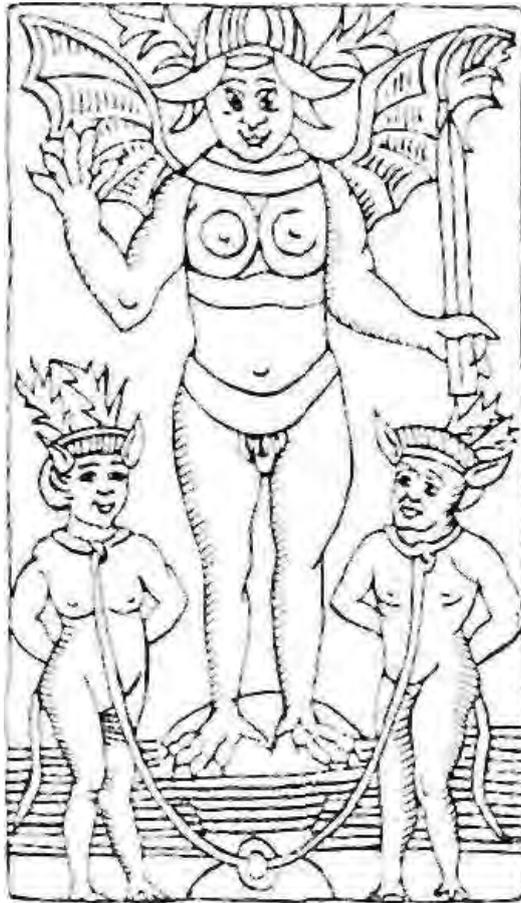


*Meditation on the
Fifteenth Major Arcanum of the Tarot*

THE DEVIL

LE DIABLE

LETTER XV



THE DEVIL

Dear Unknown Friend.

It is whilst still being impressed by the Arcanum of inspiration, with the winged entity pouring living water from one vase to another, that we find ourselves confronted by another winged entity holding a tapered torch above two beings bound to a pedestal, on which he is standing upright. This is the Arcanum of *counter-inspiration*, to which we now have to proceed.

And if the fourteenth Arcanum introduced us to the mystery of the *tears* and the *temperance* of inspiration, the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot will introduce us to the secrets of the *electrical fire* and the *intoxication* of counter-inspiration. This is a further chapter in the drama of the destiny of the divine image and likeness which we are now obliged to read.

But before we begin the meditation on the Arcanum of counter-inspiration, we must take account of the intrinsic difference between meditation on the other Arcana and meditation on the Arcanum "The Devil". It is as follows.

As it is a matter in the Tarot of a series of spiritual or Hermetic exercises, and as, on the other hand, every spiritual exercise tends to lead to the identification of the meditant with the subject of meditation, i.e. to an act of *intuition*, the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, in so far as it is a spiritual exercise, cannot—and must not—lead to an experience of identification of the meditant with the subject of meditation. One should not arrive at an intuition of evil, since intuition is identification, and identification is *communion*.

Unfortunately many authors—occultist and non-occultist—have dealt without rhyme or reason with the profound things of both good and evil. They believed they should "do their best" with respect to depth and penetration in their treatment of the subject of the mysteries of good and, equally, that of the secrets of evil. It is thus that Dostoyevsky released into the world certain profound truths of Christianity, and, at the same time, certain secret practical methods of evil. This is above all the case in his novel *The Possessed*.

Another example of an excessive accentuation of the knowledge of evil—and therefore of an occupation of consciousness with evil—is the preoccupation with the problem of the twofold (even threefold) evil amongst German Anthroposophists. Lucifer and Ahriman (and even Adzura), the two principles of evil, subjective and objective, the seducing principle and the hypnotising principle, have so taken possession of the consciousness of Anthroposophists that there is hardly a single thing which would not fall under the category- of being Ahrimanic or Luciferic. Science is Ahrimanic in so far as it is objective; Christian mysticism is Luciferic in so far as it is subjective. The East is under the domination of Lucifer, because it denies matter; the West is under the domination of Ahriman, because it has created a material civilisation and tends to materialism. All machines—including the apparatus of radio and television—incorporate Ahrimanic demons. Laboratories are the fortresses of Ahriman; theatres—and churches, some believe—are the fortresses of Lucifer. And so on. Anthroposophists are led to classify thousands of facts from the point of view of the category of evil which is revealed through them—which suffices to occupy them for the whole day. And to so occupy oneself amounts to contact with evil and a corresponding reduction of living and inspiring contact with good. The result is a lame wisdom without wings, deprived of creative elan, which only repeats and comments to satiety what the master, Dr. Rudolf Steiner, said. And yet Rudolf Steiner has certainly said things of a nature to awaken the greatest creative elan! His series of lectures on the four Gospels, his lectures at Helsingfors and Dusseldorf on the celestial hierarchies—without mentioning his book on the inner work leading to initiation (*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds. How is it achieved?*)—would alone suffice to inflame a deep and mature creative enthusiasm in every soul who aspires to authentic experience of the spiritual world. But it is the preoccupation with evil which has clipped the

wings of the Anthroposophical Movement and which has rendered it such as it is since the death of its founder: a movement for cultural reform (art, education, medicine, agriculture) deprived of living esotericism, i.e. without mysticism, without gnosis and without magic, which have been replaced by lectures, study and intellectual work aiming at establishing a concordance between the writings and stenographed lectures of the master.

One ought not to occupy oneself with evil, other than in keeping a certain distance and a certain reserve, if one wishes to avoid the risk of paralysing the creative elan and a still greater risk—that of furnishing arms to the powers of evil. One can grasp profoundly, i.e. intuitively, only that which one loves. Love is the vital element of profound knowledge, intuitive knowledge. Now, one cannot love evil. Evil is therefore unknowable in its *essence*. One can understand it only at a distance, as an *observer* of its phenomenology.

This is why you will certainly find luminous descriptions — although schematic — of the celestial hierarchies by St. Dionysius the Areopagite, St. Bonaventura, St. Thomas Aquinas, and also in the Cabbala and in the work of Rudolf Steiner, but you will search in vain for an analogous tableau with regard to the hierarchies of evil. You will certainly find amongst sorcerers' grimoires and in the practical Cabbala (by Abramelin the Mage, for example) a host of names of particular beings belonging to the hierarchies of evil, but you will not find a description of their general classification in the manner of that by St. Dionysius the Areopagite of the celestial hierarchies. The world of the hierarchies of evil appears like a luxuriant jungle, where you can certainly, if necessary, distinguish hundreds and thousands of particular plants, but where you can never attain to a clear view of the totality. The world of evil is a *chaotic world*— at least, such as it presents itself to the observer.

One ought not to enter this jungle if one does not want to lose one's way there; one should be an observer from outside. This is why meditation on the Arcanum "The Devil" must obey the laws indicated above concerning the attitude towards evil. It will therefore be a matter of an effort to comprehend this Arcanum *at a distance* by means of the phenomenological method.

Let us proceed therefore to the phenomenology of the Card itself. Firstly, it represents three personages. The one in the middle is larger than the others, and he is standing upright on a pedestal to which the other two are attached. The personage in the middle is an androgynous entity equipped with bat's wings raised upwards. His right hand is raised. His left hand is directed downwards; it holds a lighted torch. His wings and legs are blue. On his head he wears a yellow skull-cap with two yellow horns in the form of antlers. He is naked, save for his skull-cap and a red girdle.

The two other personages before him and on either side of him represent a naked man and woman. They have tails and the ears of beasts. On their heads they are wearing red skull-caps and are bearing horns in the form of antlers. Their arms are tied behind their backs, and a cord passed around their necks fastens them

to a central ring fixed on the lower red-coloured part of the central personage's pedestal. With respect to the latter, there is still a characteristic trait to mention: *he is cross-eyed*, his pupils focussing on the bridge of his nose.

What, therefore, is the set of ideas that is evoked, to begin with, by the Card? . . . ideas, I would like to say, of a nature having a *practical* spiritual significance, i.e. aiming at a practical *arcanum* of Hermeticism as a synthesis of mysticism, gnosis and magic.

