

## Yogis' Little Helper in Reading "Milton. A Poem", by William Blake

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*("Milton. A Poem" is quoted from Copy D, except for the preface. Copy D otherwise has a clear sequence of pages from 1 to 50. It can be found in the "The William Blake Archive", <https://blakearchive.org/copy/milton.d>, where also a transcription of each page is available. In brackets it is quoted with "M" only and the following numbers giving the page and the line. – "Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion" is quoted from Copy E, which was also the basis for: Morton D. Paley, „William Blake – Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion" - Blake's Illuminated Books Volume 1, [Gen. Ed. David Bindman], The W. Blake Trust/The Tate Gallery, 1998.)*

"Would to God that all the Lords people were Prophets.  
Numbers. XI. ch 29 v."

These are the last lines of the preface to "Milton. A poem". William Blake wished and prayed, that all seekers should become Sahaja Yogis. Shri Mataji has talked about "Milton" often when she was living in the UK. She said that this book is about Sahaja Yoga, and that Blake even gave the places in London where She would live (especially Surrey and Brompton Square), and the first Ashram in Lambeth (Speech in Paris, 18<sup>th</sup> June 1983). More about this can be found in "William Blake's Prophecies of Sahaja Yoga", by Carol and Luis Garrido. In the same speech Shri Mataji also mentioned that William Blake identified Milton as a seeker. – "Milton. A Poem" by William Blake is all about the pure desire to attain the spirit. A poet who already rests in heaven decides to go back to earth, only for becoming pure.



*Milton. A Poem, Title and Frontispiece*

"Milton. A poem" is not easy to read. But even if the complexity of Blake's universe is confusing, the poetic beauty and the vibrations of the work will impress the reader.

For William Blake, our reality is a faint shadow of the eternal world. We don't see much with our eyes: "The Eye of Man a little narrow orb closd up & dark // Scarcely beholding the great light conversing with the Void" (M 5.21 and 22), that is how he describes our sense of sight. When the sun rises, William Blake does not see a small round disc of fire, he sees "an innumerable company of the heavenly host crying Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty"<sup>1</sup>. "Eternal death" (or "Death Eternal", frequently used in "Milton. A Poem") is by no means physical death. On the contrary, for Blake it is the end of existence in heaven and being (re)born into our earthly reality. He sees into another world, and he sees more clearly there, it seems, than in the world that for so long did not appreciate his works.

Even Blake scholars had to recognize, that "Milton. A Poem" is a fabric with so many threads and knots that it must first be viewed as a whole, without getting caught in any one loop. Travelling through time and space is possible and even necessary to complete Milton's "mission". People merge or hide inside other people, different parts of a personality linger in different places, universes overlap, places in the macrocosm can be found in the human body at the same time. People from Blake's "real" life take part in the narrative, and biblical figures are placed in relation to the recurring archetypes, for example when the sons of Jacob from the Old Testament are listed as children of Los (M 26.2 and 3).

All this is necessary, because John Milton realizes, that he must cleanse himself before the great judgement (M 15.17 ff), that he must get rid of everything that is "an Incrustation over my Immortal Spirit" (M 46.35). – There is a lot for the reader to absorb. "But the neural overload helps cleanse the doors of perception"<sup>2</sup>, a Blake-scholar from the USA tells us.

## WILLIAM BLAKE'S MESSAGES

Before focusing on "Milton", a brief reminder of William Blake's continual messages in all his books could be useful.

"For Mercy has a human heart;  
Pity, a human face;  
And Love, the human form divine:  
And Peace the human dress."<sup>3</sup>

He is a fervent advocate of the Christian teaching of forgiveness and love for your neighbours. He repeatedly emphasized these virtues. "Mutual forgiveness of each vice. Such are the Gates of Paradise"<sup>4</sup> is one of his typical statements on the subject. In all his prophetic works, mercy and forgiveness are virtues that bring out the divine nature of man. In "Jerusalem. The Emanation of the Giant Albion" and "Milton. A Poem" (henceforth only: "Milton"), the narratives culminate in the appearance of Jesus Christ. At this point, however, one must not fall prey to the misunderstanding that he wanted to build a simple gospel of mutual benevolence. "No man had harder Dogmas; no one insisted more that religion must have theology."<sup>5</sup> The second message that we constantly encounter in William Blake's texts combines poetry and the performing arts with the communication of a different reality:

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<sup>1</sup> The Notebook of William Blake, David V. Erdman (Hg), Oxford University Press, 1977, p N95.

<sup>2</sup> Mary Linn Johnson, Milton and his contexts, in: Cambridge Companion to William Blake, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p 231.

<sup>3</sup> Songs of Innocence, "The Divine Image".

<sup>4</sup> The Gates of Paradise, "For Children": 1793, "For the Sexes": 1818.

<sup>5</sup> G. K. Chesterton, William Blake, Looe, Cornwall, 2008, p 46.

“To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
and a Heaven in a Wild Flower,  
hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
and Eternity in an hour.”<sup>6</sup>

He often describes this "other" reality as "imagination"<sup>7</sup>, “which is the Divine Vision & Fruition / In which Man liveth eternally” (M 35.19 and 20). This is where his universes and heavens of different functions and qualities exist, where people/figures are easily merged or divided, and where man's journey through eternity takes place. The unique thing about Blake's "Prophecies" is the unity of form and content. Poetry, images and messages combine in his prophetic books to create something that has a stronger or more subtle effect on the viewer than just the sum of the elements<sup>8</sup>. This "imagination" is arguably more than just mental vision, Blake describes it as seeing “through” the eyes rather than “with” the eyes<sup>9</sup>.

