





THE SACRIFICE

The Sacrifice is a most misunderstood subject. When we read about Sacrifice in a religious or magical context, it almost invariably appears in the form of blood offering or imbecile life-taking rituals which, although they undeniably constitute Sacrifice, correspond only to the lowest resonance of the concept. It is true that both animal and human Sacrifice – unfortunately – still exists throughout the world today, even in a non-religious and non-magical form, but they will not be promoted nor even be given time and attention here. The true Sacrifice, in its most sublime form, either in religious or magical context, refers to atonement, the reconciliation of divinity and humanity, of Ego and Id, and to the personal surrendering through acts of inner and outer reverence. Sacrifice, above all Self-Sacrifice, means resignation, abandonment to divine providence and the acceptance of a transitory yet meaningful loss in return for a higher power gain. Self-Sacrifice in the present context, however, should not be understood as a devotional, voluntary belief in something, but as a proclamation of our own “enlightenable” nature.

Self-Sacrifice is about renunciation, giving up the world in its entirety and achieving freedom from lust, craving and desire. This is attained by the continuous realization that suffering is inseparable from desire, the vehicle of the Ego, and thus by inclining the Will to abnegation. In the beginning, this paradigm shift can be felt as the transition from pleasure to pain and from wealth to impoverishment, but this is merely its exoteric appearance; it is only the way that Ego perceives it. Esoterically, it means to change the focus of Will from the unnatural, vulgar actions and inclinations, which can only be described with reference to each other, to a dignified sense of frith and a conscious control of one’s behaviour. Frith means not just a general state of peace, but also a reconciliation with the environment and with the innate characteristics of social relationships that tends to generate peace, harmony and safekeeping.

Self-Sacrifice involves the abdication of actions and personal desires, and of secondary needs, in favour of more basic, greater needs, and in favour of the needs of others; not necessarily strangers, but especially the closest ones, like one’s spouse and children, friends and significant others. Actions can be divided in three

types: natural, tending towards liberation and enlightenment; artificial, tending towards the preservation of confusion and pain; and neutral, tending to cause other actions that in turn will manifest as natural or artificial. Natural actions are more related to the fulfilment of basic needs of survival like physiological needs and safety needs; now, artificial actions follow the desire – sometimes illusory felt like a necessity – to accomplish everything that one could, to become the most that one can be. The danger of artificial needs and actions lie in the fact that most of the time they are external, originated by others and, therefore, unnatural.

Consider the need to breathe, or to drink water and to eat, to sleep, to keep the body's warmth by wearing clothes and shoes, and to be sheltered from the elements. These are all basic, natural needs. Their fulfilment is accomplished by natural actions. Now consider the need for social belonging, of having the car of the year or of having a wife twenty years younger, or the need to wear clothing of a specific (expensive) brand or to comply with certain aesthetical standards, or the need to have the grass greener than the neighbour's. These are artificial needs, social constructs of desirable circumstances that are not always simple or quick to afford; sometimes they are not even possible. And this is not merely related to financial status, because there are artificial needs that are not necessarily related to money, like the need to be famous, or the need to be recognized or the need to be accepted.

In most cases, when such artificial, secondary needs are not fulfilled due to many complicated reasons, the person becomes a pariah, an outcast – God-forsaken. Because of this, people can lead totally miserable lives in the depression of the Abyss, abandoned by God and by the others, incapable of either complying with such needs or accepting that those needs are of an illusory nature. Some people, instead, lead their entire lives on the brink of the Abyss, fulfilling more or less those artificial needs here and there in a not fully satisfying manner, completely enslaved by the others and by their own Ego and, thus, unhappy, unactualized and no less miserable than the outcasts. Sooner or later, they will stumble and fall; and the Abyss will be there for them, smiling. To remain on the brink of the Abyss, we have learned to lie, to cheat, to steal and to kill.

We learned to wear masks of respectability; we learned to become someone else and, sometimes, to lead a double life. The risk of developing a dissociative identity disorder in this case is always imminent. The masks or personae that we learn to wear, and that here we identify as Ego – that bundle of fleeting states – can take us further away from ourselves and distance us from our basic needs; they lead us away from our true nature and, if you want to put it that way, further away from God. These masks are directly related to our self-esteem, our general subjective and emotional estimation of our own value, and to the illusion of self-actualization, or the self-deceptive desire to become more and more what we think we are or should be; the foolish desire to become everything that we think we are or should be ca-

pable of becoming, wilfully not accepting the obvious: that we are not and will never be able to be.

The true Sacrifice, the sacrifice of the soul, is about self-transcendence and illumination, the dissolution of the Ego or the loss of the sense of separateness by immersion in experience; meaningful experience. It is the full comprehension – even if temporary – of life, the Universe and everything. Surrender! For the liberated individual, all is free and freedom; his actions are always honest and straightforward, and he is assisted by the Will of the All; he knows neither grief nor pleasure, only awareness; he knows only light. He becomes numinous, he becomes divine, which is the same as becoming God. It is then that the mystic realizes that God and the Devil are one and the same, and that they are one with him. He discovers that God and consciousness are both within and beyond himself and the Universe, present in it, but not of it, and at the same time permeating and exceeding everything.

Sacrifice, suffering, actions and the choices behind them, and enlightenment, are all intimately related. Artificial actions and desire are the cause of all suffering, both felt by us and inflicted on others by us, and that which beyond doubt blocks us from the truth of the Universe, which is the truth of the self, and from attaining enlightenment. Besides it, such actions and desires are the reason for our continuous reincarnation and suffering, which is a natural law independent of God's judgement or Will, until they are eliminated through the cultivation of natural actions. The liberation from this death-and-rebirth cycle, from this vicious circle of suffering, which is also a liberation from the illusory, secondary needs, and from the entrapment by the Ego, is a Gnostic metamorphosis that allows us to see the truth and reality beyond the darkness of Abyss.

The Norse God Odin, who sacrificed one eye in return for the wisdom of the well of his uncle Mimir (refer to *Völuspá*, the Prophecy of the *Völva*), narrates his Self-Sacrifice on the *Yggdrasil* Tree in the Poem *Hávamál*, the Sayings of the High One – which is part of the much larger Poetic Edda. In the fourth part of *Hávamál*, which is known as *Rúnatal*, or the Rune Song of Odin, he tells how he hung for nine days on the tree in his quest after the Runes. It describes his shamanic ordeal, his Sacrifice of himself and to himself, in which part of him dies and part survives to receive the secret of the Runes. In the end of the ninth day, the Runes accepted his Sacrifice and showed themselves to him, not only in shape but also in the form of the secrets and powers they carry within them. Following the achievement of this state of awareness, he decided to put an end to his self-imposed ordeal. In the Rune Song, Odin says:

Wounded I hung on a wind-swept gallows
For nine long nights,
Pierced by a spear, pledged to Odin,

Offered, myself to myself
The wisest know not from whence spring
The roots of that ancient rood

They gave me no bread,
They gave me no mead,
I looked down;
with a loud cry
I took up runes;
from that tree I fell.

Nine lays of power
I learned from the famous Bolthor, Bestla's father:
He poured me a draught of precious mead,
Mixed with magical Odrerir.