Does it have to do with the cosmic metaphysics of evil, or the history of the rebellion of a part of the celestial hierarchies under the direction of the "ancient dragon" who "swept down a third of the stars" (Revelation xii, 3-4)? Is it related to the entity of whom Ezekiel spoke when he said:

You were a guardian Cherubim, with outspread wings;
I placed you on the holy mountain of God;
You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.
You were blameless in your ways.
From the day you were created.
Until iniquity was found in you. . .
So I cast you as a profane thing
From the mountain of God,
And you, guardian Cherubim,
Have been driven out
From the midst of the stones of fire.
Your heart was proud because of your beauty;
You corrupted your wisdom
For the sake of your splendour.
I cast you to the ground. . -

(Ezekiel xxviii, 14-17)

Evidently not. The Devil of the Card does not evoke ideas having to do with the cosmic drama of the fall of the "guardian Cherubim from the mountain of God", nor with the "ancient dragon" waging battle against the archstrategist Michael and his celestial army. The ideas that are evoked by the totality of the Card and its context are rather those of slavery, in which two personages are found who are attached to the pedestal of a monstrous demon. The Card does not suggest the metaphysics of evil, but rather an eminently practical lesson as to how it happens that beings can forfeit their freedom and become slaves of a monstrous entity which makes them degenerate by rendering them similar to it.

The theme of the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot is one of the *generation* of demons and of the power that they have over those who generate them. It is the Arcanum of the creation of artificial beings and of the slavery into which the creator can fall—becoming a slave of his own creation.

In order to be able to grasp this Arcanum, it is necessary firstly to take account of the fact that the world of evil consists not only of fallen entities of the celestial

hierarchies (with the exception of Seraphim) but also of entities of *non-hierarchical origin*, i.e. entities who, in the manner of bacilli, microbes and viruses of infectious diseases in the domain of biology, owe their origin — to express it in the terms of Scholastic philosophy— neither to the primary cause, nor to secondary causes, but rather to tertiary causes, namely to arbitrary abuse on the part of autonomous creatures. Thus, there are hierarchies who are "of the left" and who act within the framework of the law, executing a strictly just function in their capacity as accusers and "putters to the trial"—whilst on the other hand there are "microbes of evil" or entities artificially created by incarnated human beings. These latter entities are demons whose soul is a special passion and whose body is the totality of "electro-magnetic" vibrations produced by this passion. These artificial demons can be engendered by human communities—such are many of the monstrous "gods" of the Phoenicians, Mexicans, and even Tibetans of the present day. The Canaan Moloch who demanded the bloody sacrifice of the first born, mentioned so often in the Bible, is not a hierarchical entity—either of good or of evil—but rather an evil *egregore*, i.e. a demon created artificially and collectively by human communities infatuated with the thrill of fear. The Mexican Quetzalcoatl is a similar instance of this. There, also, it was a matter of a demon created and worshipped collectively.

With respect to Tibet, we find there the singular phenomenon of the conscious — semi-"scientific"— practice of the creation and destruction of demons. It appears that in Tibet the Arcanum with which we are occupied is known, and it is practised as one of the methods of occult training of the will and imagination. The training consists of three parts: the creation of *tulpas* (magical creatures) through concentrated and directed imagination, then their evocation and, lastly, the freeing of consciousness from their hold on it by an act of knowledge which destroys them—through which it is realised that they are only a creation of the imagination, and therefore illusory. The aim of this training is therefore to arrive at disbelief in demons *after having created them* through the force of imagination and having confronted their terrifying apparitions with intrepidity. This is what Alexandra David-Neel, who wrote with a deep knowledge of the subject, said about it:

I have questioned several lamas on this subject (of incredulity). "Incredulity comes sometimes," answered a *geshes* (graduate) from Derge (a town in Kham, Eastern Tibet). "Indeed, it is one of the ultimate objects of the mystic masters, but if the disciple reaches this state of mind before the proper time he misses something which these exercises are designed to develop, that is fearlessness. Moreover, the teachers do not approve of simple incredulity, they deem it contrary to truth. The disciple must understand that gods and demons do really exist for those who believe in their existence, and that they are possessed with the power of benefitting or harming those who worship or fear them. However, very few reach incredulity in the early part of their

training. Most novices actually *see* frightful apparitions. . ."
 . . .I had the opportunity of talking with a *gomchen* of Ga
 (Eastern Tibet) called Kushog Wanchen about sudden deaths
 which occurred while calling up demons. This lama did not ap-
 pear inclined towards superstition and I thought he would agree
 with my opinion on this matter. "Those who died were killed
 by fear. Their visions were the creations of their own imagina-
 tion. He who does not believe in demons would never be killed
 by them." I was much astonished when the anchorites replied
 in a peculiar tone of voice: "According to that it must also follow
 that a man who does not believe in the existence of tigers may
 feel confident that none of them would ever hurt him even if
 he were confronted by such a beast." . . . and he continued: "Vis-
 ualising mental formations, either voluntarily or not, is a most
 mysterious process. What becomes of these creations? May it not
 be that like children born of our flesh, these children of our mind
 separate their lives from ours, escape our control, and play parts
 of their own? Must we not also consider that we are not the on-
 ly ones capable of creating such formations? And if such entities
 (*tulpas*, magical creatures) exist in the world, are we not liable
 to come into touch with them, either by the will of their maker
 or from some other cause? Could one of these causes not be that,
 through our mind or through our material deeds, we bring
 about the conditions in which these entities are capable of
 manifesting some kind of activity?. . .One must know how to
 protect oneself against the tigers to which one has given birth,
 as well as against those that have been begotten by others."
 (Alexandra David-Neel, *Magic and Mystery in Tibet*, London,
 1967, pp. 146-148)

This is what the Tibetan masters thought of magic that creates demons. But the French master of magic, Eliphas Levi, hardly thought otherwise about it.

The devil-making magic which dictated the Grimoire of Pope Honorius, the *Enchiridion* of Leo III, the exorcisms of the Ritual, the verdicts of inquisitors, the suits of Laubardement, the articles of the Veillot brothers, the books of MM. de Falloux, de Montalembert, de Mirville, the magic of sorcerers and of pious persons who are not sorcerers, is truly a thing to be condemned in some and infinitely deplored in others. It is above all to combat these unhappy aberrations of the human mind by their exposure that we have published this book. May it further the holy cause! (*Ritual*, ch, xv).

Man is himself the creator of his heaven and hell, and there are no demons except our own follies. Minds chastised by truth are corrected by that chastisement, and dream no more of disturb-

ing the world (*Ritual*, ch. xxii). (Eliphas Levi, *Transcendental Magic. Its Doctrine and Ritual*; trsl. A. E. Waite, London, 1968, pp. 322-323, 410)

For, in accordance with his experience of them, Eliphas Levi saw in demons—such as incubi and succubi, the Leonard masters presiding over witches' sabbaths, and the demons of the possessed—only creations of human will and imagination, projecting, individually or collectively, their content into the malleable substance of the "astral light" and thus engendering demons, which are therefore engendered in Europe in exactly the same way as the Tibetan *tulpas*!

The art and method of "making idols", which is forbidden by the second of the ten commandments, is ancient and universal. It seems that at all times and everywhere demons have been engendered.

Both Eliphas Levi and the Tibetan masters are in agreement not only with respect to the subjective and psychological origin of demons but also with respect to their *objective* existence. Engendered subjectively, they become forces independent of the subjective consciousness which engendered them. They are, in other words, *magical creations*, for magic is the *objectification* of that which takes its origin in subjective consciousness. Demons that have not arrived at the stage of objectification, i.e. at that of an existence separate from the psychic life of their parents, have a semi-autonomous existence which is designated in modern psychology by the term "psychological complex". C. G. Jung regarded these as parasitic entities, which are to the psychic organism what, for example, cancer is to the physical organism. A psychopathological "complex" is therefore a demon, when it has not come from outside but is engendered by the patient himself. In its state of gestation it is still not born, but it certainly has an almost autonomous life of its own, nourished by the psychic life of its parent. C. G. Jung said on this subject:

It appears as an autonomous formation intruding upon consciousness. . . It is just as if the complex were an autonomous being capable of interfering with the intentions of the ego. Complexes do indeed behave like secondary or partial personalities possessing a mental life of their own. (C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*; trsl. R. F. C. Hull, *The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 11, London, 1958, pp. 13-14)

Now, "an autonomous being capable of interfering with the intentions of the ego" and which "possesses a mental life of its own" is nothing other than what we understand by a "demon".

