the Emerald Tablet: “Separate the etherial from the gross, gently (or suavely) and with great ingenuity. It is important to keep in sight the words of the Oracle, “to extend the void mind of the Soul.” This is like Lao-Tze’s aphorism: “Having emptied yourself of everything, remain where you are.”

167. Thou wilt not comprehend it, as when understanding some common thing.

To “comprehend” is to grasp fully. The higher understanding might be described as being comprehended, rather than as comprehension. Personal consciousness, as Paul says, is “caught up’ into superconsciousness.

169. Things divine are not attainable by mortals who understand the body alone, but only by those who, stripped of their garments, arrive at the summit.

Compare this with the Qabalistic dictum, ‘Nulla res spiritualis deecendit sine indumento,’ ‘No spirit ever descends without a garment.’ Concerning this, Eliphas Levi makes the comment:

“The garments of the spirit have reference to the media through which it passes. As it is the lightness or heaviness of bodies which causes them to rise or to fall down, so the spirit clothes itself to descend and unclothes itself to go upward.”

This Oracle also makes clear the distinction in consciousness between those who are on the path of return and those who are yet enmeshed in the snare of external appearances. The latter are ‘mortals,’ but the former have caught a glimpse of their immortality.

170. Having put on the completely armed vigour of resounding Light, with triple strength fortifying the soul and the mind, he must put into the mind the various symbols, and not walk dispersedly on the empyrean path, but with concentration.

Our Work aims to carry out the spirit of this Oracle. The earlier lessons have afforded you some opportunity to ‘sow the mind with symbols,’ and to learn the meaning of concentration. The symbols which are most important are those of the Hebrew alphabet. Of them it has been said, ‘The sacred letters are perfect hieroglyphics which express all Ideas.’ Eliphas Levi writes:

‘Hence, by the combination of these letters, which are also numbers, are obtained combinations of ideas which are always new and always rigorously exact, like the operations of arithmetic. This is the signal wonder and the supreme power of Kabbalistic science.’

172. Explore the River of the Soul, whence, or in what order you have come: so that although you have become a servant to the body, you may again rise to the Order from which you descended, joining works to sacred reason.

173. Every way unto the emancipated Soul extend the rays of Fire.

They extend even in that dimension which is held to be at right angles to our three dimensions, and it is from this Fourth Dimension that the consciousness of the practical magician works in ways which seem miracles to the uninstructed.

174. Let the immortal depth of your Soul lead you, but earnestly raise your eyes upward.

176 If thou extendeth to the fiery mind to the work of piety, thou wilt preserve the body.

178 The Oracles of the Gods declare, that through purifying ceremonies, not the Soul only but bodies themselves become worthy of receiving much assistance and health, for, say they, the mortal vestment of coarse matter will by these means be purified. And thus the gods, in an exhortatory manner, announce to the most holy of Theurgists.

179. We should flee, according to the Oracle, the multitude of men going in a herd.

One of the most important works of the practical occultist is to free himself from the dominance of the race-consciousness. This is what Jacob Boehme means by 'walking in all things contrary to the world.'

180. Who knoweth himself knoweth all things in himself.

181. The Oracles often give victory to our own choice, and not to the order alone of the mundane periods. As, for instance, when they say, 'On beholding thyself, fear!' And again, 'Believe thyself to be above the body, and thou art so.' And, still further, when they assert, 'That our voluntary sorrows germinate in us the growth of the particular life we lead.'

185. Theurgists fall not so as to be ranked among the herd that are in subjection to Fate.

196. If thou often invokest thou shalt see all things growing dark; and then when no longer is visible unto thee the high-arched vault of heaven, when the stars have lost their light and the lamp of the moon is veiled, the earth abideth not, and around thee darts the Lightning Flame and all things appear amid thunders.

198. A similar Fire flashingly extending through the rushings of Air, or a Fire formless whence cometh the image of a Voice, or even a flashing light abounding, revolving, whirling forth, crying aloud. Also there is the vision of the fire-flashing courser of light, or also a child, borne aloft on the shoulders of the celestial steed, fiery, or clothed with gold, or naked, or shooting with the bow shafts of light; and standing on the shoulders of the horse; then if thy meditation prolongeth itself thou shalt unite all these symbols into the form of a lion.

199. When thou shalt behold that holy and formless fire shine flashingly through the depths of the universe: Hear thou the Voice of the Fire’.