Pity and compassion are pillars of William Blake's universe, which extends through fantastic realms ("Zoas") and spiritual spheres that spread out around our "Mundane Shell". And central to this is another message that echoes through these spheres and that Blake repeatedly tried to convey to his contemporaries: rationality and logical thinking are dead ends in art and religion. The interpretation of religions - Blake naturally referred to the Judeo-Christian tradition - through reason, i.e. the usual exegesis of texts and the derivation of "laws" from them, was anathema to him. He considered all Old Testament laws and regulations to be superseded by Jesus' teachings on loving one's neighbour. The organized Christian and other religions, however, are, according to Blake, still the old cruel religions of the past, chained to their own intellectual precepts and supposed insights, and some universes away from the possibility of spirituality opened by Jesus Christ<sup>10</sup>. He also despised the "fashions" in the arts of his time, which gave rise to major controversies with the established art teachers at the Royal Academy, for example. All of this is also made clear in "Milton".

Blake extends his criticism further to the first modern representatives of the Enlightenment, as far as they supported its developing claim to be the sole representative of truth and knowledge.

In the spirit of forgiveness and general renewal, however, at the end of "Jerusalem. The Emanation of the Giant Albion", after the furnaces have become sources of "Living Water", Bacon, Newton and Locke are mentioned in the same line with Milton, Shakespeare and Chaucer. William Blake regarded Shakespeare and Milton as outstanding authors, even if both were limited in their inspiration by the influence of the classical traditions from Rome and Greece (see the preface to "Milton").

Blake fought for the acceptance of imagination and for a very personal approach to religion and spirituality. He prophesied a cooling and deadening of human nature as a result of rationality overwhelming everything else. His views on authority,



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<sup>6</sup> Auguries of Innocence, 1803, l. 1.

<sup>7</sup> Vgl. G. E. Bentley, *The Stranger From Paradise, A Biography Of William Blake*, New Haven and London, 2003, p 370 f.

<sup>8</sup> More than 150 years before Marshall McLuhan's sentence „The medium is the message“ - in „Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man“, 1964.

<sup>9</sup> “This life's dim windows of the soul  
Distorts the heavens from pole to pole  
And leads you to believe a lie  
When you see with, not through, the eye.”

*The Everlasting Gospel*, 1818, (d) l. 99.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Count L. Tolstoi, *My Religion*, New York, 1885.

especially the monarchic constitution, often took him to the extreme limits of personal danger. He opposed slavery and was an advocate of the equality of all people and races<sup>11</sup>. He took a keen interest in the political and social movements that were emerging at the time; his circle of acquaintances included Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the founders of the women's movement in Great Britain. At a young age, he read Jakob Boehme, Swedenborg and other mystics and philosophers. His attitude towards some of them changed over the course of his life; after initial enthusiasm. He later distanced himself from Swedenborg's teachings.

William Blake held Milton and Shakespeare in high esteem. "... Shakespeare in riper years gave me his hand"<sup>12</sup>, he wrote to a friend, and in his early poems, the "Poetical Sketches", the model of Shakespeare is clearly recognizable<sup>13</sup>. Both Milton and Shakespeare, the giants of English literature, were fundamental for Blake, but not perfect.

## MILTON. A POEM

This book of William Blake is so important for Yogis, because it deals with the process a Yogi has to undergo to cleanse himself completely. It also illustrates the hurdles from the right and from the left, which often need to be confronted on a seeker's journey.

This work describes the poet John Milton's return to earth to free his immortal self from all selfish tendencies and from all old desires and inherited burdens. It emphasizes the necessity of a thorough cleansing of the left side and the right side repeatedly. The cause for this endeavour of Milton is a lecture on Satan's fall in heaven, a topic which also introduces Milton's "Paradise Lost", his most famous work. With this theme, Milton literally "wakes up". He rises from his heavenly couch and realizes that he still has some things to put right before he can face the Last Judgement.

Milton's errors were emphasized by William Blake in his prophetic book "Marriage of Heaven and Hell", published earlier, around 1793:

"It indeed appear'd to Reason as if Desire was / cast out, but the Devils account is, that the Messiah / fell. & formed a heaven of what he stole from the / Abyss.

This is shewn in the Gospel, where he prays to the / Father to send the Comforter or desire that Reason / may have ideas to build on, the Jehovah of the Bible / being no other than he who dwells in flaming fire

Know that after Christs death he became Jehovah.

But in Milton; the Father is Destiny, the Son a / Ratio of the five senses. & and the Holy-Ghost. Vacuum!

Note. The reason Milton wrote in fetters when / he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of / Devils and Hell, is because he was a true Poet and / of the Devils party without knowing it"

(Marriage of Heaven and Hell, p 5.14 to p 6.13)

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<sup>11</sup> See "Songs of Innocence", "The Little Black Boy"; James F. Moyer, "The Daughters Weave their Work in loud cries": Blake, Slavery, and Cotton, in: Blake, an Illustrated Quarterly, Volume 48 · Issue 3, Winter 2014-15 (online); P. Ackroyd, Blake – A Biography, New York, 1997, p 169 and 171, see also the image of a hand-coloured print by William Blake on page 170, reinforcing the cruelty exerted against Africans.

<sup>12</sup> Letter to John Flaxman, 12th September 1800.

<sup>13</sup> Similarities can also be found in other works: for example, see Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" V.1.14 – 16. "Milton" can be compared structurally with some of Shakespeare's Works: Chantelle L. MacPhee, 2002, "All the World's a Stage": William Blake and William Shakespear, a PhD thesis for the University of Glasgow, p 142 ff.

It should be noted that these lines come from a chapter entitled "The Voice of the Devil". And yet what is then described in more detail in "Milton" is anticipated here in a striking way. Milton's errors are not malicious, he didn't know any better, William Blake tells us.



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wives and three daughters, or aspects of these six women in Milton's past earthly life. Already before, Ololon, driven by feelings of guilt, decided to descend like Milton.