Waxed and throve well;
Word from word gave words to me,
Deed from deed gave deeds to me,

Runes you will find, and readable staves,
Very strong staves,
Very stout staves,
Staves that Bolthor stained,
Made by mighty powers,
Graven by the prophetic god,

For the gods by Odin, for the elves by Dain,
By Dvalin, too, for the dwarves,
By Asvid for the hateful giants,
And some I carved myself:
Thund, before man was made, scratched them,
Who rose first, fell thereafter

Know how to cut them, know how to read them,
Know how to stain them, know how to prove them,
Know how to evoke them, know how to score them,
Know how to send them"; know how to send them,

Better not to ask than to over-pledge
As a gift that demands a gift;
Better not to send than to slay too many.

Some people could consider the Self-Sacrifice of Odin on Yggdrasil to be identical to the Self-Sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross. Others could argue that these Sacrifices are completely different, for while Odin sacrificed himself for himself, Jesus sacrificed himself for mankind. I would say, from another point of view, that these Sacrifices are both identical in effect, but different in purpose; and then, again identical in purpose by means of Isopsephy. While Odin sacrificed himself by Will, and in exchange for knowledge, Jesus sacrificed himself by Love and in exchange for the atonement and the salvation of mankind, which is synonymous with the reconciliation with God through the sacrificial offering of the suffering and death of Jesus. Both are, however, identical in the sense of a process through which something is exchanged for the suffering and the Sacrifice undertaken. Moreover, both Will, which is Thelema in Greek, and Love, which in Greek is Agape, are related to each other by their isopsephic value, which is ninety-three. Converted to numbers, Will and Love, and the Sacrifices of Odin and Jesus are, therefore, essentially identical.

Not all divine Sacrifices are voluntary, however. Gods like Osiris, Baldur, Dumuzi and Adonis seem not to have had a choice. These are all Solar Gods of a kind, in some way related to light, vegetation and the after-life, to the seasons and the regenerative powers of the Earth's orbit, and characteristic of the mythologies of the Ancient Near East and of Indo-European Mystery Cults. They all embody some archetypal process resonating with the Collective Unconscious and the Super-Ego through which the dying and rising God becomes the symbol for the higher or true personality, the True Will. These Gods are mostly young male symbols of fertility, whose dramatic stories are often associated with mother figures and virgin Goddesses, and are sometimes related to the sacred Institution of the anointed king and to the Hieros Gamos, the symbolic holy ritual or Alchemical marriage.

In Ancient Near East, for instance, the High Priestess – compare with the second trump of the Tarot – of a temple dedicated to the Goddess Inanna would choose for her bed a young man representing the shepherd God Dumuzi, who was the mythological consort of Inanna, to re-enact and celebrate the Hieros Gamos during the Autumnal Equinox, the season we associated with the experience of the Abyss in the previous chapter. In a certain way, the Hieros Gamos – Atu VI, The Lovers – embodies a form of feminine Sacrifice in which the priestess prostituted herself to the representative of the dying and rising God, usually the king, in order to ensure the fertility of the crops and good harvest. It symbolizes a transformation of a kind, strongly associated with Alchemical Fermentation or Incineration, which

we connect principally to the Ninth House of the hero's journey around the Zodiac, but which also has subtle associations with the Seventh and Eleventh houses, and is the counterpart of the Eighth. Fermentation is ruled by Mercury, the hermaphrodite – Hermes plus Aphrodite – which is also the ruler of The Lovers in the Tarot and the co-ruler of the Ninth House.

The pouring of the adept's blood into the cup of Babalon is an evocative of the Hieros Gamos' ritual and an attempt to reunite both the male and female aspects of Sacrifice. Crowley must have felt the need for anal intercourse to experience the female aspect of the Sacrifice in the Abyss – in his desire to become everything that he thought he was or should be capable of becoming – after which he invoked Choronzon in a ritual involving blood sacrifice, which would represent the male aspect of the Sacrifice. The sexual preferences of the Beast, however, will not be examined here. The concept expressed by pouring the blood into the cup of Babalon, however, is that of the spiritual ideal and the quest to become one with the All, a process that requires refusing to deny anything and becoming completely passive to the world, allowing all experience to come forward and abandoning the sense of self to the deluge of sensation; a process clearly analogous to prostitution. Nevertheless, the content of the cup is the genuine understanding distilled from raw experience, and as Distillation is an Alchemical process related to the Sixth House, that of Virgo, it suggests that the prostitute retains her virginity through the sublime nature of her Sacrifice. She is immaculate.

The Hanged Man is the Arcane of the Tarot that better expresses the experience of the Abyss, signifying redemption through Sacrifice, punishment, loss, defeat, failure and suffering, but also new perspectives. He is the defaming portrait, the traitor, the *Pittura Infamante* of the Renaissance Italy, and reminds us of the upside down foetal position before birth; he thus reflects the position of the Babes of the Abyss in more than one sense. He suggests introspection, loneliness, impotence, absence and represents he whose friends and relatives became foes. This card is the outcast, associated with both Judas Iscariot and Cain, the fratricide. The Hanged Man is further associated with the symbol of the Cross, the Ankh and the Tau, which in the Ancient Near East was associated with the Cult of Tammuz or Dumuzi.

The Cult of Tammuz focused on two annual festivals, one celebrating his marriage to the Goddess Inanna or Ishtar – the Hieros Gamos – and the other mourning his Sacrifice and death by the hands of demons of the Underworld. The marriage of Tammuz and Inanna used to be celebrated and re-enacted in the fourth month, called *Arah Dumuzu* and equivalent to the Summer season, and to twenty-nine days between the months of June and July, associated with the sign of Cancer. To this day, the fourth month of the Hebrew Calendar is called Tammuz, and this tradition can also be observed in other Levantine cultures, or in those originated by them, like the Lebanese, the Turkish, the Syrian and the Palestinian. On the sev-

enteenth day of Tammuz, the Jews practice fasting that lasts from dawn to dusk and special penitential prayers are recited.

Now, the dramatic celebrations of his death used to take place in the first month of the Ancient Near Eastern calendar, Arah Nisanu, which is equivalent to the Hebrew month of Nisan, comprising thirty days between March and April, related to the sign of Aries and the period in which the West still commemorates the death (Passion) and resurrection (Easter) of a God, when Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and bestowing life upon those in the tombs. The body of the resurrected Tammuz appears to have been symbolized by an assemblage of vegetable matter, honey, and a variety of other foods, which remnants today can be observed in the ritual Burning of Judas, more commonly practised throughout Latin America, in which an effigy of Judas, usually made of straw, is hanged, beaten and burnt. The practice is also connected to the Portuguese Careto's Festival and to the Wicker Man rituals of Celtic and Danish Europe.