It is true the "demon complex" still does not act from outside the psychic life of a single individual—it still does not have the "freedom of the city" of the motley and fantastic community of *tulpas* or objective demons, which can sometimes even bruise the victims of their assault with quite real blows, as was the case with St.

Anthony the Great and the holy priest of Ars, for example. The noise from such an assault that everyone hears and the bruise on the body of the victim which everyone sees is no longer purely and simply psychological — it is already objective.

How are demons engendered? As with all generation, that of demons is the result of the cooperation of the male principle and the female principle, i.e. the *will* and the *imagination*, in the case of generation through the psychic life of an individual. A desire that is perverse or contrary to nature, followed by the corresponding imagination, together constitute the act of generation of a demon.

The two personages, the one male and the other female, attached to the pedestal of the central personage of the Card of the fifteenth Arcanum —the Devil —are therefore not the creation or the children of the central personage, as one might be tempted to believe, seeing their small build in comparison with the size of the demon's stature. Rather, on the contrary, it is they who are the parents of the demon and who have become enslaved by their own creation. They represent perverse will and imagination contrary to nature, which have given birth to an androgynous demon, i.e. to a being endowed with desire and imagination, which dominates the forces that engendered it.

With respect to generation effected collectively, the demon — which in this case is known by the term *egregore* — is likewise the product of will and imagination, which in this case are collective. The birth of such an *egregore* in modern times is known to us:

"A spectre is haunting Europe —the spectre of communism"—such is the first phrase of the *Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels of 1848. The *Communist Manifesto* continues:

"All the powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise this spectre: Pope and Czar. Metternich and Guizot, French radicals and German police-spies." (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party*; trsl. S. Moore, London, 1932, p. 8)

Meanwhile, we may add, the spectre has grown in stature and in power. Engendered by the will of the masses, born from the despair following the "industrial revolution" in Europe, nourished by the resentment accumulated amongst the masses through the generations, armed with a dummy intellectuality which is Hegel's dialectic misconstrued — this spectre has grown and continues to make the rounds in Europe, and in other continents. . . Today already one third of mankind is impelled to bow down before this god and to obey it in everything.

What I am saying here concerning the generation of the most imposing modern *egregore* is in perfect accord with Marxist teaching itself. Because for Marxism there is no God or gods — there are only "demons" in the sense of creations of the human will and imagination. This is the fundamental Marxist doctrine of the so-called "ideological superstructure". According to this doctrine it is the economic interest, i.e. *the will*, which creates, i.e. *imagines*, ideologies —religious, philosophical, social

and political. For Marxism all religions are, therefore, only such "ideological superstructures", i.e. formations due to the human will and imagination. Marxism-Leninism itself is only an ideological superstructure, a product of intellectual imagination, on the basis of the will having arranged—or re-arranged—social, political and cultural things in a certain manner. And this method of production of ideological superstructures on the basis of the will is precisely what we understand by the collective generation of a demon or *egregore*.

Now, there is the Word, and there are *egregores* before whom humanity bows down; there is revelation of divine truth, and the manifestation of the will of human beings; there is the cult of God, and that of idols made by man. Is it not a diagnosis and prognosis of the whole history of the human race that at the same time that Moses received the revelation of the Word at the summit of the mountain, the people at the foot of the mountain made and worshipped a golden calf? The Word and idols, revealed truth and "ideological superstructures" of the human will, operate simultaneously in the history of the human race. Has there been a single century when the servants of the Word have not had to confront the worshippers of idols, *egregores*?

The fifteenth Card of the Tarot contains an important warning to all those who take magic seriously: it teaches them the magical Arcanum of the generation of demons, and of the power that the latter have over those who have engendered them.

We who have had experience of the demon or *egregore* in question above, and of the demon engendered by a collective will infatuated with national ambitions and making use of an imagination drawn from the province of biology—the national-socialist demon or *egregore*—*know* from first-hand experience what terrible power resides in our will and imagination, and what responsibility it entails for those who unleash it into the world! How true it is that he who "sows the wind, shall reap the whirlwind" (Hosea ix, 7). . .and what a whirlwind!

We people of the twentieth century know that the "great pests" of our time are the *egregores* of "ideological superstructures", which have cost humanity more life and suffering than the great epidemics of the Middle Ages.

And having this knowledge, is it not time that we said to ourselves: let us be silent. Let us make our arbitrary will and imagination silent; let us impose on them the discipline of silence. Is this not one of the four traditional rules of Hermeticism: to dare, to will, to know, *to be silent*? To be silent is more than to keep things secret; it is more even than to guard oneself from profaning the holy things to which a respectful silence is owed. To be silent is, above all, *the great magical commandment of not engendering demons* through our arbitrary will and imagination; it is the task of silencing arbitrary will and imagination.

Let us resign ourselves, therefore, to the "great work" of contributing constructively to tradition—the spiritual, Christian, Hermetic, scientific tradition. Let us thoroughly immerse ourselves in it, let us study it, let us practise it, lastly, let us cultivate it, i.e. let us work not in order to overthrow but in order to build. Let

us range ourselves amongst the builders of the "great cathedral" of mankind's spiritual tradition — and let us try to contribute to it. May the Holy Scriptures be holy for us; may the Sacraments be sacraments for us; may the hierarchy of spiritual authority be the hierarchy of authority for us; and may the "perennial philosophy" — and also *truly scientific* science — of the past and present have friends in us and should it be the case, respectful collaborators! This is what the commandment *to be silent* entails — the commandment of not engendering demons.

Now, it is always excess owing to *intoxication* of the will and imagination which engenders demons. If—to return to the example cited above—Marx and Engels had simply defended the interests of the industrial workers without having let themselves be carried away by their intoxicated imagination to make statements of universal historical significance, and even cosmic significance, such as the statement that God does not exist, that all religion is only the "opium of the people", that all ideology is only a superstructure on the basis of material interests (and that this has always been so, everywhere), they would have been contributors to tradition. Because care for the rights and well-being of the poor is an integral part of the very essence of tradition—Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu and humanist. Carried away by indignation—not devoid of a nobility of heart—and by the bitterness of disenchantment with the classes in power—not devoid of a foundation in experience—they cast in the same mould God, the bourgeoisie, the Gospels, capitalism, mendicant orders, industrial monopolies, idealistic philosophers, and bankers... and they declared all this, without a second thought, as riff-raff of the history of the human race. There is no doubt that with them it was a matter of an excess—a going beyond the limits of competence and sober and honest knowledge—which they did not in any way doubt, having been carried away by the intoxicating impulse of radicalism, i.e. by a fever of the will and imagination to change everything utterly at a single stroke. And it is this fever of desire to change everything utterly at a single stroke which gave birth to the demon of class hatred, atheism, disdain for the past, and material interest being placed above all else, which is now making the rounds in the world. This demon is being heroically combated at present (1963) by the head of a large communist country, who is doing all that is humanly possible to replace it by a spirit of care for the people and for their well-being—the spirit which underlies the work of the *sober* Marx and Engels, i.e. taken into the framework of tradition, not exceeding either their competence or the limits of their cause itself.

To be silent is the Temperance of the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, opposed to the intoxication whose essence and dangers are revealed by the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot. The inspiration of "Temperance" can be turned into the intoxication of "The Devil". The inspiration aiming at alleviating the lot of the poor and oppressed, and at re-establishing social justice, is able—as was the case with Marx and Engels—to change into the intoxication of radicalism, i.e. to become feverish will and imagination desiring to change everything utterly at a single stroke. This is the relationship between the inspiration of the Angel of the fourteenth Arcanum and the generation of the demon of the fifteenth Arcanum. The

history of the human race supplies us with numerous examples of the transformation of the initial inspiration of Temperance into the subsequent intoxication generating demons.

It is the relationship between the fourteenth Arcanum and the fifteenth which explains how the religion of love was able to give way to the funeral-pyres of the Inquisition, how the idea of hierarchical collaboration within mankind became a caste system (or rather the struggle between the classes), how the scientific method was transformed into materialistic dogma, and how, lastly, the facts of biological evolution were used as a basis for the doctrine of intrinsic inequality between races and the corresponding superiority of certain nations. The list is in no way complete, but it suffices to show the practical significance of the relationship between the fourteenth and fifteenth Arcana of the Tarot. It is the relationship between inspiration and counter-inspiration.