When the girl Ololon appears in Blake's garden, Blake recognizes in Milton the shadows and horrors of all ancient and contemporary religions. Milton declaims the necessity of "self-annihilation": only that which is from God may be preserved. By this Milton means the eradication of selfishness, of the ego, which Blake calls the "spectre", and of the superego, which he calls the "shadow". It carries all of Milton's burdens from the past. The complete cleansing of the subtle system is the aim.

Beyond his own perfection, Milton wants to teach humanity:

“Mine is to teach Men to despise death & to go on  
 In fearless majesty annihilating Self, laughing to scorn  
 Thy Laws & terrors, shaking down thy (*Satan's*) Synagogues as webs  
 I come to discover before Heavn & Hell the Self righteousnes” (Milton 43.40-43)

So, Milton wakes up in heaven and realizes that he needs to make corrections. To this end, he must "descend" into "eternal death", he must return into the realm of creation. Thus begins Milton's journey through eternity, during which he merges with William Blake on earth – he enters into his left foot. On his way from Albion's heaven to the earthly lowlands, he passes through further spheres. His cosmic trail is illustrated graphically on page 36.

He has to struggle with another Blakean archetype, "Urizen", before he can continue his journey. Urizen symbolizes the dry right side of mere reason and intellect here. A hurdle that many seekers also must overcome. Then his descent attracts the attention of "Ololon", who apparently has a part in his departure. Ololon is a river "of milk & liquid pearl" in the realm of "Eden", the paradise from which Adam and Eve were expelled. Subsequently, Ololon becomes a collective being, made up of those who lived on its banks. Towards the end of the story, the entity takes on the form of a twelve-year-old girl and then also embodies Milton's three

Satan also has a stage in the narrative. In the bard's song at the beginning he is drawn as a mild person, that might be a victim of misunderstandings. However, in heaven this immediately raises objections. Later Satan tries to declare himself to God, with great pomp and support from his followers; but when he beholds Milton, he stands "trembling & shuddering" (M 43.10). Blake then can see the ruins and the desolation in Satan's breast. The master of hell is an important figure in "Milton" also as the reflection of Milton's own ego (cf. M 43.28-29).

At the dramatic end of "Milton" Jesus and the seven angels of the apocalypse appear<sup>14</sup>; Albion is revived. Once again, Milton explains the necessity of self-extinction and eloquently describes (M 47 and 48) the falsehoods and aberrations that need to be discarded. The trumpets of the Last Judgement sound; Blake falls stretched out on the path. The lark rises with a loud trill. The Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations has begun.

This narrative is a very drastic reminder of the need to get rid of all millstones on the left and the right. In no other work of western literature such a clear description of the ego and the left side is given, and nowhere such an emphasis is laid on the elimination of these burdens. The goal is the "immortal Self".

Besides this interpretation of Milton's return for the purpose of his own correction and to overcome his ego ("selfhood") and his conditioning ("shadow") there are other aspects. Some sequences of the plot can be attributed to events and people from Blake's life, especially from his time in Felpham. Blake himself mentions some people with only slightly different names. This is primarily about dealing with personal conflicts and about the question of loyalty to the poetic genius versus a banal understanding of art. This aspect is somewhat overused quantitatively. Finally, the references to political and historical, also biblical events stand out.

### Correction and Purification

To let Milton return to earthly life for the purpose of correcting himself and his work is a stroke of genius on Blake's part. The fact that the living continue or complete works by those who have already died is nothing new. But in this epic, "the dead can rewrite themselves through the living"<sup>15</sup>. And work on themselves in order to complete the task. From this point of view, one of the earliest Blake scholars, S. Foster Damon, even compared the returning Milton to Buddha, who did not want to enter Nirvana before his work was completed<sup>16</sup>. For Sahaja Yogis the awakening of Milton should not be too strange an idea: "Even the dead start behaving like living because you touch the Spirit in the dead", Shri Mataji said in the Mahashivaratri Puja in Pandharpur in 1984.

What was there to correct in Blake's view? John Milton was a protagonist of English Puritanism, a poet, politician and a journalist<sup>17</sup>. For example, he took a stand against censorship and criticized the hierarchical structure of the Anglican Church. Posterity, however, is particularly interested in his epic poems. "Paradise Lost" is the most famous one, and the narrative of the bard's song in Blake's "Milton" refers to it.

John Milton's puritan mindset, even though he placed a high value on mercy, was naturally characterized by strict moral ideas. According to the doctrine of the Puritans (and most Christian churches), man can only deduce the rules given by God from the holy scriptures with his intellect. This is perhaps the biggest

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<sup>14</sup> John, Book of Revelation, ch. 8.2; cf. also "1st Book of Enoch", 20.

<sup>15</sup> Essick, Visconti, „William Blake – Milton a Poem and the Final Illuminated Works" (Blake's Illuminated Books Volume 5, (Gen. Editor David Bindman), The William Blake Trust/The Tate Gallery, 1998, p 16.

<sup>16</sup> S. Foster Damon, William Blake – His Philosophy and Symbols, New York, 1947, p 404 f, note 3:20.

<sup>17</sup> Find more information to John Milton for example on Encyclopedia Britannica:  
<https://www.britannica.com/biography/John-Milton/Early-translations-and-poems>.



Milton, p. 46

break with Blake's beliefs. However, Blake's critical attitude towards Milton's work must not be misinterpreted. Blake considered the author of "Paradise Lost" to be one of England's visionary poets alongside Shakespeare and Chaucer<sup>18</sup>. The treatment of Milton in a major work is the greatest reference Blake could pay to his predecessor. – Milton's work was also interpreted one-sidedly during Blake's lifetime, the rebellious side of the poet was ignored, the moral rules and piety were important. Milton, who had wanted to purge a corrupt state religion, "has become contaminated with his own Puritanism<sup>19</sup>". The Blake literature also refers to the difficult relationship between Milton and his three wives (one was repudiated as insane, the second died early) and three daughters<sup>20</sup>, which can be attributed in part to the Puritan view of gender. All six women appear as Milton's "emanations" several times in Blake's book; there are misunderstandings between Milton and them until the end.