The Ancient Greek festivals of Adonia, which took place around the same period, in early spring, celebrated the ritual mourning of Adonis, a God which seems to have been modelled after Tammuz and shares etymological roots with another name of Hades, Aidoneus, and with one of the names of the Jewish God, Adonai – which means Lord. According to the myth, Adonis, who was born from the Myrrh tree – and from there may come the association of this tree with Necromancy and the Underworld – was a very handsome young man, a master of hunting, and with only one look he could make any woman's heart to be agitated with desire. He was taken by the Goddess Aphrodite as a new-born to be raised by the Dread Queen Persephone in the Underworld, but when years later Aphrodite visited the Underworld and saw that he had grown into a remarkably beautiful young man, she wanted to take him with her and Persephone refused to give him away.

The Goddesses disputed over him and Aphrodite called Zeus to decide with whom the lad should live, upon which the king of the Gods decreed that Adonis would spend one-third of the year with Persephone and one-third with Aphrodite, and that the remaining one-third the young man could decide himself – and he chose Aphrodite. Once upon a time, when Aphrodite was out for a few days, she warned Adonis not to stray too far into the forest for hunting and told him to stay away from any beast that did not run away from him. But the audacious Adonis disobeyed her and plunged deep into the forest, where he came upon a wild boar and, no matter how much he tried, he could not scare it away. Some believed that the boar was Ares, the God of War and one of the jealous lovers of Aphrodite. In the end, the angered boar attacked and pierced Adonis with its tusk.

Aphrodite heard the screams of her beloved and quickly went for the forest to find him agonizing. According to the myth, the blood of Adonis flowed into the nearby river, making the water reddish for the following centuries and spawning a

carpet of scarlet buttercups along the banks. This river, then, became known as Adonis River in Lebanon. Persephone, delighted, welcomed Adonis with arms wide open as he entered the Underworld. Meanwhile, Aphrodite rushed to the Underworld to try and bring him back. Once more, Zeus was called to intervene and stop the Goddesses from quarrelling over who would have rightful possession of Adonis. This time, Zeus decided that Adonis would spend half of the year with Persephone and the other half with Aphrodite – just like Dumuzi, who would spend half the year in the Underworld with Ereshkigal and the other half on the upper world.

Another God, whose dying and rising myth is intimately connected to the myths of Dumuzi and Adonis is the Phrygian God Attis. The shepherd God Attis was believed to have been a beautiful young man that was loved by Cybele, the Anatolian Mother Goddess whose chief Cult was established in Phrygia, the modern-day Turkey. In some versions of the myth, Cybele was also considered to be his mother. The birth of this God is said to have been miraculous, for his mother Nana – compare with the name of the Sumerian Inanna – the daughter of the Phrygian river-god Sangarius, was a virgin who became pregnant when an almond fell from an almond tree on her lap. In the Phrygian cosmogony, the almond was considered to be the Prima Materia, the father of all things and related to the Spring season.

According to one account of the myth he was killed by a boar, just like the God Adonis, and it was said that because of this the Phrygians avoided eating pork. Another version says that Attis emasculated himself under a pine-tree and that there he bled to death. It was believed that after his death, his body turned into a pine-tree. This story of Attis' self-injury seems to have been an effort to explain the self-mutilation of his priests, who were expected to castrate themselves upon entering the priesthood service. The priests would cut a pine-tree on the Vernal Equinox and bring it to the temple of Cybele, where it was treated as if it was Attis himself. The trunk of the tree was wrapped like a corpse, with bands made of wool and decorated with garlands of violets, which, along with roses and anemones, were said to have sprung from the blood of Attis when he castrated himself.

A statue of Attis was customarily fixed to the tree trunk and two days later the High Priest would draw blood from his arms as a sacrificial offering to the God and Goddess; with their state of mind altered by the music and the dance, the other members of the ritual usually imitated their leader and cut themselves and allowed their blood to flow until the whole altar and the mummified tree were covered with blood. It was part of the ritual mourning of Attis and intended to strengthen him for the resurrection. It was probably during this ritual that the aspiring priests emasculated themselves, and then their severed parts were dedicated to the Goddess Cybele and buried to hasten the general resurrection of the land, which was by the time bursting into flower under the vernal Sun. These priests sacrificed their manhood in exchange for ensured, good harvest – that is why their male parts were

buried: to impregnate the Goddess by the life-giving energy before she could re-transmit it to the world in the form of crops.

Another dying and rising God who was associated with a severed penis is the Egyptian Osiris. Having inherited the throne of the Egypt from his royal ancestor Gods in a lineage extending back to the creator God Ra, Osiris governed the land with his sister and consort Isis by his side, maintaining the ideal natural order which was the essential aim of the Ancient Egyptian culture. He was the Lord of Love, the King of the Living, and represented the life-giving power and righteous kingship, while his younger brother Set was associated with the wilderness and chaos. Under the rule of Osiris, Egypt became an egalitarian paradise, food was abundant and the crops were always rich. He was, thus, for his status and success, envied by his brother, whose sister and consort Nephthys, to make things even worse, had disguised herself as her sister Isis to have intercourse with him. Nephthys became pregnant with the canine God Anubis.

Jealous and resentful of his brother's accomplishments, Set ordered a beautiful sarcophagus to be made for Osiris with his precisely matching dimensions and then invited his brother and others to a great event in which he showed the coffin to the guests and told them that if anyone there fit in it perfectly, he could have the coffin as a gift. When Osiris entered the coffin, Set closed it and threw it into the river Nile. The coffin with the body of the God journeyed out to the sea and eventually became stuck in a Lebanese tamarisk tree which grew quickly around it and completely contained it. The king of Byblos, admiring the tree and the sweet smell that emanated from it, ordered it to be cut down and brought to his palace as a pillar to decorate the court, and there Osiris remained, trapped inside the coffin within the pillar, until he died.

During this time, Isis had desperately left Egypt in search for her husband, and eventually came to Byblos disguised as an older woman. There she sat down by the shore and wept for her missing husband while Set assumed control of Egypt. Some royal handmaidens, who had come to the shore to bathe, saw her and invited her to visit the palace, where then she was asked by the king and queen to be the nursemaid for their young princes. Isis tried to make the youngest boy immortal by bathing him in fire and, when the queen discovered this, she was horrified. Then, Isis showed herself in her Goddess form, and the king and queen, amazed, told her that anything she wanted they would provide. And she asked for the pillar, which she knew to contain the body of her husband, and which they quickly granted to her.

Leaving the palace, the Goddess cut her husband from the tree, carried him back to Egypt and hid him from the now sovereign Set. There she asked her sister Nephthys to keep the body of the God while she would go out to pluck some herbs to make a concoction to revive him. Meanwhile, Set was informed that Osiris' body

was found and brought back, and he managed to force Nephthys to tell him where it was, after which he found the corpse and cut it into pieces which he scattered across the land and into the Nile. When the Goddess came back, she was shocked and terrorized, but she rapidly went on with Nephthys to gather the pieces of her husband; they were able to find all the pieces of his body, except the penis, which Set had thrown into the river and had been subsequently eaten by a fish. Because of this, the fish, the elephant fish, was a taboo food in Egypt.