One is in the habit — since the first centuries of the Christian era — of designating this counter-inspiration straight away as the "voice of the flesh", which subsequently promoted the flourishing of the principal dogma of the Manichaeism and Cathar heresy, which declares Nature to be intrinsically bad. However, exact statements to the contrary were not lacking in Christian antiquity. For example, the following is what St. Anthony the Great said, who is, without doubt, an authority of the first order concerning the problem of "demon-flesh":

I think that the body has a natural movement, adapted to it, but which is not produced if the soul does not want it; then only a movement without passion arises in the body. There is also another movement which comes from the nourishment and pleasure the body receives through food and drink. The warmth of blood that is thus provoked excites the body to action. . . And there is another movement, in those who are struggling, which comes from the snares and jealousy of demons. . . *It is known that the body has three kinds of carnal movements. The first is a natural movement, inherent in it. . . the second kind of movement in the body is produced by too abundant food and drink. . . the third movement comes from the evil spirits. . .* (St. Anthony the Great, *Apophthegmata*, xxii; trsl. of italicised text by E. Kadloubovsky and G. E. H. Palmer, *Early Fathers from the Philokalia*, London, 1954, p. 40)

These are, therefore, the principles — expounded with a clarity which leaves nothing to be desired — of traditional asceticism, based on experience and confirmed by the experience of thousands of spiritual seekers, including St. Teresa of Avila and St. Ignatius of Loyola in Spain. . . and Gautama Buddha in India. More than a century before Anthony, Origen said:

We have often said that Christians have had to take up a struggle on two fronts. For the perfect, for those who are like Paul

of Ephesus, as the apostle himself said, ". . . are not contending against flesh and blood, but against Principalities and Powers, against the princes of the world of darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in heavenly places" (Ephesians vi, 12). Lesser ones — those who are not yet perfect — must struggle against flesh and blood; they are still struggling against the vices and weaknesses of the flesh. (Origen, *In libro Jesum Nave*, homily ix, 4; ed. W. A. Baehrens, *Die gnechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten dreiJahrhunderte*, vol. 7, Leipzig, 1921, pp. 349-350)

In other words, beginners have to struggle against the second movement of the body (following St. Anthony's schema) whilst the more advanced have to deal with demons and with hierarchies of the left. The scale of temptation therefore corresponds to that of spiritual advancement: temptation is progressively spiritualised as man becomes more spiritual. The temptations of "Principalities and Powers" (*archai kai exousiai*) which the spiritually advanced have to face are incomparably more subtle than those for a beginner. If one says, "merit necessitates" (*noblesse oblige*), one should add "simplicity protects". This is why Origen gave the following advice:

One should not. . . speak to disciples, at the beginning of their formative period, of profound and secret mysteries; but one should confide to them that which concerns the improvement of habits, the formation of discipline, and the first elements of religious life and simple faith. Such is the milk of the Church; such are the first elements for initial beginners. (Origen, *In libro Judicum*, homily v, 6; ed. Baehrens, pp. 496-497)

It is the law of temperance which is required. Now, the Arcanum of Temperance, the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, represents a guardian Angel who is charged with his office. Origen is of the same opinion as we, and as the unknown author of the Tarot. He said, in fact:

When we begin to come to the cult of God, when we receive the principles of the word of God and of heavenly doctrine, it is the "princes of Israel" who must deliver these beginnings to us. By "princes of Israel" one should, in my opinion, understand the *Angels of Christian people* who, according to the word of the Lord, assist the smallest in the Church and look always upon the face of the Father in heaven. These are they who are "princes", and from whom we must receive the principles. . . (Origen, *In libro Judicum*, homily vi, 1; ed. Baehrens, p. 498)

Origen attributed not only the office of temperance to guardian Angels ("the Angels of Christian people") in conformity with the teaching of the fourteenth Arcanum of the Tarot, but he also taught the principle of the teaching concern-

ing the "liberation of Angels" through man, as found in the preceding Letter. He said, in fact:

But we must not always rely on the Angels to fight for us; they help us only at the beginning, when we ourselves are commencing. With the progress of time, we should arm ourselves for combat. Before we learn to do battle, so that we will consider giving ourselves up to the battles of the Lord, we are succoured by the "princes", by Angels. Initially, we receive the provision of celestial bread. . . as long as we are children, we are nourished by milk; when we begin to hold to the word of Christ, we live as children under the authority of tutors and procurators. But when we have tasted the sacraments of celestial militia, when we have nourished ourselves on the bread of life, listen how the apostolic trumpet invites us to combat! It is with a loud voice that Paul cried to us, saying: "Take the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand the wiles of the devil." He no longer permits us to hide ourselves under the wings of our nurse; he invites us to the fields of battle. "Gird yourself," he says, "with the breastplate of righteousness, and the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and above all the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one" (Ephesians vi, 13-17). (Origen, *In libro Judicum*, homily vi, 2; ed. Baehrens, pp. 498-500)

The same teaching is found twelve centuries later with St. John of the Cross. St. John of the Cross does not grow tired of repeating that the soul who seeks God is called to renounce every created being, above and below, every being—terrestrial and celestial. He summarised this teaching by saying:

This knowledge is referred to by David when he says, "I have watched and am become as the lonely sparrow on the housetop" (*Vigilavi, et factus sum, sicut passer solitarius in tecto* — Psalm 101, 8), that is "I opened the eyes of my understanding, and was raised up above all natural comprehension, lonely, without them, on the housetop, lifted up above all earthly considerations." (St. John of the Cross, *A Spiritual Canticle* xv, 4; transl. D. Lewis, London, 1909, p. 122)

This solitude and isolation is the consequence that one has ceased to live "like a child under the authority of tutors and procurators", as Origen expresses it, and that one has attained a mature spiritual age. The change which then takes place is characterised by St. John of the Cross in the following way:

... it is at the time they (i.e. beginners) are going about their spiritual exercises with delight and satisfaction, when in their

opinion the sun of divine favour is shining most brightly on them, that God darkens all this light and closes the door and spring of the sweet spiritual water they were tasting as often and as long as they desired. For since they were weak and tender, no door was closed to them, as St. John says in the Apocalypse (Rev. iii, 8). God now leaves them in such darkness that they do not know which way to turn in their discursive imaginings; they cannot advance a step in meditation, as they used to, now that the interior sensory faculties are engulfed in this night. He leaves them in such dryness that they not only fail to receive satisfaction and pleasure from their spiritual exercises and works, as they formerly did, but also find these exercises distasteful and bitter. As I said, when God sees that they have grown a little, he weans them from the sweet breast so that they might be strengthened, lays aside their swaddling bands, and puts them down from his arms that they may grow accustomed to walking by themselves. (St. John of the Cross, *The Dark Night* I, viii, 3; trsl. K. Kavanaugh and O. Rodriguez in *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, London, 1966, p. 312)

Let us add: to walk by themselves in order to become, in the progress of time, as Origen said, combatants in the ranks of the militia of God.

This progress is accompanied by more and more subtle temptations. The temptations of the "vices and weaknesses of the flesh" are therefore followed by the assaults of artificial demons, engendered by others or engendered collectively, which subsequently give way to more subtle temptations whose authors are entities of the fallen hierarchies. Lastly, on the threshold of the All—God himself—there is the last temptation, by way of the void: the "dark night of the soul", of which St. John of the Cross speaks, signifying simultaneously union with God or, rather, the despair of nothing—complete and supreme nihilism.

For this is the truth of which St. Anthony the Great spoke:

No one, if he is not tempted, will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. For, take away the temptations and no one is saved. (St. Anthony the Great, *Apophthegmata*, v)

This law is of such universality that Jesus Christ, also, had to face three temptations in the desert after the manifestation of the Holy Trinity at the time of the Baptism in the Jordan. The ladder of perfection therefore entails that of temptation. And just as the former signifies progress from the gross to the subtle, so does the latter signify an analogous progress. In other words, inspiration is followed or accompanied by counter-inspiration.

How, therefore, does one distinguish one from the other? What are the criteria by which one must abide in order to be able to distinguish inspiration from counter-inspiration?

