

Pymander – The One Mind

The Vision of Hermes Trismegistus

1. My thoughts being once seriously busied about the things that are, and my understanding lifted up, all my bodily senses being exceedingly held back, as it is with them that are heavy of sleep, by reason either of fullness of food or of bodily labor. Methought I saw one of an exceeding great stature, and of an infinite greatness, call me by my name, and say unto me, *What would you hear and see? Or what would you understand to learn and know?*
2. Then said I, Who are you? He said: *I am Pymander, the mind of the great Lord, the most mighty and absolute Emperor: I know what you would have, and I am always present with you.*
3. Then I said, I would learn the things that are, and understand the nature of them, and know God. *How?* said he. I answered that I would gladly hear. *Then, said he, have me again in your mind, and whatsoever you would learn, I will teach you.*
4. When he had thus said, he was changed in his Idea or Form, and straightway, in the twinkling of an eye, all things were opened unto me. And I saw an infinite sight, all things were become light, both sweet and exceeding pleasant; and I was wonderfully delighted in the beholding it.
5. But after a little while, there was a darkness made in part, coming down obliquely, fearful and hideous, which seemed unto me to be changed into a certain moist nature, unspeakably troubled, which yielded a smoke as from fire; and from whence proceeded a voice unutterable, and very mournful, but inarticulate, inasmuch as it seemed to have come from the Light.
6. Then from that light, a certain holy Word joined itself unto Nature, and spew out the pure and unmixed Fire from the moist nature upwards on high; it was exceeding Light, and sharp, and operative withal. And the Air, which was also light, followed the Spirit and mounted up to Fire (from the Earth and the Water), inasmuch that it seemed to hang and depend upon it.
7. And the Earth and the Water stayed by themselves so mingled together, that the Earth could not be seen for the Water, but they were moved because of the Spiritual word that was carried upon them.
8. Then said Pymander unto me: *Do you understand this vision, and what it means?* I shall know, said I. Then said he: *I am that Light, the Mind, your God, who am before that moist nature that appeared out of darkness; and that bright and lightful Word from the mind is the Son of God.*
9. How is that, said I? He said: *Thus understand it: That which in you see and hear, the Word of the Lord, and the Mind of the Father, God, differ not one from the other; and the union of these is Life.*
- I thank you, said I. Said he: *But first conceive well the Light in your mind, and know it.*
10. When he had said thus, for a long time we looked steadfastly one upon the other, inasmuch that I trembled at his Idea or Form.
11. But when he nodded to me, I beheld in my mind the Light that is in innumerable, and the truly indefinite ornament or world; and that the Fire is comprehended or contained in, or by a great moist Power, and constrained to keep its station.
12. These things I understood, seeing the word, or Pymander; and when I was mightily amazed, he said again unto me: *Have you seen in thy mind that Archetypal Form which was before the interminate and infinite Beginning?* Then I ask: But whence or whereof are the Elements of Nature made? *Of the Will and counsel of God; which taking the Word, and beholding the beautiful World (in the Archetype thereof) imitated it, and so made this World, by the principles and vital seeds or Soul-like productions of itself.*
13. *For the Mind being God, Male and Female, Life and Light, brought forth by his Word a child of his own Mind – Mind the Maker or the Workman or Son of God – which being God of the Fire, and the Spirit, fashioned and formed seven other Governors, which in their circles contain the Sensible World, whose Government or disposition is called Fate or Destiny.*

14. *Straightway leaped out, or exalted itself from the downward Elements of God, The Word of God, into the clean and pure Workmanship of Nature, and was united to Mind the Maker, for it was Consubstantial; and so the downward born elements of Nature were left without Reason, that they might be the only Matter.*

15. *But Mind the Maker, together with the Word, containing the circles, and whirling them about, turned round as a wheel, his own Workmanships; and suffered them to be turned from an indefinite beginning to an indeterminate end, for they always began where they end.*

16. *And the Circulation or running round of these, as the mind wills, out of the lower or downward-born Elements, brought forth unreasonable or brutish Creatures, for they had no reason, the Air flying things, and the Water such as swim.*

17. *And the Earth and the Water were separated, either from the other, as the Mind would; and the Earth brought forth from herself, such living creatures as she had, four-footed and creeping beasts, wild and tame.*

18. *But the Father of all things, the Mind being Life and Light, brought forth Man like unto himself, whom he loved as his proper Birth; for he was all beauteous, having the image of his Father.*

19. *For indeed God was exceedingly enamored of his own form or shape, and delivered unto it all his own Workmanships. But he, seeing and understanding the Creation of Mind the Maker in the whole, would needs also himself fall to work, and so was separated from the Father, being in the sphere of Generation or Operation.*

20. *Having all Power, he considered the Operations or Workmanships of the Seven [Governors]; but they loved him, and every one made him partaker of his own order.*

21. *And he learning diligently, and understanding their Essence, and partaking [of] their Nature, resolved to pierce and break through the Circumference of the Circles, and to understand the power of him that sits upon the Fire.*

22. *And having already all power of mortal things, of the Living, and of the unreasonable creatures of the World, stooped down and peeped through the Harmony, and breaking yough the strength of the Circles, so showed and made manifest the downward-born Nature, the fair and beautiful Shape or Form of God.*