Once Osiris was made whole again – except for his penis – Isis managed to resurrect him with the help of Thoth and Anubis, and to magically extract his seed, and then she got pregnant with Horus, the falcon-headed God of the Sky whose alleged minister, Aiwass, supposedly dictated the Book of the Law, which inaugurated a New Æon. The previous Æons are said to have been ruled by Isis and Osiris, respectively. Even revived, Osiris could not rule any more for he was incomplete, deprived of his manliness, so Horus became the next in line to the throne. Osiris, then, withdrew into Amenti, the Egyptian Underworld, where he became the Lord and Judge of the Dead. Horus defeated and dethroned his uncle Set. The Sacrifice of Osiris resulted in the birth of Horus and, consequently, in the restoration of the order.

Another God of light and Summer who was sacrificed was Baldur, son of Odin, whose death was the first event in a chain that will, in due course, lead to the destruction of the Gods in Ragnarök – a great battle that is expected to cause the death of Odin, Thor, Týr and others. According to the Poem *Völuspá*, Baldur will be reborn in the new world after Ragnarök. He was the most handsome of the Gods and the most beloved of Odin. As a young man, he had a blissful life and eventually married the Goddess Nanna – compare with the name of Attis' mother and with the Goddess Inanna. He was plagued, however, with horrible nightmares about his own death, as did his mother Freyja, so she asked everything animate and inanimate to take an oath not to hurt Balder, but the young plant mistletoe was too young to take an oath.

The Gods used to amuse themselves by throwing things on Baldur for fun, since nothing could hurt him. The trickster Loki, however, the maker of mischief, wanted to find out what could hurt Baldur and so, transformed himself into an old woman and went to visit Freyja, asking her if it was true that all things had taken an oath not to hurt her son Balder. Freyja confessed that she had not asked the mistletoe to take the vow for it was too young for that, and then Loki went to the place where the mistletoe grew and took a twig from it, with which he made a dart. In some versions it was a spear or an arrow. Afterwards, he approached Baldur's blind twin-brother Hodur and convinced him to join the others and throw the dart on his brother, offering to guide his hand as he was throwing it. The weapon made of mistletoe struck Baldur and killed him immediately, upon which the Gods became dazed, speechless and unable to react due to their grief.

Desperately, Freyja besought any God to go and pay for his rescue from Hel, the Norse Underworld, and another brother of Baldur, Hermod, the messenger of the Gods, offered to go down and talk to the Goddess Hel to recover him. He journeyed to Hel and stayed there for one night, trying to convince the Goddess Hel to release Baldur, after which she told him that if everything under heaven shed a tear for Baldur, she would allow him to return; but if one thing refused to weep for him, he would have to remain there. And so, the Gods travelled to every part of world and asked everyone and everything to weep for Balder, but an old hag dwelling in a cave, named Thökk, refused to cry for Baldur. It was believed that the old hag was in fact the malicious shapeshifter, Loki, the God of Fire. Thus Baldur had to remain in the Underworld, and he will not be released until Ragnarök is over; when he and his brother Hodur will be reconciled and govern the new Earth along with the sons of Thor.

Death, mutilation, loss and mourning are not the only manifestations of Sacrifice. Scapegoating, ostracism and exile, as much as forced labour and imprisonment are also forms of Sacrifice. In fact, any form of prolonged, meaningful suffering, is Sacrifice. There is learning in suffering; in a way, wisdom is only possible through suffering. It is the price we pay for enlightenment. It is the Fall that is responsible for the acquisition of knowledge; meaningful knowledge. Suffering can teach us important lessons in life and bring about creativity, originality and audacity, insight and reconciliation. It can ultimately shape our character and show us what we are made of. Additionally, suffering can enable us to help others who are going through similar pain and prevent us from becoming treacherously proud.

In the same way we are taught from early childhood to suppress those parts in us that can be perceived either by ourselves or by others as unwanted, we also learn to enforce the suppression on others. That is very useful in preserving the welfare of the mainstream society and to avoid violence and loss in large scale; now, on the other hand, the scapegoating mechanism is precisely – and paradoxically – the main cause for mass violence and loss in large scale. I remember that when I was attending Law School, a Professor of Introduction to the Study of Law was explaining that the Law emerged as the promulgation of the Will of Society, when I suddenly interrupted him to mention I had not been asked what my Will was; and he obviously became furious and used the scapegoating mechanism to diminish me in front of the class and continue with his very important lesson and schedule. He also went on to point out the extremely important role the opposable thumb – a thumb capable of a movement by which the pulp surface of the thumb is placed squarely in contact with, or diametrically opposite to, the terminal pads of one or all of the remaining digits – had in human development, without, ironically, realizing the opposable – and somehow important – role I had in his class.

We are mostly driven by desire for that which the others have or want to have, which is called mimetic desire. When we desire the same thing and it cannot

be shared or desired, it evidently results in conflict. It happens with countable and uncountable, tangible and abstract things, and tends to increase to a point in which society becomes at risk. At this point, one person – or group of persons – is generally singled out and appointed as the cause of the trouble and then is expelled or exterminated by the majority or the stronger group. This is how we exterminated some of the other species or subspecies of the Homo genus – despite I strongly oppose the idea that we “humans” are currently composed of 7.6 billion individuals solely of the Homo sapiens species or of the Homo sapiens sapiens subspecies; I will not develop this opposition here, however, for the sake of self-preservation and to avoid being labelled as Phrenology-promoter, or as fascist or Nazi or racist or whatever, that is exactly the next step to which the singling out process would take me – either as victim or perpetrator. I just would like to make it clear that my observation above has absolutely nothing to do with the possibility of the stupid legitimization or justification for one group’s “supremacy” over another, or a call to arms against a specific individual or group: in essence, we are all full of shit. If you read enough about genetics and haplogroups you can draw your own conclusions (we are not alone; maybe there is not even a satisfactory “we”).

Back to our analysis – and I am sorry, you are going to have to get used to my digressions – when the scapegoat, or the person or group appointed as the cause of trouble is successfully removed from the presence of the mainstream, the illusion of a social “order” is then restored or re-erected and the mainstream individuals can feel content again. This happened to Cain, and this happened to Jesus too (if they ever existed), and this happened in astronomical proportions during the times of the Inquisitions and Witch-trials, and at the time of the Second World War and it still happens everywhere around us today, in one way or another, from parental bullying and school bullying to religious and ethnic intolerance, bigotry and fanaticism. This practice is so “human” – or one could even say, so APISH – and so ingrained in our blood that Ancient Near Eastern societies developed a traditional practice in which an animal was ritually burdened with the sins of people – instead of a person – and then driven away or killed to promote the illusionary cleaning of the community. It feels nice when the scapegoat is the other, but it totally sucks when it is us.

In the Bible, the greatest example of this practice is that of Azazel, the scapegoat in Leviticus, the third book in the Torah. In this passage, God spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of his elder brother Aaron; they had made offerings to God and after that they died. God commanded Moses to tell Aaron to come into the holy place with a young bull for a sin offering – a Sacrifice – and a ram for a burnt offering, and to instruct him to wash himself and to dress with a holy linen coat, and to wear a girdle and a mitre made of linen, for these were holy garments. Aaron should, additionally, take two goatlings for another sin offering, and one ram

for a burnt offering. He should offer the young bull of the sin offering and, through this, effect an atonement – a reconciliation – for himself and for his house.