The following are answers given by the most experienced masters of spiritual practice:

St. Anthony the Great:

... it is quite possible to tell the difference between the good and the bad when God grants it. *A vision of the holy ones is not turbulent. . . it comes so quietly and gently that instantly joy and gladness and courage arise in the soul..* And the thoughts of the soul remain untroubled and unruffled, so that in its own bright transparency it is able to behold those who appear... Such, then, is the vision of the holy ones. *On the other hand, the attack and appearance of the evil ones is full of confusion, accompanied by crashing, roaring, and shouting: it could well be the tumult produced by rude boys and robbers. This at once begets terror in the soul, disturbance and confusion of thoughts, dejection, hatred of ascetics, indifference, sadness, remembrance of kinsfolk, and fear of death; and then a desire for evil, a disdain for virtue, and a complete subversion of character. When, therefore, you have a vision (or experience some inspiration*) and are afraid, if then the fear is taken from you immediately and in its place comes ineffable joy and contentment; and courage and recovery of strength and calmness of thought and the other things I have mentioned, and stout-heartedness, too, and love of God, then be of good cheer and pray—for your joy and your soul's tranquility betoken the holiness of Him who is present. . .* But when you have certain visions, and confusion overtakes you and there is tumult from without and earthly apparitions and threats of death and all the things I have mentioned, then know that the visit is from the wicked. (St. Athanasius, *The Life of Saint Anthony*, trsl. R. T. Meyer, Westminster, 1950, pp.49-51)

St. Teresa of Avila:

Locutions (inspired*) that come from the devil not only lead to no good, but leave bad effects behind them. These I have experienced, though only on two or three occasions, and each time I have had an immediate warning from the Lord that they came from the devil. *Not only is the soul left in great dryness, but there is also a certain disquiet, such as I have experienced on many other occasions when the Lord has allowed me to be subjected to great temptations and spiritual trials of various sorts. But although this disquiet torments me very often, as I shall say later, it is not easy to know where it comes from. The soul seems to resist the experience and is upset and afflicted without*

*Author's note.

knowing why. for what is actually said is not evil but good. . The pleasures and joys which the devil bestows differ greatly. I believe, from those which come from God. . . After visions of the kind that come from the devil, *the sou/is not left in a calm state, but in a kind of bewilderment and most perturbed*. . . When the devil speaks to us, all good things seem to be hidden from the soul and to flee from it; it becomes restless and touchy, and suffers nothing but bad effects. It may seem to have good desires, but they are not strong; and the humility that remains behind is false, excitable, and lacking in tranquility. (*The Life of St. Teresa of Avila*; trsl. J. M. Cohen, London, 1957, pp. 177-179)

Now let us return to the first point. These communications may come either from the inferior or the superior part of the soul, or from without, which does not prevent their originating from God. The most certain signs of their being divine are in my opinion these: *The first* and truest is the *power and authority* they carry with them and their operation (i.e. they are communications and works at one and the same time)... I will explain myself at greater length. A soul is suffering all the sorrow and disquiet I have described: the mind is darkened and dry; but is set at peace, freed from all trouble and filled with light, merely by hearing the words: "*Be not troubled.*" These deliver it from all its pains, although before, if the whole world and all its learned men had united to persuade it (that) there was no cause for grief, it could not, in spite of all their efforts, have got rid of its sadness. . The *second sign* is *a great calm* and a devout and peaceful recollection which dwell in the soul, together with a desire to praise God.. The *third proof* is that these words (interior communications) *do not pass from the memory*. but remain there for a very long time; indeed, some are never forgotten. .. (St. Teresa of Avila, *The Interior Castle* vi, 6-7, 10-11; trsl. by the Benedictines of Stanbrook, revised by B. Zimmerman, London, 1906, pp. 157-159)

St. John of the Cross:

. . .there is a great difference between the visions of God and those of the evil one. For the effect of the latter is not like that of the former: those of Satan *result in dryness of spirit*, in a tendency to self-esteem, to accept and make much of visions; and in no degree whatever do they produce the gentleness of humility, and love of God. Again, the forms of the diabolic visions do not remain impressed on the soul with the sweet clearness of the others, *neither do they endure, yea, rather, are immediately effaced*, except when the soul attaches itself to them: in that case the importance attached to them causes them

to be remembered naturally, but with great dryness of spirit, and without the fruit of humility and love, which issue out of the good visions, whenever they recur to the memory. The effects of these (latter) visions in the soul are quietness, enlightenment, joy like glory, sweetness, pureness, love, humility, inclination, or elevation of the mind to God, sometimes more of one, sometimes more of another. .. (St. John of the Cross, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* II, xxiv, 6-7; transl. D. Lewis, London, 1906, pp. 201-202)

This is the *traditional* doctrine, i.e. based on experience repeated and renewed through the centuries. People of the century of Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz were strongly impressed by *geometry*, because philosophical opinions change, whilst the arguments and conclusions of Euclid and Archimedes remain unalterably valid. Thus, people of the seventeenth century were led to prefer the geometrical mode (*modo geometrico*) of reasoning to all other kinds of reasoning. However, there exists still something else of as unalterable validity and universality as the geometrical method: this is authentic spiritual experience. As we see from the above quotations from spiritual masters of the fourth and sixteenth centuries, authentic spiritual experience remains the same across the ages just as geometrical reasoning remained the same across the ages—until Lobachevsky.

It is this immutable reality of spiritual experience which is the foundation and essence of *Hermeticism*, i.e. of knowledge founded on first-hand experience of spiritual reality across the ages. Hermeticism is therefore not limited to the spokesmen for so-called Hermetic orders, brotherhoods or societies, but it also includes all those who have had something to say with real knowledge of spiritual reality and of the path towards this reality—all those, in other words, who *bear witness* to the mysticism, gnosis and magic whose unity is Hermeticism. For this reason we have many more masters from whom we are able to learn—and, in fact, from whom we should learn—than are contained in the list of authors of so-called authorities: Cabbalists, Rosicrucians, esotericists, Theosophists, occultists, etc. In any case, this was really the point of view of Papus, Sedir, Marc Haven and others—all of whom belonged to orders, fraternities and societies for initiation—when they recognised in Maitre Philip of Lyons their master, although not only did he not belong to any organisation for initiation but also he considered them more or less superfluous. And if this did not prevent them in any way from rallying around Maitre Philip of Lyons, it was because they believed—not without reason, moreover—to have found a master in him, i.e. an authentic witness to spiritual reality, to Hermeticism understood in exactly the same sense as we understand it in these Letters: as the *tradition of authentic spiritual experience* across the ages, which has the aspects named "mysticism", "gnosis" and "magic".

Such was also the point of view of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin who, being a member of the initiation order of Martinez de Pasqually, did not hesitate to act in the same way with regard to the shoemaker of Goerlitz, Jacob Boehme, as Papus and his friends acted with regard to Maitre Philip of Lyons.

Now, I know very well that neither St. Anthony the Great, nor St. Teresa of Avila, nor St. John of the Cross were members of any initiation organisation — that, therefore, they were not representatives of the so-called initiation tradition — but, as they are authentic witnesses to spiritual reality, I take the same attitude towards them as Papus and his friends took with regard to Maitre Philip of Lyons or that Saint-Martin took with regard to Jacob Boehme. For Hermeticism is in no way exclusiveness, but *depth*. Therefore all that which is deep belongs to it. It is not "legitimate initiation" which constitutes the chain—or rather the flow—of the tradition — but rather the *niveau* and *authenticity* of spiritual experience and the *depth* of thought that it comprises. Therefore it is initiation *per se* which constitutes the Hermetic tradition across the ages, and not the transmission of initiation by way of rituals and formulae. If the tradition depended only on the latter, it would already long ago have been either extinguished or certainly lost in the jungle of quarrels over rights and legitimacy. Now, it is he who *knows from first-hand experience* who represents the tradition, and it is his authentic knowledge which is his legitimacy. If this were not so, the old argument "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" would have rendered the tradition sterile by reducing it to the niveau of the scribes and Pharisees, i.e. to the niveau of erudition and rules. Let us add in parentheses that the one who advanced this argument historically, Nathanael, had the moral courage not to attribute to it the role of a decisive criterion, since he followed the invitation from Philip: "Come and see" (John i, 46). This had the consequence that he said, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" and that he heard the words of the Master, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven open and the Angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man" (John i, 49-51). This is the formula of the essence of the tradition: *to see heaven open and the Angels of God ascending and descending*.