Here we need to look at the enigmatic "Ololon". Blake scholars often reduced this figure to Milton's emanations, i.e. his three wives and three daughters. But it is not as simple as that. The origin of Ololon is "Eden" (M 23.16), i.e. a place very close to eternity. Milton, however, sees his daughters and wives "scattered through the depths of torment!" (M 2.19 and 20). On the other hand, Ololon laments that they (Ololon) had made Milton descend into the depths; it suggests that Ololon at least also represents Milton's emanations. An even stronger indication is the confrontation on page 40, when Milton stands before Ololon. The heavenly river misinterprets Milton's intentions and wonders whether her "feminine parts" have caused the aberration into rationality, the "natural religion". This and the report on page 36 (the divine voice in the songs of Beulah, M 36.2 to 23) confirm the assumption with certainty: Ololon definitely *also* stands for Milton's female side or female partners, at least at this point. As his biography proves, the great poet had a lot to work out in his relationship with women<sup>21</sup>, and the orthodox view of gender relations must also be corrected. However, this affected not only the Puritans. All religious communities at Milton's and William Blake's times were organized patriarchally. And, above all, the whole society worked by male "superiority" – these broad social conditioning needed a correction.

It is obvious, that Ololon is more than the apparition of Milton's female family; the being has a far-reaching catalytic function. The divine family gives the entity the task of watching over this world and renewing it to eternal life (M 23.55 and 56). A few lines later, Jesus unites with Ololon and appears in its clouds. When this being encounters the "Starry Eight" at Milton's couch, she immediately throws herself

<sup>18</sup> „Milton lov'd me in childhood & shew'd me his face", Blake wrote to his friend John Flaxman in 1800, see FN 13.

<sup>19</sup> Mary Linn Johnson, see FN 2, p 234; cf. also J. A. Wittreich, Blake's Ideas Of Milton, Madison, 1975, p 138.

<sup>20</sup> J. A. Wittreich, Blake's Ideas Of Milton, Madison, 1975, p 232.

<sup>21</sup> Essick, Viscomi, see FN 15, p 16 und 114 note 1; J. A. Wittreich, see FN20, p 232.

to the ground. But the "Starry Eight" are overjoyed to see the collective entity, because Ololon has opened a wide path to eternity in their descent (M 39.34 and 35). "For mighty were the multitudes of Ololon, vast the extent / Of their great sway, reaching from Ulro to Eternity" (M 39.37 and 38). This clarifies that this being is more than the women in Milton's life. The "river of milk and pearl" is, besides its errors, also the positive aspect of the left side, of the feminine part of the "Humanity Divine". John Milton, in the perception of Blake's contemporaries, was a man with all "manly", right-sided and patriarchal attributes of the time. Thus, a completion was needed, that could balance this overweight of one side. Introducing "Ololon" as a collective, mainly feminine, benevolent, and powerful being<sup>22</sup>, that also must correct errors, makes Blake's narrative perfect. The left and the right, women and men must be purified. Milton's desire for this purification, joined by Ololon, is the driving force of the whole book.

In the final pages, Milton's "emanations" manifest themselves once again. After The poet's great speech (beginning at M 46.29), Ololon trembles and asks: "Is this our Femin[in]e Portion the Six-fold Miltonic Female / Terribly this Portion trembles before thee O awful Man" (M 48.29 - 31). The word "Portion" is used explicitly. On the next page (M 49.3 - 6), the imperfect parts, the spectres and the shadows, dramatically separate themselves from the immortal part of the emanations<sup>23</sup> so that the immortal part can unite with Milton's immortal soul. The event culminates in the appearance of Jesus; Ololon becomes his robe. Everything is ready "To go forth to the Great Harvest & Vintage of the Nations" (M 50.1).

As Yogis we could expand our imagination even further. On page 40 Ololon "steps into the Polypus", she enters the vegetative Life in the "Mundane Shell". However, she can only do that in a female form, otherwise she would become the enemy of humanity. This appearance of Ololon and all "its mighty hosts" is like a Shakti-power becoming active on earth; as the Parama Chaitanya only has been active since the Kruta-Yuga began.

### The Structure of the Person in Blake's "Milton"

The "correction" that Milton has to undergo in Blake's work goes beyond puritanical doctrines, it reaches into the core of the personality. In none of Blake's prophetic books is the composition of a person so clearly exemplified as in "Milton". At the centre is the "immortal Self"<sup>24</sup>, which cannot pass away but can go to heaven. Then there are the "spectre" and the "shadow" as well as the "emanations" for the male figures. The latter are always female and necessary for unification and communication in eternity<sup>25</sup>. The term "shadow", when sometimes used for a female partner, is misleading<sup>26</sup>.