And then, Aaron should take the two goats and present them to God at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and cast lots upon the two young goats; one lot for God and the other lot for Azazel. The goat upon which the lot of God had fallen should be offered to God as a sin offering, which began with Aaron confessing the unintentional transgressions of the community while placing his hands and pushing his full weight over the head of the young goat. Then, the goatling was slaughtered and its blood was collected in a vessel, later to be sprinkled on the two outer corners of the altar, after which the earthen vessel was smashed. The fat, liver, kidneys and caul were burnt on the top of the altar. But the goatling upon which the lot of Azazel had fallen should be presented alive to God for atonement and let go for a scapegoat into the wasteland. A comparison can be made with the mystic as the scapegoat and the Abyss as the wilderness, the wasteland. The sin, in this case, is a deviation from truth, from True Will, knowingly and wilfully rejecting truth and fearing knowledge; and it requires atonement through the experience of the wasteland.

According to the Book of Enoch, Azazel was one of the Fallen Angels who took wives among the daughters of Cain. He taught the Cainites to make swords and knives and shields and breastplates; and he made known to them the metals and how to work them; and he taught the making of bracelets and ornaments, and the use of antimony and the beautifying of the eyelids, and all kinds of precious stones and all colouring tinctures, and revealed to them the eternal secrets which were in heaven. And because of this, there arose much godlessness, and people committed fornication, and they were led astray and became corrupt in all their ways. So, for his transgression, Azazel was bound and cast into darkness inside a hole in the Desert of Dudael to abide there forever, until the Judgement Day, when he shall be cast into the fire.

And thus, the earth which the angels have corrupted was healed, and the healing was proclaimed, and the plague was healed; all the children of men may not perish through all the secret things that the Fallen Angels have disclosed and have taught their sons. And it was acknowledged that the whole Earth has been corrupted through the works that were taught by Azazel: to him, it was said, ascribe all sin. In a way, giving Azazel – or Satan – the function of sin-bearer, transferring the sins of the people to him in order to make atonement, equates him to Jesus. Satan, Choronzon or Azazel is the Lord of Sins and the Father of Lies; but these Lies are in fact Truths to the eyes of those who are able to see beyond the veil of illusions. The Yazidis, the Kurdish religious minority originated in the Mesopotamian plains, believe that Azazel was indeed cast into Hell, but that he also repented and cried copiously until the fires of Hell were extinguished, and that then he eventually returned to the grace of God – which is, in a word, Atonement.

Aaron's ritual resisted time and survives in our days in the form of Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the year in Judaism. Scapegoating also had a prominent role by the times of the Roman Catholic Inquisition, in the Middle Ages, when thousands of individuals labelled as Witches or Devil Worshipers or otherwise considered unfit, like the Jews, were "identified" and exterminated. The subject of Witch-hunting and the Church's Inquisition has already been explored ad nauseam in many books and studies of matchless quality, so I will refrain from doing so. It will suffice to mention that their "identity" – as Witches and Devil Worshipers – was "confirmed" by a mark, called Stigma. It resembles the function of the Mark of Cain, and was often called Stigmata Diaboli (Mark of the Devil) or Stigmata Sorcieri (Mark of the Witch) and also Sigillum Diaboli (Seal of the Devil).

The Witch's Mark was variously described as polimastia or polythelia, extra breasts or nipples, or another natural physical malformation or blemishes, sometimes a blue spot on the body or pagan tattoos and heterochromia iridum, which means having one eye of each colour. But these were almost always natural marks that served to legitimate the condemnation of the victim – in practice, anything would do. Now, artificial marks also served to the purpose of scapegoating from the Middle Ages to the 16th and 17th centuries, when criminals, heretics, adulterous women and prostitutes were often branded or tattooed with letters on the shoulder, breast, hands or face. Thieves were usually branded with a "T", Blasphemers received a "B", Rogues were marked with an "R" and Adulterous people – generally women – and prostitutes were identified with an "A". Individuals "identified" as Malefactors would receive an "M", Deserters a "D" and Soldiers with a Bad Character would receive a "BC".

A similar practice was used in the Nazi Germany, when the Reich decided to stigmatize and scapegoat the Jews for the sins – or weaknesses – of its people. Among the Concentration Camp Badges, a yellow six-pointed star sewn to jackets and trousers of the prisoners identified Jews; pink triangles distinguished the homosexuals and sexual offenders; purple triangles denoted Jehovah's Witnesses; and black or brown triangles were used to classify Gypsies, alcoholics and drug addicts, as much as the mentally ill and the beggars. Social stigma and the process of stigmatization have a long history and are cross-culturally universal. I suspect the scapegoating tendency is a biological mechanism present in social animals to ensure the propagation of their own genes – like the Alpha, Beta and Omega behaviours studied by Ethology. It is, in a way, an extension of the natural selection, the survival of the fittest, that we share with apes and wolves. We abhor diversity so much, so much, that we had to create and feed the illusion that we "humans" are a collective body composed by one single species to be able to tolerate the others of "our kind". I insist: we are not one single species – and that's beautiful.

Stigmatization or scapegoating, the characterization of others as disgraceful or ignominious or shameful or evil, the construction of stereotypes and the consequent separation of labelled persons into distinct groups, is the manifestation of the Abyss in the Social Level. In the Psychological Level, the Abyss manifests as the Shadow or the Dark Side of personality – much in the same way the Devil is the Dark Side of God or the manifestation of the Abyss in the Divine Level. In the Spiritual Level, the Abyss is Self-Sacrifice and in the Material Level it is physical suffering. It is possible that the scapegoating mechanism has a relationship with Psychological Projection, which is defined by the way we defend ourselves against our own unconscious impulses through denying their existence in ourselves while attributing them to “the other”. The concept of otherness or The Other will be further explored in the chapter after the next, in which we will have a look at The Shadow.

Scapegoating is also related to the principle of Separation that, in the Kabbalah, is the domain of the Sefirah Geburah, which lies in the middle of the Pillar of Severity, and is the opposite or complement of Compassion. It is Geburah that counterbalances Chesed, the primary emotional attribute of Creation, and allows for the possibility of Compassionless Love, of which we will speak again in the last chapters. Separation is Evil; and Evil is separated. That is the principle of Geburah, atonement and scapegoating. Geburah is the divine principle of punishment and destruction, and also the force that was mostly active when, during the creation, God divided night and day. Geburah has a fundamental role in Creation by separating things from the primordial, chaotic, state of undifferentiated existence preceding Genesis.

This process actually starts with Binah, the first Sefirah in the Pillar of Severity and the left eye of God. Binah is the deductive reasoning which starts separating stimuli, ideas and concepts that, in turn, reach their highest point of separation in Geburah. It is the rational process inherent to the mind that is operative when we develop an idea completely. These abstractions are, then, fully formed in Hod, the Glory of God, where they become wholly distinguishable forms and the divine ubiquity as it is perceived by us. The Pillar of Severity, composed by Binah, Geburah and Hod, describes the whole process of perception and mindflow. Severity expresses the whole notion of the Abyss and Self-Sacrifice, the state in which we best perceive the Severity of God, and also describes the degree of separateness or undesirability of something, connecting it to the scapegoating mechanism. After the experience of the Abyss – or Daath – the mystic repents and rectifies all his flaws and failures, just as Binah sweetens all severities and neutralizes their bitterness.