Now, all those who have seen "heaven open and the Angels of God ascending and descending" belong to the tradition and represent the tradition, including St. Anthony the Great, St. Teresa of Avila and St. John of the Cross, to mention only those witnesses spoken of in this Letter.

Do you know, dear Unknown Friend, who is an initiate of the first order in the tradition of Christian Hermeticism? This is St. Francis of Assisi, the *poverello* without erudition and without rules—a star of the first order in the heaven of mysticism, gnosis and magic! For not only did he see heaven open and the Angels of God ascending and descending, but also he was rendered at one accord with the Initiator himself of all authentic initiations in the act of initiation accomplished by the Seraphim from above.

But let us return to the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot. . . Until now we have treated it from the point of view of the generation of "artificial demons"—individual generation and collective generation. Concerning the latter, i.e. the generation of *egregores*, the following is an important point that still needs to be specified:

Occult literature—above all in France—of the nineteenth and twentieth cen-

turies advances the thesis (which has become almost classical, and seems to be generally accepted) that as well as bad *egregores* good ones can equally well be engendered through collective will and imagination, i.e. "good demons" are engendered in exactly the same way as evil ones. According to this thesis, all depends on the generating will and imagination: if they are good, they engender positive *egregores*; if they are bad, they engender negative *egregores*. There are, according to this thesis, good "artificial demons" as well as bad ones—just as there are good and bad thoughts.

From a practical point of view this thesis gives rise to a practice where one endeavours to collectively create an *egregore* for this special purpose: as a "group spirit" or spirit of the fraternity concerned. This *egregore* once created, it is believed that one is able to rely on it and that one has an efficacious magical ally in it. It is believed that every group has an active "group spirit" which renders it influential with regard to the outside world as well as with regard to its members. It is believed that real and effective traditions are, in the last analysis, only strong and well-nourished *egregores*, which live and act across the ages. Not only do all initiation orders and fraternities owe their life and influence to their *egregores*, but it is believed that churches do also. Therefore, Catholicism is believed to be an *egregore* generated by the collective will and imagination of believers. . . and similarly so with the eastern Orthodox Church, and with Lamaism, etc.

This is the thesis and its main consequence in practice. The exactness that I think I must give concerning this point amounts to the counter-thesis that *good "artificial demons" do not exist*, i.e. one cannot engender positive *egregores*. The reasons in support of this are as follows:

In order to engender a psychic or "astral" entity, it is necessary that the psychic and mental energy that you produce to this effect coagulates, i.e. *enfolds*. A form is not produced by *radiation*; it is produced only by coagulation or *enfolding*. Now, good only radiates; it does not at all enfold. It is always evil which does this.

You cannot engender a "demon of pure love" or an "*egregore* of universal love" because the quality of will and imagination required to this end is not held together as a formation centred in itself, but forms an alliance—one of "radiating movement"—with the activity of the world of spiritual hierarchies. The psychic and mental energy of love would never give rise to the formation of an individualised psychic or "astral" entity; it would immediately put itself wholly at the disposal of the celestial hierarchies, saints, and God. Therefore, although one can certainly engender demons, one cannot engender artificial Angels.

If there are *egregores* of initiation orders and religious—and other—communities, they are always negative. The *egregore* of Catholicism, for example, is its parasitic double (the existence of which it would be futile to deny), which manifests itself as fanaticism, cruelty, "diplomatic wisdom" and excessive pretensions. But in so far as the *positive* spirits of communities are concerned, they are never *egregores*, but rather they are entities from the ten hierarchies (ten, because the tenth hierarchy—that of mankind—is included here). It is therefore a human soul,

an Angel or an Archangel who assumes responsibility for the direction of a human community in a positive sense. Thus, it is not at all an *egregore* but rather St. Francis himself who is the spiritual director of the Franciscan order. It is similarly so for the Church. Its guiding spirit is Jesus Christ.

Nations are under the direction of Archangels, in so far as it is a matter of their true mission and spiritual progress. There are, at the same time, *egregores* or demons engendered by the collective will and imagination of nations. The "French cock" therefore disputes with the "Archangel of memory" over the direction of the French nation. And it is the same with other nations.

One could object: if the good—psychic and mental energy of good—does not accumulate, how can one explain miracles or the magical action of certain "holy places", statues, icons and relics, if not by the fact that they are "magnetised" by the faith, i.e. by the will and imagination, of believers?

Holy places, miraculous relics, statues and icons, are not depots for the psychic and mental energy of pilgrims and other believers, but rather places or objects where "heaven opens and Angels are able to ascend and descend". They are points of departure for spiritual radiation. This radiation certainly presupposes faith on the part of the believers in order to be effective, but it is not so that the "energy" which they radiate is drawn out from the believers. The faith of the latter is simply that which renders them *susceptible* to the healing and illuminating force which radiates from these places or objects, but it is not the source of this force.

Therefore, one can certainly say that relics, etc., are "magnetised"—long ago and by someone—in the sense that they have become doors, windows or window-frames, so to say, open to the heavens and allowing its activity to enter. But they are not "magnetised" by believers in the sense of being accumulators of fluid emanated by believers and constituting the active agent in subsequent healings, conversions and illuminations. The law of relics, etc., is that the more one takes from them, the more force they radiate, whilst the law of things magnetised fluidically is that of an inverse ratio between the energy deposited and the energy consumed. The magnetiser knows very well that he cannot go beyond a certain level in the consumption of his vital fluid without risk to his health and his life—his vital fluid being regulated by the law of quantity: the more that is consumed, the less remains. The saint, however, does not heal by giving his vital fluid to the sick person; he heals him *by taking* the latter's sickness upon himself and by raising it within himself as an offering ("host") to heaven.

It is similarly *so* with talismen and relics. Talismen are depots of magical energy; they are under the law of quantity. In contrast, relics are windows open to heaven; they are under the law of quality, i.e. the more energy they give out, the more they become capable of giving out. They are inexhaustible as sources of energy. They are not depots for, or accumulators of, energy; rather, they are generators or sources of energy.

Consecrated water, for example, does not "lock up" the blessing—or the force of will and imagination of the priest who blessed it—but the blessing "hovers"

above it. It re-establishes — through the sacred magic of analogy put into practice — the primordial relationship which existed between water and the spirit of God on the first day of creation, when "the spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (Genesis i, 2). Therefore, consecrated water is not water which has become a depot for the beneficial force of consecration, but rather it has been rendered susceptible to the presence of heaven. And a few drops of it are very effective for chasing demons away, as borne out by authentic witnesses across the centuries.

Now, here we arrive at an important question: Once artificial demons are generated, how does one combat them, and how does one protect oneself and rid oneself of them?

Firstly, how does one combat them? Good does not combat evil in the sense of destructive action. It "combats" it by the sole fact of its *presence*. Just as darkness gives way to the presence of light, so does evil give way before the presence of good.

Modern depth psychology has discovered and put into practice the therapeutic principle of bringing unconscious complexes to the light of consciousness. Because—so it affirms—the light of consciousness renders the obsessional complex not only visible but also impotent. This important discovery of modern psychology is in complete accord with the spiritual reality of the "struggle" of the celestial hierarchies against evil. Because this "struggle", also, amounts to their presence alone, i.e. to bringing evil to the light of day.

Light drives out darkness. This simple truth is the practical key to the problem of how to combat demons. A demon perceived, i.e. on whom the light of consciousness is thrown, is already a demon rendered impotent. This is why the desert fathers and other solitary saints had so much experience with demons. They cast their light on them. And they did so as representatives of human consciousness in general, for whoever withdraws from the world becomes representative of the world; he becomes a "son of man". And being a "son of man" the solitary saint attracted the demons haunting the subconscious of mankind, making them *appear*, i.e. bringing them to the light of consciousness and thus rendering them impotent. Whilst St. Athanasius the Great struggled against human errors and depravations in the daylight of his public life as bishop of Alexandria, his friend and brother, St. Anthony the Great, in the solitude of the Egyptian desert, struggled against the demons whose doings in the darkness of the subconscious were stirring up these very errors and depravations.