The status of the "female" is no less important to Blake than that of the "male". The emanations are separate personalities with their own will and their own ideas. Just as they are inconceivable without their male partners, the reverse is also true: "Man divided from his Emanation is a dark Spectre – His Emanation is an ever-weeping melancholy Shadow" ("Jerusalem, the Emanation..." 53:26). The title figure of "Jerusalem, the Emanation of the Giant Albion" is equally important, or even more

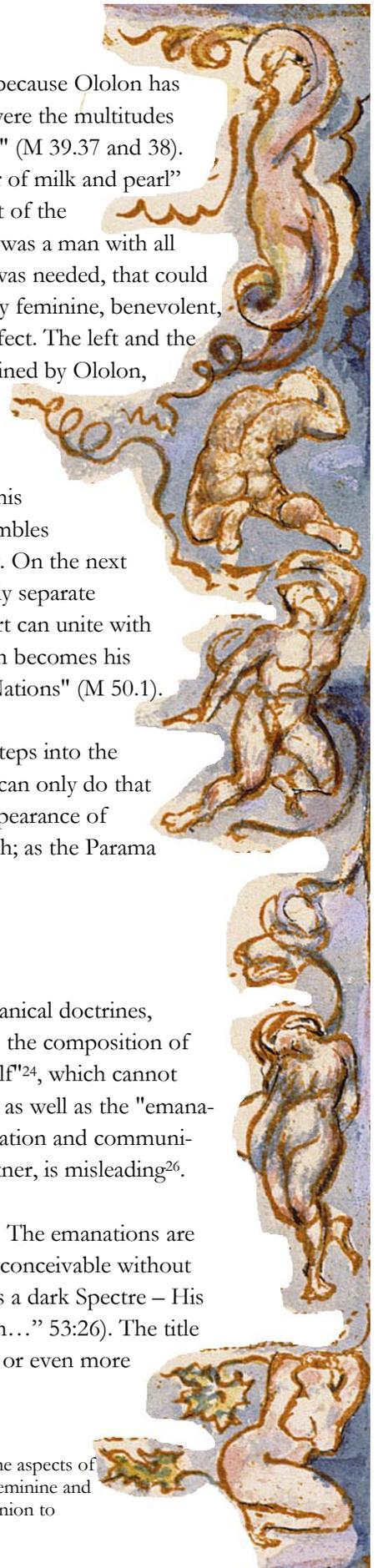
<sup>22</sup> In the Blake-literature this entity has also been interpreted as the embodiment of all the feminine aspects of Milton. This could be his six female family members, the women in his works, and unfulfilled feminine and creative aspects of himself: Mary Linn Johnson, Milton and his contexts, in: Cambridge Companion to William Blake, Cambridge University Press, 2003, p 244.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. S. Foster Damon, William Blake – His Philosophy and Symbols, New York, 1947, p 429, note 44 : 7-11; and Essick, Viscomi, see FN 15, p 210, Notes 3-6.

<sup>24</sup> „immortal Self“, M 17.11; „Immortal Spirit“, M 46.35 und 36.

<sup>25</sup> „Jerusalem, The Emanation ...“, 88.3 ff.

<sup>26</sup> M 49:28 e.g.



important than Albion, in the work thus titled. For she is not only the emanation of Albion that must be awakened, she also embodies the New Jerusalem from the Revelation of John<sup>27</sup> (chapter 21). It is reminiscent of the old Indian doctrine of the "shaktis", the "wives" of the gods. These shaktis embody the power of the respective deity, and without them the male gods are powerless. The shaktis are also much more than female mirror images, as we Yogis know. Conflicts with their "men" are not impossible. The emanations are to be regarded as personalities in their own rights.

In Blake's description, the person is thus divided into three, apart from the physical body. Three terms are coined: The "immortal self" ("immortal Self" - M 17.11) or the "immortal soul" ("Immortal Spirit" - M 46.35-36), the "spectre" and the "shadow".

Milton identifies his ego immediately as he awakens, when he equates his „selfhood“ with Satan (M 15.30). "Thou art my Pride & Self-righteousness"<sup>28</sup>, this is how the "spectre" is described in "Jerusalem, the Emanation ...". In the first 25 pages of this work, Los fights with his "spectre" and tries to get it under control. Negation and the power of thinking and arguing are characteristics of this aspect. Justifications and deceit are part of the repertoire of the "spectres". It is the ego that ruthlessly pursues its goals and plunges people into ruin<sup>29</sup>.

"Each Man is in his Spectres power  
 Untill the arrival of that hour  
 When his Humanity awakes  
 And cast his Spectre into the Lake."<sup>30</sup>



Jerusalem, the Emanation p. 6, the spectre hovering above Los

The counterpart is the "shadow", which is often described as the embodiment of unfulfilled desires. However, as is described in detail in "Milton", the "shadow" is much more<sup>31</sup>. On page 15, Milton recognizes his shadow at the edge of Beulah (M 15.36). He enters his "shadow" with his immortal self, uniting with it, which is not painless, and not without the help of the seven angels of the divine presence. On his journey, Milton is perceived as this "shadow" by the other characters (Los and his sons, the "Shadowy Feminine" and others, but not explicitly by William Blake as a character in "Milton"), at least labelled as such. On pages 41 and 43, Blake recognizes the full extent of Milton's

<sup>27</sup> Morton D. Paley, „William Blake – Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion“ - Blake's Illuminated Books Volume 1, (Gen. Ed. David Bindman), The W. Blake Trust/The Tate Gallery, 1998, p 276, note 19.

<sup>28</sup> Jerusalem, The Emanation ..., 8.30.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. S. Foster Damon, A Blake Dictionary, Dartmouth College Press, 2013, Begriff "Spectre", p 413 (pdf).

<sup>30</sup> The Notebook of William Blake, David V. Erdman (Ed), Oxford University Press, 1977, p N8; cf. also "Jerusalem, The Emanation ..." p 41, at the bottom written inverted.

<sup>31</sup> S. Foster Damon, William Blake – His Philosophy and Symbols, New York, 1947, p 412, Note 12:36.

shadow. He refers to him as the "Wicker Man", a large wickerwork figure like those burnt as sacrificial offerings in Scandinavia in ancient times. William Blake sees in him all the false religions that have ever existed. The list ranges from the churches of Beulah and synagogues of Satan to ancient Egyptian, biblical and medieval names, often personified.

It becomes clear that the "shadow" contains far more than the sum of unfulfilled desires. Milton was a learned theologian, and he carries with him the whole burden of past religious doctrines. It is impossible to say whether and where the boundary between Milton's subconscious and a collective subconscious lies. In any case, the enormous millstones described suggest that these burdens of belief go beyond learnt knowledge. Milton himself wants all of this to be discarded, annihilated, as he makes clear shortly afterwards.