Things get worse before they get better. Self-Sacrifice is a sine qua non – an imperative – condition for crossing the Abyss. It is only through Sacrifice that we can conquer God and the Devil, and dissolve the darkness of this bottomless pit.

I saw a beggar crossing the street the other day, while the green light was still on; he walked between the cars recklessly, completely fearless. This is precisely the attitude of the sacrificed man. I am in no way telling you to go out and do the same, but I am inviting you to reflect upon the beggar's attitude. He had nothing left to lose; his life was meaningless when compared to his suffering. Meaning is necessary, living is not. For the magician, Self-Sacrifice comes in many forms, but especially through the painful abandonment of his magic – that by which he defines himself, his meaning and purpose. This abandonment of magic by the magician can be either voluntary or compulsory, and the intensity of the pain experienced depends directly on which direction it takes.

Shave your head and clip your nails. Shave your body; become raw again. Dedicate the leftovers to Choronzon and the Qliphoth in a burnt offering. Have a ritual bath in the dark with myrrh and birch. Let yourself become, let yourself come into being. Contemplate freedom and self-knowledge; see through the illusions of this world of horrors and seek power for a coherent afterlife. Seek rebirth. Like the scarab beetle, roll the ball of dung across the ground and let new life emerge from the shit of the Abyss. Abandon all magic: the greatest work of Will, the Magnum Opus, is to conquer Will, to Will-not-to-Will, to attain freedom from all desire; this is the true Self-Sacrifice, the sacrifice of impetus, which paradoxically becomes the wind at one's back necessary to cross the Abyss on the boat of even-mindedness. The superabundance of any force inevitably produces its opposite.

But first you must suffer, you must suffer many things, my child. You must suffer the pains of Death and Hell and of the Grave; and after these things are come to pass NEMO will come unto you and comfort you. And there shall be no more sea, neither shall there be any more fear, but He alone will inform you in all things, even unto the end which is NOT. For many have said unto you strange and diverse words, but His shall be the One Word which IS and WAS and SHALL BE. Amen. And then you can see through the mystery of 93, which is complete and perfect, for Kether, the Crown, is 31; and Chochmah, Wisdom, is 31; and Binah, Understanding, is 31; the sum of which is 93, the number of Thelema, which is Will; and of Agape, Love. And this is the mystery of the divine trinity. Self, AL is also selflessness, which is LA; and for numeration 31, Three is One, which IS None! And the reverse of this Number is 13, which is Unity and Love. The key to AL = God is LA = Not; Nothing; that which exists outside consciousness; and Non-being, which is the ground and root of Being.

Use your isolation – and desolation – and the knowledge you have gained as a tool upon your path to reach higher levels of consciousness. You have gone far beyond the point of being judgemental and now you can understand and appreciate that any path leads to the same place. In the Abyss, and through Self-Sacrifice, you have reached a (low and) high enough level of spiritual attainment, and thus you shall not feel the need to convince the others of what they should do. Become the

Hermit and honour silence, for TUTUM SILENTII PREMIUM (safety is the reward of silence). Allow time for rebirth. Meditate, read, read, read, read again, work upon yourself and you shall find. You will have to learn everything again, from the very beginning. Remember that you are a Babe in the Abyss; you need to mature, you are in gestation period.

Self-Sacrifice calls for introspection, the process by which we examine our own thoughts and feelings. Whenever it is possible, avoid people at all costs – especially “friends” and relatives; they won’t make you any better. They simply cannot. People will only vomit their own sorrows and regrets upon you, thinking they are helping by being solidary to you and showing they also have feelings; or they will try to show you the illusionary bright and promising side of life with their small talk and pollyannaism. Of course you probably have to work and take the bus or go to the supermarket – after all, we have to buy, buy, and buy; the American Dream – but avoid unnecessary interaction with the mundanes (Hylics). This is different from being impolite and indifferent, however. Misanthropy and altruism are not necessarily mutually exclusives.

Visit a Cemetery, especially when there is a funeral going on; then visit a church at night; prefer those with Gothic architecture and go before or after the mass: avoid crowds. Then, visit a public hospital, and a homeless shelter after that. Understand suffering; UNDERSTAND it. The newspapers and television made us numb, indifferent to tragedy and suffering, and the American Dream and consumerism taught us to ignore the dark side of life for its incompatibility with our modes of production; we have to work, we have to produce, and we have to consume; we have no time to suffer and it is professed that by consuming petty, superfluous and disposable goods we can find happiness. And we believe it! We live to work as slaves and, as slaves, to consume sex, alcohol and trips to the coast, and we have to purchase expensive cars and luxurious houses with white fences and elaborated security systems, and next generation technologies and fancy diplomas; and we must have a Facebook profile – where we can show others everything we bought – and Instagram and a twitter account to feel alive, to feel part of the whole, to belong. We have no room for suffering; we pretend we don’t. We have to work most of the time, more than one-third of our life, for we have a promising career ahead and a reputation to hold. FUCK IT, the Abyss does not give a shit. When it comes, dear consumer, it is the Abyss that will consume you.

Before I continue, I think I should make it clear that I am not a communist. I remember when I first criticised Capitalism and Consumerism in a conversation with my father, he rudely reprehended me, saying that Communism was a crap; which only showed me how intellectually limited my father was and made me feel that it would be best to stop talking. When years later, as a young adult I told him of my wish to live in an alternative community in the countryside where people ate

what they planted, drank the milk that they milked themselves and wore the clothes they have made on their own, my father replied that I could smoke pot in the big city too, and that it was completely unnecessary to move so far from the family because of this and that there, away from “civilization”, I would be plagued with toothache for the rest of my life. He completely misunderstood the whole thing and did not make any effort to try to understand that an ecological utopian alternative community had nothing to do with smoking pot. My frustrated attempts to engage in intellectual conversation and discussing complex ideas with my father had ceased by this time. It was all too complex for him; or maybe it was he that was too simple – or shallow. Work, eat, drink, fuck and sleep; that’s enough.

People can be classified in three types. Those who are very proud of their possessions and career and about how they fit well in the society in which they take part; they are luxurious and act rashly and are never satisfied: their nature is easy to understand; they are predictable. There are also those who are courteous and always act after consideration: their nature is not so easy to understand and they can be unpredictable. Now there are – a few – others who have overcome desire: it is impossible to understand their nature and they are always unpredictable. The Gnostics called the first of the three types Hylics or Sarkics, the lowest order of people, completely bound to matter and entirely focused in eating, sleeping, mating and pleasing the senses; these are completely doomed and incapable of reaching salvation. The second type they called Psychics, matter-dwelling spirits that can have discernment and can be either saved or damned, depending on their thoughts and acts. And the third type, which they called Pneumatics, that are naturally prone to salvation due to their free nature.