The famous "temptations" of St. Anthony were not, truth to tell, only temptations where it was a matter of the salvation and progress of his soul, but rather they were, in the first place, *acts of healing* the humanity of his time from demoniacal obsession. They were acts of sacred magic, bringing demons to the light of consciousness illumined from above, through which they were reduced to impotence. St. Anthony drew demons from darkness to the light of the consciousness of the "son of man". *He rendered them visible, and thus impotent.*

A demon rendered impotent is a deflated balloon. It is thus that certain demons engendered collectively in the Middle Ages became purely abstract and fell into

forgetfulness — which was the lot, for example, of the famous demoniacal personage known by the name of "master Leonard" or the "goat of the sabbath". He disappeared from one day to the next thanks to a courageous and pure soul who deflated him.

Artificial demons, brought to the light of day and resisted, are dissipated. They disappear. With respect to "natural demons", i.e. entities of the hierarchies of the left, this is not so. The demon, for example, who loved Sarah, the daughter of Raguel, and who killed her suitors "fled through the air to Egypt. Raphael pursued him there, and bound and shackled him at once" (Tobit viii, 3). according to the Jerusalem Bible, and ". . . was overtaken by the Angel Raphael in the waste lands of Upper Egypt, and there held prisoner" (*tunc Raphael' Angelus apprehendit daemonium, et religavit illud in deserto superioris Aegypti, Liber Tobiae viii, 3*), according to the Vulgate.

Here it is not a question of the annihilation of the demon, but rather of changing its field of activity and the place—or, rather, mode—of its existence. The vanquished demon in the story of Tobias (which is not generally found in the Protestant Bible) was forced by the Archangel Raphael to leave the country of his victim or protegee, and to take up "exile" in Egypt and to remain there. It was the *presence* of the Archangel Raphael — made possible by prayer and by the ritual carried out by Tobias during the three wedding nights—which forced the demon to withdraw and to go to Egypt.

Let us now proceed to the second part of our question: How does one protect oneself and rid oneself of demons? It follows from the foregoing that clarity of thought and tightness of moral attitude are both necessary—and also sufficient—in order to supply the light which renders demons impotent. Nevertheless, one needs rest—time during which one is left in peace by demons, i.e. time during which they are *absent*.

In order to assure this, one has to resort to sacred magic. Tradition, centuries of experience, teaches us what is necessary in order to protect oneself from the approach of demons—or, if one senses them approaching, what to do in order to drive them away—and gives the following practical advice: make the sign of the Cross towards the north, south, east and west, each time saying the first two verses of Psalm 68 (from David):

Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered;
 let those who hate him flee before him!
 As smoke is driven away, so drive them away;
 as wax melts before fire.
 let the wicked perish before God!

And here is further advice, as simple and as effective as the preceding: if one senses depression or any other sign of approach of a demon or demons, one spits three times to the left and crosses oneself.

These two procedures have been tried across the centuries and, I repeat, are very effective. They are so above all with regard to artificial demons. With respect to entities of the hierarchies of the left, it is not so simple to protect oneself against them. For the formula "Let God arise, let his enemies be scattered..." does not apply, truth to tell, to entities of the hierarchies of the left, because they are not enemies of God and also because they are not to be dissipated. In law one cannot win a cause simply by driving the attorney away. One must convince him of the innocence of the accused. Only then will he become silent and leave the latter in peace. It is the same with entities of the hierarchies of the left — hierarchies of "strict justice" as they are designated (with good reason) in the Cabbala. They have their joint functions as attorney or agents of the attorney, police, and witnesses for the prosecution. Imagine to yourself a law department whose agents are occupied not only with establishing the facts of crimes committed but also —and above all —with putting potential criminals to the test by setting them in conditions favourable for crime, i.e. by submitting them to *temptations*. Such is, in fact, the activity of entities of hierarchies of the left towards mankind. The story of Job supplies us with a renowned example of this, where Satan, who is present amongst the sons of God, says to God concerning Job: "Does Job fear God for naught? Hast thou not put a hedge about him and his house and all that he has, on every side? Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his possessions have increased in the land. But put forth thy hand now, and touch all that he has, and he will curse thee to thy face" (Job i, 9-11)- And with permission obtained, Satan puts Job to the test.

Thus, Satan does not accuse Job of sin committed but of a *potential sin*. And he sets to work so as to actualise it. They are "laboratory experiments", so to say, that he makes with Job in order to prove his prosecution thesis. Who needs them? God? No, because God is too noble and too generous a friend, and too tender a Father, to put his friends and children to the test. Moreover, God does not need an experimental verification of his statement made with certainty: "There is none like Job on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil" (Job i, 8). The one who needs to test is therefore Satan himself—and, perhaps, some of the "sons of God" present at the dialogue who could have been impressed by the accusation advanced by Satan.

Now, no magical means would have sufficed in Job's case to protect him against Satan, and to drive Satan away. Job had to endure to *convince* Satan of the futility of his design to get him to curse God.

Entities of the hierarchies of the left must therefore be convinced during the course of real testing that they are wrong. There is no other means of making them go away. It was the same in the case of Tobias and the demon Asmodeus. Tobias had proved, having spent three nights in the wedding chamber with his fiancée in prayer, that he was not one of those "such as go about their marrying with all thought of God shut out of their hearts and minds, wholly intent on their lust, as if they were horse or mule, brutes without reason" (Tobias vi, 17—Vulgate).

Having done so, the Archangel Raphael made the demon leave and go to Egypt. The demon was therefore vanquished by the demonstration of the fact that Tobias was not like the seven preceding suitors for Sarah's hand. The demon who "loved" Sarah wanted to protect her against a marriage that he believed would be unworthy of her. Tobias proved that he was a husband worthy of her. Without this, the heart and liver of the fish alone would not have sufficed to make the demon give up his place as Sarah's protector to the Archangel Raphael and Tobias.

These examples—Job's "Satan" and Tobias' demon—are in themselves sufficient to understand the nature of the entities of hierarchies of the left and the way in which they operate, and likewise show how one struggles against them. They are critical spirits, i.e. prosecutors, and one can vanquish them only by convincing them—under "laboratory conditions", so to say—that the accusation lacks foundation, which is exceptional and difficult. For their accusation is usually the result of work done with indefatigable zeal, and with a very lucid and very well informed intelligence—save for the intimate human domain of moral conscience, which is not accessible to them. And it is precisely the intimate domain of moral conscience from whence the decisive factor can arise which can turn the accusation to the advantage of the accused. Because one is "righteous" and "holy" only if good *and evil* fall into agreement that it is so. This is why the procedure with an *advocatus diaboli* (devil's advocate) is not only allowed but also is required preceding the declaration of a new saint by the Church.

Concerning their function as prosecutor, entities of the hierarchies of the left fulfill it in a number of quite different ways. Some do it in the tragic sense of having to do what they no longer want to do and they no longer believe; others do it with fierce conviction and passionate indignation; there are also entities from the hierarchies of the left who accuse by making use of *ridicule*—*farce*—as a means of demonstrating their prosecuting thesis. An entity belonging to this latter category is known in the western world. This is Mephistopheles, whose portrait Goethe painted with astonishing exactness. As he is generally known—just as are Job's "Satan" and Tobias' demon—one can, without going beyond the limits of discretion in question (cf. the beginning of this Letter), add the example of Mephistopheles to those of the "Satan" of Job and the demon of Tobias.

The ridicule which Mephistopheles makes use of has a serious foundation. It is primarily human pretension and snobbery that he turns into ridicule. Here is an example of this:

A journalist, disenchanted with everything, and who was able to allow himself this luxury, retired with his wife from the vanity of the world and lived in a villa on a small island near Great Britain. As a good journalist with lots of experience, he took nothing for definite and he did not deny anything definitely.

He lived simply from breakfast to lunch, from lunch to five o'clock tea, and from tea to supper. But something extraordinary happened to him one day. He felt a sudden desire to take some paper and write. He did this. And he produced from inner dictation a series of manuscripts with drawings — he who had never drawn—whose author declared himself to be none other than Osiris himself, from ancient Egypt, and who now seized the opportunity to recount frankly and in detail what he knew of ancient wisdom and religion in the guise of a message to mankind of the twentieth century. One reads there, expounded with pompous simplicity, the history of the struggle between the good and the wicked, and how the wickedness of the latter had its punishment in the guise of the Atlantean catastrophe. One reads there details of the true cult celebrated in the temples of Osiris, and one sees there drawings of the candelabras, vases and other cult objects, and also portraits of Osiris and other important personages of pre-historic antiquity, who are all as alike as peas. The beneficiary of this prodigious revelation and his wife, enamoured by the grandeur of the revelation and the person of the revelator, looked at the work admiringly with a view to bearing the unheard of revelation to the knowledge of the whole of mankind. And this is how a special publishing house put before the world one volume after another of the revelation of Osiris. . .