*Milton, p. 16, showing John Milton*

It is interesting that at the end of this painting there is a shift from idolatrous religions, which are explicitly seen in Milton's "shadow", towards "spectres": "All these are seen in Milton's Shadow who is the Covering Cherub / The Spectre of Albion in which the Spectre of Luvah inhabits" (M 41.44-45). The "covering cherub"<sup>32</sup> is often a reference to the written religion and its intellectual interpretation or reduction, however, on the other hand, as here, a synonym for the selfish "spectre" or the ego. Perhaps a hint of inherited errors inflating the present ego.

One might ask where his "spectre" remained in Milton's journey through the spheres. For, as we have already seen, Milton's "real and immortal

self" (M 17.11) has united with his "shadow"; the "spectre" is not explicitly mentioned. However, there are clear indications that Milton undertakes his journey "completely", i.e. with all three aspects of his personality: as his immortal self, his shadow and his ego ("spectre"). Thus, on page 22, the "Spectrous body of Milton" is described as flowing back from Blake's left foot into Los' mundane space (M 22.20-21). So the "spectre" must have been with the poet's immortal self at this point. Finally, on page 43, Milton addresses Satan as "My Spectre" (M 43.29) and explains that it is his, Milton's, task to teach others to despise death and to annihilate the self (M 43.40-41). This "self" can only mean the egoistic self, the "spectre". Milton's immortal self is central, but he needs his "spectre" to be able to act and confront Satan, also as a reflection of his own ego. In Milton's final speech to Ololon in the form of his "emanations", he speaks of the "thinking power" as an incrustation over his immortal soul (M 46.34-36). This must be removed in order to cleanse the face of his soul ("spirit"). The "spectre" and the "shadow" depend on each other in a certain way: "His Spectre slept, his Shadow woke; when one sleeps th'other wakens" M 23.3).

It is not surprising that the union of the immortal self with the "shadow" is complex and painful, while the reception of the "spectre" is not mentioned separately. The "spectre" was probably already a part of Milton on the "couch" in heaven, as he roamed eternity "... pondring the intricate mazes of Providence" (M 2.17); "pondring" is a function of the "spectre". Just as we act with our self-consciousness on a daily basis, even in the heavens of eternity the "spectre" was still a part of Milton. And just as the confrontation

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Ezekiel 28, where the King of Tyre, who wanted to exalt himself above God, is damned and called a former "covering Cherub". As Satan in „Milton“, also this King was destroyed by his own hybris.

with repressed or unconscious conflicts or injuries is painful for us, so is the absorption of the "shadow" into the immortal soul.

The goal is the complete purification of the immortal soul. According to the teachings of Shri Mataji and this work of William Blake, the ego, the "spectre" and all "shadows" of desires and even unconscious conditionings must be erased. "Lest the Last Judgment come & find me unannihilated / And I be siez'd & giv'n into the hands of my own Selfhood" (M 15.23-24).

### **Other interesting aspects**

#### Los, furnaces and wine presses

Los and his sons appear for the first time in the bard's song. Los is "the prophet of eternity", as such he also embodies poetry and the realm of imagination. Together, he and his emanation Enitharmon are the allegory of time and space. He and his family work tirelessly at the furnaces and the looms of creation; he guides souls at birth and death (M 28.16 f and 31.47) The furnaces and anvils already appear in the bard's song (M 5). In the Song of the Sons and Daughters of Albion, the limitations of human perception are traced as they create the three classes (of humans – M 5.28 to 37). Pages 26 to 30 describe various aspects of renewal through the wine presses<sup>33</sup>, furnaces and looms. "The Mundane Egg" is formed, regardless of the state of the spectres; the ascent and descent of the souls is even illustrated geographically; the plough and harrow must continue to work. This process is obviously painful for the souls, "the Human grapes sing not nor dance / They howl & writhe in shoals of torment" (M 29.30 and 31). Several descriptions illustrate processes of rebirth<sup>34</sup> (M 27.6 f, M 28.38 ff, M 30:10 ff and 26). It is time for the "Great Vintage & Harvest"<sup>35</sup> (M 27.17). From a Sahaj point of view, these metaphors could perhaps describe how the remaining part of our subtle body gets a treatment or cleansing in between death and rebirth. – Shri Mataji described how after death the soul contains also a record of our past in Her speech for Mahavira-Puja in Perth, 1991. To listen to this Puja-Speech could help to understand this part of "Milton" better.

#### The classes of human beings

William Blake also turns the class society according to the doctrine of predestination<sup>36</sup> on its head in "Milton". The "elect" are not those destined by God for salvation from the beginning, no, they are those who form the establishment and rule over others, whether secular or in the churches. The "redeemed" are not those who have found redemption despite their sins, but those who are oppressed by the elect, but do not know how to defend themselves. And the "reprobate" are those who rebel and who above all have inspiration. Of course they can find redemption. This is Blake's kind of satire. He not only points out the absurdity of these classifications, but also castigates the upper classes of society, i.e. those who base their power on such constructions.

#### The Zoas

The Zoas represent four basic functions in a human being: The first one belongs to the physical body and sensations, and all worldly things. This one is called Tharmas. The second is Urizen, our rationality and intellectual logic, that enables to formulate laws, for example. The third Zoa is called Luvah, it is the power of love and desire. The fourth one provides the power of Imagination, Urthona. From Imagination also the arts derive; intuition is the vehicle of imagination. These "realms" are also personified, except for

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<sup>33</sup> Cf. to „wine presses“: Book of Isaiah, ch. 63.3.