The Pneumatics embody the force which saves, and thus they cannot sin — except perhaps from the point of appearances – because, their substance being faith and therefore, justice through faith, all that they touch turns into gold. This is extremely rare, being the nature of an avatar above all – an incarnated force of nature – but it does exist, indeed. The Pneumatics naturally see through the veil. The Hylics will never, and this is simply because they cannot ever, pass through the experience of the Abyss. They barely reach its brink; even if they suffer, their suffering is in vain. The Psychics will certainly enter the Abyss sooner or later in their life, and their suffering may be rewarding; and they can or cannot succeed in crossing the Abyss. That will depend on their spiritual energy and conversion. Now the Pneumatics do not need to, but still they surely will, experience the Abyss and cross it in order to help others in crossing too. The Hylics cannot be saved by the Pneumatics, it is not worth even trying; but the Psychics can. There are many ways in which it is true and achievable.

But this is not a subject for this book; and maybe not for any other – some things cannot be written or described, they have to be experienced, for experience

is the root of their existence and the only environment in which they are true. When the mystic crosses the Abyss, he will know if he is a Psychic or Pneumatic; he will know how, if it is his Will, to save others. It is not something to be promoted, it is part of the natural order of the Universe, a Cosmic Law, and the Pneumatic's duty. This is different from becoming a leader, or a guru, a saint or even a messiah; the true messiahs will pass unnoticed. They are responsible for upholding the entire existence, regardless of the others' awareness, regardless even of their own awareness. They are those through whom the wheel keeps moving and who are responsible for making enlightenment possible and eternal.

Apart from the daily banishings and the invocation of Nemo, and from Dharaana, Dhyana and Samadhi, abstain from magic. Avoid even magical thinking. For at least a period of nine months, whenever you catch yourself involved in magical thinking, stop it by looking for an otherwise reasonable, logical or sceptical thought. Suppress all perception of, or belief in, the connectedness among unrelated phenomena. From matter arises desire, from desire arises suffering; this is the only connection allowed to be perceived. Desire controls consciousness through the senses: then, suppress the senses. Seek not to please them and seek no comfort. Life is a burden, understand this and live properly. Do not allow the mind to wander; do not think about the past or make plans for the future; live in the here and now.

First of all, suppress taste, it is one of the senses that most controls us. Almost fifteen percent of the population is fat thanks to it – in some countries the proportion is much bigger. Eat only for the purpose of nutrition and in low quantities, twice a day. Eat natural food only, preferably raw; and have tea and other herbal infusions. For nine months, do not seek pleasure in food. Avoid all that industrialized crap; if it cannot be grown in soil, do not eat it. For nine months, eliminate radio, internet and television from your life. Of course, this includes video games. Avoid singing and dancing too. Reading is allowed, but only at home and in the maximum of two hours a day: do not read anything about magic and religion; prefer philosophy, history, biology or anthropology. Spend time thinking, contemplating the environment and observing suffering; and dedicate suffering to the coming of Nemo.

Suffering is necessary for enlightenment, but suffering for its own sake is worthless. A monkey is capable of suffering, but hardly of achieving enlightenment – that is, except for Hanuman and Rafiki. Suffer consciously and transfer the emotional distress to the purpose of enlightenment and the dissolution of the Abyss. For nine months, sleep on the ground, over a thin mattress. When at home, wear old, weary clothes, and stay barefoot. During this time, use only neutral or coconut soap in the shower; do not use shampoos and hair conditioners, nor perfumes and oils and moisturisers or emollients. Instead of deodorants with fragrance, use pure ethanol. If the weather is not harsh, eliminate hot shower from your life for these nine months. The shower shall not be employed as a relaxing therapy nor as a

means for beautification; the purpose is solely getting clean and avoid stinking.

Avoid medicines, unless you are under medical treatment and the interruption can be life-threatening. Actually, if you are under medical treatment or have a severe condition, this book is not for you. The average person takes aspirins and other painkillers like they were chewing gum. For common headache, drink water and employ do-in and pressure points for relieving it. Take time to learn about medicinal plants and employ them in your routine. Note: I am not telling you not to seek medical care and help if you have a serious illness. I am just telling you not to be hypochondriac and not to self-diagnose and not to self-medicate by introducing unnecessary industrialized chemicals in your body. Additionally, practice Hatha Yoga, Tai Chi, Qigong or Pranayama if you want to improve your health.

Use your free time in additional labour, like toiling the ground and planting part of your own food or taking part in the building or renovation of a house. I wonder if Freemasonry would be different today if every Freemason was required to perform for a while as an actual mason or bricklayer to attain a specific degree within the lodge. Carpentry and smithery are also recommended, as it is horse breeding and cattle herding – but only if the objective is milking: refrain from slaughtering and butchering activities. Dedicate all the time of labour and its product to Nemo, to enlightenment. If you live in the urban area, engage in voluntary labour; the purpose of the practices suggested in this paragraph is to experience a form of labour in which the reward is not money or another material gain. It should improve knowledge in other areas, previously unknown – I mean, practical knowledge – and provide a means for enlightenment.

Helping others is but a secondary and consequent objective; you actually cannot help others if you do not help yourself first. Compassion here – differently from the Buddhist doctrine – is not something aimed or endorsed; you do not have to be compassionate to be altruist and useful to the community. Use your suffering and your manpower – or womanpower – to make this dump we call world a better place; not necessarily for the others, but for yourself. Charity through almsgiving or donating money for Institutions is all too easy; I want to see you striving and sweating, and stopping only for half an hour to eat a self-made, packed lunch, unheated. No microwaves! And if you opt for a voluntary labour that involves interacting with animals, treat them gently and try to communicate with them. Try to understand suffering and bodily needs from the point of view of another animal. Could you live like them?

Observe yourself while you do this. Observe yourself during the nine months of Self-Sacrifice. Enumerate and write down all qualities and flaws you perceive in others that you think you do not have. Then re-examine yourself. Try to develop those qualities and double-check if you really do not have the perceived flaws. Admit if you do; it is the first step, and the only way, to overcome them. The Shadow

embodies everything that we refuse to acknowledge about ourselves. Once we acknowledge this “everything”, Ego and Shadow should no longer be divided, but brought together in a somewhat fluctuating unity. Ego and Shadow shall merge; one shall assimilate the other. This is halfway up and out of the Abyss. The Shadow is what first drags us down into the Abyss, but it is also the force which propels us out of it.

When two desired things cannot both be had and one must be given up for the sake of the other, that is Sacrifice. When two – sometimes opposite – parts of the Ego/Shadow cannot coexist, and one must be given up for the sake of the other, that is Self-Sacrifice. This is part of a process that psychologists may call individuation, meaning that through such a process we become truly a person – or an individual – and tend to exhibit a more integrated personality. It is a process of fulfilling our most basic, even animal, capacities, when we have a direct experience of being in relation to our inner nature as an unrestrained creator of our own reality, and during which we manage to integrate the parts of the Shadow that we are capable of making conscious through self-examination. It is a call for – and a tendency towards – wholeness. It happens to most, although not all, human beings in a given point between birth and death.