This story that I have recounted is true; the publishing house is real; the volumes that it has put out are to be found, in fact, in public libraries in England; and there is, without doubt, a revelation and a revelator. Only the revelator is not Osiris but . . . Mephistopheles; and the whole revelation is only a farce made by him for the . . . credulous? no—for spiritual snobs. For, whoever the author of this "revelation" may be—you, dear Unknown Friend, not being obliged to believe me on my word alone—whoever the author may be, he actually said:

You who hold for very little the scientific endeavour, the world of thought from Plato to Kant, the treasures of authentic witness of the great mystics, the riches of the Hermetic tradition and, lastly, the Holy Scripture, the sacraments, the blood and sweat of Gethsemane, the Cross of Calvary, the Resurrection. . . take, therefore, what you desire—these volumes of banalities presented in a pompous manner and communicated to you, as you would wish, in an extraordinary way.

This is an example of Mephistophelian accusation against those who do not seek the *truth* as such, but rather extraordinary circumstances of revelation . . . no matter

what. I would still add to this example of Mephistophelian dupery that, with a little Tightness of thought and moral judgement, it is an easy thing to avoid becoming a victim of it.

I believe, dear Unknown Friend, that the preceding has portrayed with sufficient clarity: firstly, the difference between on the one hand demons engendered artificially through human will and imagination and on the other hand entities of the hierarchies of the left; and secondly, that the fifteenth Arcanum of the Tarot is that of the generation and the enslaving role of so-called "artificial demons"—the Tibetan *tulpas*. It is a warning which says that we certainly have the force to generate demons but that the use of this force will render the generator a slave of the generated.

There still remains one last question for us: Were all of the pagan gods always demons—collectively engendered *egregores*? Is paganism in general simply a cult of demons?

Before answering this question, one has to distinguish between the "paganism" of the philosophers and initiates into the mysteries, symbolic and mythological "paganism", naturalistic "paganism" and, lastly, demoniacal "paganism".

In other words, one has to distinguish firstly between the "paganism" of Hermes Trismegistus, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, etc., and the "paganism" of Homer and Hesiod. Then one must distinguish between the latter and the totality of cults of the sun, moon, stars, fire, air, water and earth. And, lastly, one has to distinguish between the latter and the totality of cults of "divinities" engendered by perverse collective imagination and will—the cults of *egregores*, pure and simple.

It would be an error and a grave injustice to consider the four "paganisms" as the same thing, e.g. to see a priest of Moloch sacrificing human beings as a representative of the same cause as Plato. It would be a similar error to see the same "light" in the funeral-pyres of the Inquisition and the lighted lamps of the Resurrection festival—or even to see Mahatma Gandhi and a thug, a strangler for the glory of the goddess Kali, as representatives of the same cause, namely that of Hindu "paganism".

With this distinction made, one can say that the "pagan" initiates and philosophers knew of the unique God—the creator and supreme Good of the world. The Bhagavad-Gita, the books of Hermes Trismegistus, Plato, Plutarch, Plotinus and many other ancient sources prove this beyond any shadow of a doubt. The difference between the religion of the so-called "pagan" initiates and philosophers and that of Moses is simply the fact that the latter made monotheism a *popular religion*, whilst the former reserved it for the elite, for the spiritual aristocracy—although they were often fairly numerous.

With respect to the cult of the "gods" and the iconolatry that this cult entailed, the "pagan" initiates and philosophers saw in it the practice of *theurgy*, i.e. that of intercourse with entities of the celestial hierarchies either by raising themselves to them, or by rendering possible their descent and *presence* on earth—in the

sanctuaries or temples or elsewhere. Hermes Trismegistus and Iamblichus treat this subject with sufficient clarity. Thus Iamblichus says:

They (i.e. the Egyptians) also establish a pure intellect above the world, and one impartial intellect in the whole world, and another which is distributed into all the spheres. And these things they do not survey by mere reason alone, but through the sacerdotal theurgy, they announce that they are able to ascend to more elevated and universal essences, and to those that are established above Fate, viz. to God and the Demiurgus; neither employing matter, nor assuming any other thing besides, except the observation of a suitable time. This deific and anagogic path Hermes, indeed, narrated. . . (*De mysteriis* viii, 4-5). Again. . . such Gods as are truly divinities, are alone the givers of good; alone associate with good men, and with those that are purified by the sacerdotal art, and from these amputate all vice, and every passion. When these, also, impart their light, that which is evil, and at the same time demoniacal, vanishes from before more excellent natures, in the same manner as darkness when light is present; nor is it able to disturb theurgists in the smallest degree, who receive from this light every virtue, obtain worthy manners, become orderly and elegant in their actions, are liberated from passions, and purified from every disorderly motion, and from atheistical and unholy conduct (*De mysteriis* iii, 31). (Iamblichus, *De mysteriis*; trsl. T. Taylor, *Iamblichus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians*, London, 1968, pp. 199, 306)

These are the principal traits of the theurgy of the "paganism" of the initiates and philosophers. You can also find important details in Plutarch's *De hide et Osiride* 77, in Plotinus' *Enneads* iv, 3,11, in Hermes Trismegistus' *Asclepius* 25-24, 37 and in Proclus' *De sacrificio et magia* (= *The Hieratic Art*). It goes without saying that the "paganism" of the initiates and sages, when not degenerated, had nothing to do with the cult of collectively engendered demons.

The "paganism" of the poets—symbolic and mythological paganism—was, in so far as it was not a symbolic version of the wisdom and magic (theurgy) of the mysteries, a universal *humanism*. Its "gods" were, truth to tell, human personages—heroes and heroines, divinised or poerised, who were prototypes of the development of the *human personality*, i.e. planetary and zodiacal types. Thus Jupiter, Juno, Mars, Venus, Mercury, Diana, Apollo, etc., were not at all demons, but leading prototypes of the development of the human personality who, in their turn, corresponded to cosmic—planetary and zodiacal—principles.

Concerning the third form of "paganism"—"naturalistic paganism"—it was "cosmolatry", i.e. it did not go beyond the limits of Nature—like natural science today. It was, therefore, "neutral" from the point of view both of the true spiritual

world and of the demons. It accepted the latter as a *fact* with which it had to come to terms. But in bowing before Nature it did not engender demons, because this would be contrary to Nature—for the generation of demons presupposes a *perverse* will and imagination.

There remains, lastly, the fourth form of "paganism"—that of the worship of collectively engendered demons. This form of paganism, which is due to the degeneration of the other three forms—and above all of "naturalistic paganism"—is the only form of paganism where demons were engendered, worshipped and obeyed, and which led to the whole of paganism being renamed unjustly and calumniously as the "demoniacal religion". The Church fathers, who—with a few exceptions—treated it as such, had in truth to do above all with degenerate paganism and, consequently, were right in seeing in the popular pagan cult of their time either the cult of demons or the fables of poets. But those amongst them such as Clement of Alexandria, Origen, St. Augustine, and Synesius, who had knowledge of the paganism of the initiates and philosophers (which was the pure essence of paganism as such), spoke of what "all men possess as a healthy anticipation of the moral doctrine". As Origen expressed it:

There is. . . nothing amazing about it if the same God has implanted in the souls of all men the truths which He taught through the prophets and the Saviour. (Origen, *Contra Celsum* i. 4; trsl. H. Chadwick, Cambridge, 1953, pp. 8-9)

This is something quite different from paganism as the worship of demons.

With respect to Christian Hermeticism, it cannot see otherwise than that as the coming of Jesus Christ was an event of universal significance, it had its universal prepararion, i.e. that just as the prophets of Israel until John the Baptist prepared the coming of Jesus Christ in the flesh, so did the initiates, sages and righteous men of the whole world prepare the world for his Word and his Spirit. The incarnated Logos was awaited everywhere wherever one suffered, died, believed, hoped, loved. . . The Jews prepared for the Incarnation; the pagans prepared themselves to recognise the Logos. Thus Christianity had its precursors everywhere—the "choir" of precursors included not only the prophets of Israel, but also the initiates and sages of paganism.