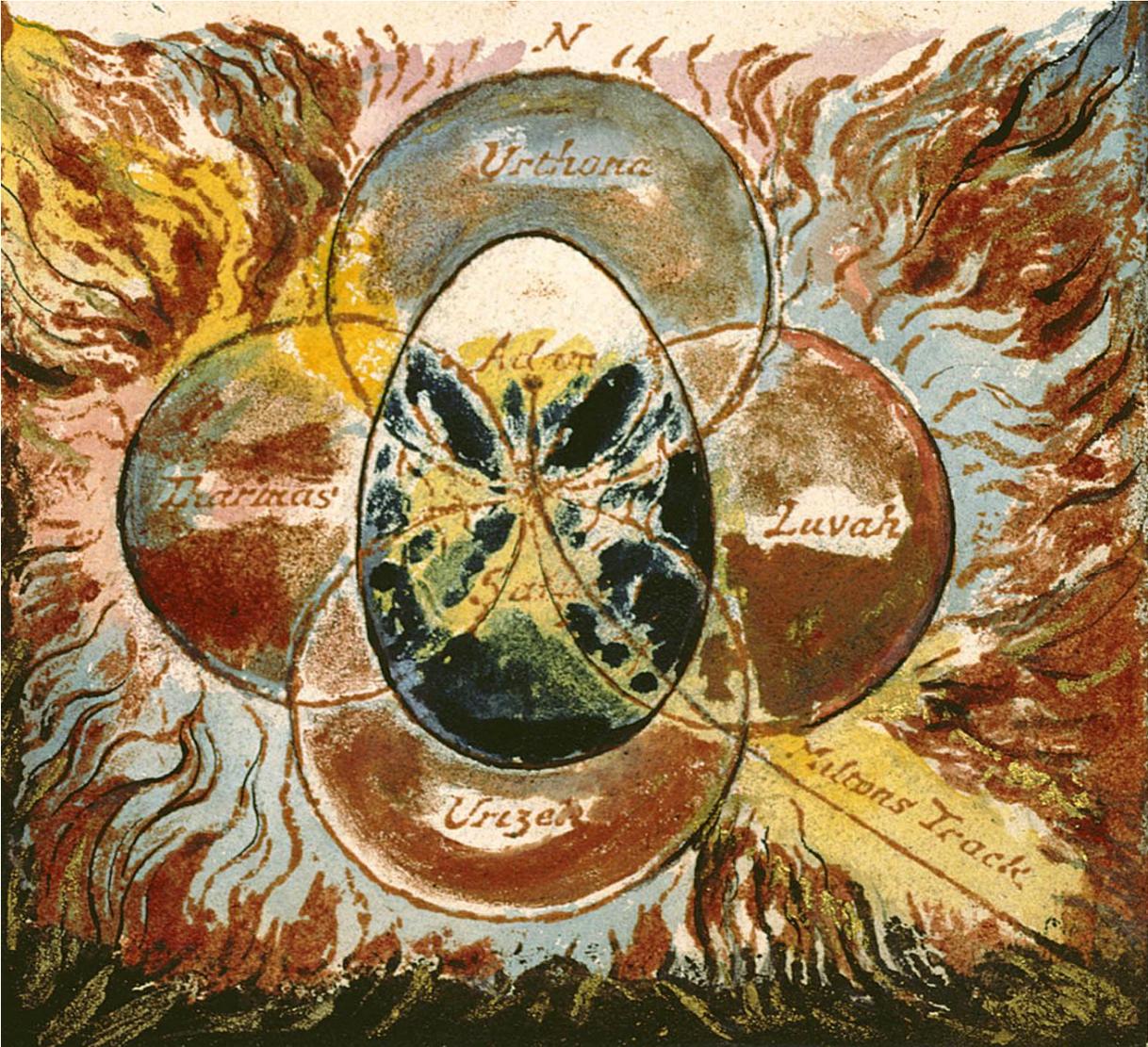
<sup>34</sup> S. Foster Damon, William Blake – His Philosophy and Symbols, New York, 1947, p 141, and especially to "Milton. A Poem", p 421, notes 25: 32 – 37 and 26: 13 – 22.

<sup>35</sup> John, Book of Revelation, ch. 14.14 to 20.

<sup>36</sup> Which Calvin had derived from Paulus texts.

“Urthona”. Los and Enitharmon act for this Zoa. The last picture shows Blake’s illustration of the these four powers and Milton’s course through these realms to the earth, the “mundane shell” in the egg-shape.

All images from “The William Blake Archive”, USA, <https://blakearchive.org/> -- “Milton. A Poem”, Copy D



Milton, p. 36

## Figures and Terms

Ahania	Emanation of Urizen; associated with pleasure and joy.
Albion	Poetic name for England. With Blake, the spiritual form of the country.
Allamanda	Land around Golgonooza; commerce; the nervous system.
Antamon	A son of Los and Enitharmon.
Benython	Benython Entuthon: A dark land of sorrow, not far from Golgonooza and Allamanda.
Beulah	A biblical name for Palestine. In Blake's system, a region surrounding heaven/eternity. Beulah is often associated with the subconscious. Poetry and inspiration are alive there. It is a resting place for the exhausted from eternity.
Bowlahoola	The anvils and furnaces of Los are located there. It is also the stomach and the law.
Bromion	A son of Los and Enitharmon. He represents reason, including dogma. Becomes the rapist of Oothon in "Visions of the Daughters of Albion" and even tries to justify his actions.
Cathedron	The hall(s), with towers and pinnacles, in which the looms of Enitharmon weave the bodies, i.e. the cosmic womb.
Coban	A son of Albion.
Conwenna	One of the daughters of Albion, a mythical British royal mother.
Elynittria	Emanation of Palamabron. She protects her husband, if necessary with her silver bow and silver arrows.
Enitharmon	The eternal feminine, and spiritual beauty. Emanation of Los, who works on the looms of creation.
Entuthon	see Benython
Eternal Great Humanity Divine	God Almighty. Sometimes also in the shorter Form of "Divine Humanity". The "Humanity"-portion of such a name gives hope for mankind.
Golgonooza	The city of arts and crafts. There, the formless is given shape, a refuge of imagination. In the center is Los' palace and his forge.
Gwendolen	One of the daughters of Albion, a mythical British queen.
Hand	A son of Albion.
Hyle	A son of Albion; synonymous with a bad artist, and probably also with William Hayley.
Mundane Shell	A concave view of the earth in which everything from the "vegetative" world can be seen. A material crust that encloses us. Immortals have access to this shell, like Milton. But mortals cannot physically travel to heaven through or from it.