The whole experience can be interpreted as the realization of the divine nature in us – some would prefer to call it the attainment of godhood: apotheosis – or the complete awareness of our wholeness. As I mentioned before in more than one way, this cannot, however, be possible without pain, struggling and suffering; and we inevitably need to accept those parts in us, and of us, that we normally would refuse to recognize in order to pass on to the next step. It is natural that, once we accept and integrate the hitherto unconscious parts of our being, we reach the aim of individuation. We should, then, become fully conscious of our relationships with other beings and with the entire Universe, both within and without; that is, simultaneously enchanted and repelled by the inexhaustible variety of experience. Thus, as uttered by Heraclitus, Good and Evil are one. We have become One; we have BECOME. Like the Egyptian God Khepri – or Xeper – the one who has come into being, we fully come into being and get involved in the creation of the world during the process.

Modern world does not give us enough opportunity to experience the Shadow. When as a child we express our animal instincts, we are normally punished by our parents. The punishment, however, does not eliminate our instincts; it only represses them and, thus, creates the Shadow. Behold this: punishment and the Shadow have a causal relationship. These repressed parts of the Psyche, or one could say, of the Soul, withdraw to an unconscious state – not very unlike the way God began the process of creation in the kabbalistic concept of Tzimtzum – and there they remain, primeval and undifferentiated. These repressed parts we collec-

tively call the Shadow; the Shadow is plural. When, once in a while, the Shadow breaks through the repressive barrier – or psychic censor – it manifests itself in a way that can be seen as sinister, evil and even pathological. Because the Shadow only receives punishment from social interactions, this is the only way it learns to interact. Pain, violence, retribution, punishment, torture: this is the language of the Shadow. It speaks in wounds.

The process of individuation takes place only after we become conscious of our personae, the masks we wear in our daily life. It is through the masks that we become conscious of the Shadow, that is, everything that the masks conceal – or try to. And then we start to perceive the suppressed parts of our being, including feminine parts in males and masculine parts in females. This is not the same thing as being an effeminate man or a masculinized woman, and it is far from the idea of “coming out of the closet”. Of course sexual self-disclosure can be part of the process of confronting the Shadow, but individuation is not defined by this. Recognizing and integrating feminine parts of our consciousness is more related to traits like intuition, mildness, empathy, compassion, selflessness, sweetness, tolerance, succourance and nurturance. Now, for women, recognizing the male parts of their being may include courage, independence, fierceness, and assertiveness.

But the repressed traits that accrue in the form of the Shadow actually go far beyond the more superficial spheres of gender confirmation and morality dichotomies; they are largely animal traits, frustrations and traumas, fears and fantasies. It is very difficult to identify the complex elements that form the Shadow, and it is certainly not in one or two lines of a formal exposition of the subject that one may find them. The directions can be pointed, however, and they can surely be identified through dreams, imagination, observation and experimentation, either with regards of our unrestrained animal nature or in our hypothetical behaviour if – or when – we are given godly powers; after all, Gods are just animals with super-powers. Can you unleash your animal aspects when society is not eyeing you and can you guess what would you do if you could do anything without punishment? Responsibility is a matter of morality, which in turn is but a set of social rules that specify acceptable forms of conduct.

Individuation is, ultimately, the refusal of any label for the Self and the acknowledgement of the plastic nature of consciousness. The philosopher – and here read the magician, the mystic, the traveller, the artist or the scientist – goes beyond his mere apish awareness of “I think, therefore I am” to formulate the divine understanding of his whole being as “I Am that I Am”. And in order to attain godly individuality, he sacrifices his identity. And by thus joining all the observable opposite tendencies of his personality, he realizes all aspects of the personality as they were originally concealed in the core of his being, and then he can finally develop or rescue his potential, primordial or innate Unity – that is, unification, atonement, rec-

conciliation. The outcome can also be called transcendence, the state of being beyond the range of normal perception and free from the constraints of materiality.

The individual realizes himself – or his Self – as a simple and practical yet extremely powerful force of nature that permeates everything and manifests and flows as an aggregate of essential properties that correspond to Truth, Beauty and Goodness. Like Science, Art and Religion, he becomes a transcendental himself. It is not enough to read this or try to devise a conceptual understanding of it; you have to experience it, you have to live it, you have to be it. It is a state of being: that of the divine simplicity. The being of a transcendental being is indistinguishable from its transcendental attributes. This being remains undivided, it does not have parts or fixed qualities; it is a whole. It simply IS, having no form or structure, and existing in and of itself, by itself. Like the Schrödinger's cat, the transcendental being is simultaneously dead and alive; does not matter. It transcends time, life and death, passion, clinging, aversion and ignorance.

Transcendence is only possible through Self-Sacrifice, or the Sacrifice of the Self – comprehending Ego, Super-Ego, Shadow and all the psychic population – the only true Sacrifice. Suffering is inherent to existence and to our cognitive processes, but we have a tendency to avoid it and seek pleasure in its place. But pleasure produces nothing except suffering when it ceases. Rather than trying to free ourselves from suffering, we should actually embrace it as the fundamental step towards awakening and transcendence; by embracing suffering and reflecting upon it, we are able to acknowledge the folly in our reactions towards it and derived by it, and to make the choice of abandoning them. By fully understanding suffering, we can sacrifice desire and liberate ourselves from self-enslavement.

That is True Will – Transcendent Will – the One life-force unbounded, the ultimate goal of the magician, of the mystic, of the artist and of the philosopher. It is our true nature. We have to make ourselves able to find it, and strive to understand it and to perform it, after which it will propel us towards our destiny and compel us into the joy of accomplishing what we were meant to accomplish, without lust of result. Unsatisfied by intention, and delivered from lust of result, it is in every way perfect. We first, however, have to divest it from desire and not rest content with things partial and ephemeral, but proceed firmly to the end: the destruction of ourselves in Love. The Transcendent Will, Gnosis, shall spring as a fountain of light from within and flow unchecked, seething with Love into the Ocean of Life and Death.

ALL THINGS WILL DIE

by Tennyson

Clearly the blue river chimes in its flowing
Under my eye;
Warmly and broadly the South winds are blowing
Over the sky.

One after another the white clouds are fleeting;
Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating
Full merrily;
Yet all things must die.

The stream will cease to flow;
The wind will cease to blow;
The clouds will cease to fleet;
The heart will cease to beat;
For all things must die.

All things must die.
Spring will come never more.

Oh! vanity!

Death waits at the door.
See! our friends are all forsaking
The wine and the merrymaking.
We are call'd — we must go.

Laid low, very low,
In the dark we must lie.
The merry glees are still;
The voice of the bird
Shall no more be heard,
Nor the wind on the hill.

Oh! misery!

Hark! death is calling
While I speak to ye,
The jaw is falling,
The red cheek paling,
The strong limbs failing;
Ice with the warm blood mixing;
The eyeballs fixing.
Nine times goes the passing bell:

Ye merry souls, farewell.

The old earth
Had a birth,
As all men know,
Long ago.
And the old earth must die.
So let the warm winds range,
And the blue wave beat the shore;
For even and morn
Ye will never see
Thro' eternity.
All things were born.
Ye will come never more,
For all things must die.