Jerusalem	Emanation of Albion; and the New Jerusalem of the Revelation of John. The marriage of the Lamb and the Bride (Jerusalem) mentioned in the Revelation is interpreted by church scholars as the union of Jesus with the Church. William Blake regards it as the union of Jesus with humanity. The foundations of Jerusalem are laid in Lambeth.
Leutha	An emanation associated with Satan. In the bard's song becoming an allegory of sin.
Los	The eternal poet and prophet. The embodiment of imagination. He belongs to the Zoa Urthona and works tirelessly with his emanation Enitharmon and his children on the creation or "recycling" of living beings. He also works on Golgonooza. Appears in all of Blake's major prophetic books and is usually depicted as a blacksmith.
Luban	A place and gate in Golgonooza, associated with the creation of the new bodies.
Luvah	One of the Zoas, associated with emotion and passion.
Michael	The archangel. Only appears in "Milton. A Poem", not in any other work of Blake (as Blake ad personam).
Ocalythron	Daughter of Los and Enitharmon, emanation of Rintrah.
Ololon	"A river in Eden" and a collective celestial being. Also represents the wives and daughters of Milton.
Oothon	Daughter of Los and Enitharmon, emanation of Theotormon.
Orc	Son of Los and Enitharmon; stands for the revolutionary element, and is thus the antagonist of Urizen, the law-writer.
Ozoth	Son of Los and Enitharmon.
Palamabron	Son of Los and Enitharmon; bonded with Elynittria. Characterized as mild and compassionate, and seen as Blake's alter ego by some scholars.
Rahab	Described as a harlot in the Old Testament (Book of Joshua). With Blake, an allegory for "moral virtue" based on intellectual reasoning; the commercialization of religion.
Rintrah	Son of Los and Enitharmon; bonded with Ocalythron. He represents the wrath of the Prophet.
Shadowy Female	Our material world; nature and life without consciousness.
Satan	Depicted in the bard's song as the son of Los and Enitharmon. Satan is also a state. Blake often refers to Satan as the "god of this world", by which he means the materialistic and purely rational understanding of religion.
Sotha	Son of Los and Enitharmon.
Tharmas	A Zoa, which also stands for sensory perception.
Theotormon	Son of Los and Enitharmon. Is associated with jealousy in "Milton". Also referred to as an idealist and ascetic.

Thulloh	A friend of Satan.
Tirzah	Daughter of Rahab; involved in the creation of the bodies. Also a daughter of the biblical Zelophehad (Genesis 4, 27).
Tyburn's Brook	A brook in London. It came from a place called "Tyburn", near today's Marble Arch, and most executions in London took place at the gallows there. From this place it flowed into the Serpentine in Hyde Park, and before the serpentine lake was created it probably continued south towards the Thames. Flows underground today, also through Brompton Square.
Udan Adan	A dark lake of space; Satan's couch stands there. Abode of the unborn souls.
Ulro	Lies below Beulah; a dark place. There is no divine vision there. It is limited to the perception of the senses and has also been described as our material world.
Urizen	One of the four Zoas. As the protagonist, the maker of laws who believes in reason and logic (alone). Can go too far and then captivates himself and others with his laws of reason and morality ("the cold abstraction").
Urthona	One of the four Zoas, does not appear as a person. Urthona is the realm of imagination and inspiration. See also: "Los".
Vala	Is described as the emanation of Luvah. In "Jerusalem, the Emanation ..." she also appears as nature per se, thus there is a relation to the "Shadowy Female".
Whitefield and Westley	John Wesley (Blake preferred Westley) was the founder of the Methodist movement. George Whitefield was the first to hold open-air sermons in front of crowds. Social and anti-slavery activist, joined the Methodists.
Zoas	Four realms (See M S 36) and four forces that shape man. Tharmas with Enion (emanation) stand for the body and sensory perception; Urizen with Ahanian for reason, the intellect; Luvah with Vala for the emotions; and Urthona, personified as Los and Enitharmon, for imagination and intuition. Blake thus has given the pattern for C. G. Jung's four basic psychic functions: Thinking, Sensing, Feeling and Intuition. Jung knew Blake, he even used two of his paintings for his book "Psychology and Alchemy", 1944. His method of psychologic examination, "active imagination", also points to William Blake. He possibly has taken more from the English Prophet than he ever openly declared.

Biblical figures and place names from the Old Testament are also incorporated into "Milton". Tirzah, Milka, Mahlah, Noah and Hoglah are daughters of Zelophehad, who died before the people of Israel had reached the Promised Land with Moses. Hor, Peor, Bashan, Abarim, Lebanon, Hermon, Edom, Aram, Moab, Midian and Amalek are place names or names of mountains. Og and Amak are two giants from Old Testament stories. Molech or Moloch and Pahad are also biblical terms with multiple possible interpretations. "Shaddai" means the "Almighty"; and "Jehovah" is a well-known name for the Old Testament God. The sons of Jacob are also listed: Reuben, Manasseh (Manasseh), Gad, Simeon, Levi, Ephraim and Judah. Los claims them as his sons (M 25.61 to 26.3). – The valley of Rephaim is located south of Jerusalem.