23. *Which, when he saw, having in itself the insatiable Beauty, and all the operations of the Seven Governors, and the Form or Shape of God, he smiled for love, as if he had seen the shape or likeness in the Water, or the shadow upon the Earth, of the fairest Human form.*

24. *And seeing in the Water a Shape, a Shape like unto himself, in himself he loved it, and would cohabit with it, and immediately upon the resolution ensued the operation, and brought forth the unreasonable Image or Shape.*

25. *Nature presently laying hold of what it so much loved, did wholly wrap herself about it, and they were mingled, for they loved one another.*

26. *And from this cause Man above all things that love upon earth is double: Mortal, because of his body, and Immortal, because of the substantial Man. For being immortal, and having power of all things, he yet suffers mortal things, and such as are subject to Fate or Destiny.*

27. *And therefore being above all Harmony, he is made and become a servant to Harmony. And being Hermaphrodite, or Male and Female, and watchful, he is governed by and subjected to a Father, that is both Male and Female, and watchful.*

28. *After these things, I said: You are my mind, and I am in love with Reason.*

29. *Then said Pymander: This is the Mystery that to this day is hidden and kept secret; for Nature being mingled with man, brought forth a Wonder most Wonderful; for he having the nature of the Harmony of the Seven [Governors], from him whom I told you, the Fire and the Spirit, Nature continued not, but forthwith brought forth seven Men, all Males and Females, and sublime, or on high, according to the natures of the seven Governors.*

30. *And after these things, Oh Pymander, say I, I am now come into a great desire and longing to hear; do not digress or run out.*

31. *But he said: Keep silence, for I have not yet finished the first speech.*

32. Behold, I am silent.

33. *The Generation therefore of these Seven [Men] was after this manner:--the Air being Feminine and the Water desirous of Copulation, took from the Fire its ripeness, and from the ether Spirit, and so Nature produced Bodies after the species and shape of men.*

34. *And man was made of Life and Light, into Soul and Mind; of Life the Soul, of Light the Mind.*

35. *And so all the members of the Sensible World, continued unto the period of the end, bearing rule and generating.*

36. *Hear now the rest of that speech you so much desire to hear.*

37. *When that period was fulfilled, the bond of all things was loosed and untied by the will of God; for all living Creatures being Hermaphroditic, or Male and Female, were loosed and untied together with man; and so the Males were apart by themselves and the Females likewise.*

38. *And straightway God said to the Holy Word, Increase in increasing and multiplying in multitude all you my Creatures and Workmanships. And let him that is endued with mind, know himself to be immortal; and that the cause of death is the love of the body, and let him learn all things that are.*

39. *When he had thus said, Providence by Fate of Harmony, made the mixtures and established the Generations, and all things were multiplied according to their kind. And he that knew himself, came at length to the Superstantial of every way substantial good.*

40. *But he that through the error of Love loved the Body, abide wandering in the darkness, sensible, suffering the things of death.*

41. But why do they that are ignorant, I asked, sin so much, that they should therefore be deprived of immortality?

42. *You seem not to have understood what you hast heard.*

43. Peradventure I seem so to you; but I both understand and remember them.

44. *I am glad for your sake if you understood them.*

45. Tell me why are they worthy of death, asked I, that are of death?

46. *Because there goes a sad and dismal darkness before its body; of which darkness is the moist nature, of which moist nature the Body consists in the sensible world, from which death is derived. Have you understood this rightly?*

47. But why, or how doth he that understands himself, go or pass into God?

48. *That which the Word of God said, say I: Because the Father of all things consists of Life and Light, whereof man is made.*

49. You speak very well.

50. *God and the Father is Light and Life, of which man is made. If therefore you learn and believe yourself to be of the Life and Light, you shall again pass into Life.*

51. But yet tell me more, O my Mind, how I shall go into Life?

52. *God says, Let man, endued with a mind, mark, consider, and know himself well.*

53. Have not all men a mind?

54. *Take heed what you say, for I the Mind come into men that are holy and good, pure and merciful, and that live piously and religiously; and my presence is a help to them. And forthwith they know all things and lovingly they supplicate and propitiate the Father; and blessing him, they give thanks, and sing hymns unto him, being ordered and directed by filial Affection and natural Love. And before they give up their bodies to the death of them, they hate their senses, knowing their Works and Operations.*

55. *Remember I that am the Mind itself, will not suffer the operations or Works, which happen or belong to the body, to be finished and brought to perfection in them; but being the Porter and Doorkeeper, I will shut up the entrances of Evil, and cut off the youthful desires of filthy works.*

56. *But to the foolish, and evil, and wicked, and envious, and covetous, and murderous, and profane, I am far off, giving place to the revenging Demon, which applying unto him the sharpness of fire, torments such a man sensible, and arms him the more to all wickedness, that he may obtain the greater punishment.*

57. *And such an one never ceases, having unfulfilled desires, and unsatisfiable concupiscences, and always fighting in darkness; for the Demon always afflicts and torments him continually, and increases the fire upon him more and more.*

58. You hast, O Mind, most excellently taught me all things, as I desired; but tell me, moreover, after the return is made, what then?

59. *First of all, in the resolution of the material body, the Body itself is given up to alteration, and the form which it had becomes invisible; and the idle manners are permitted, and left to the Demon, and the senses of the Body return into their Fountains, being parts, and again made up into Operations.*

60. *And Anger, and Concupiscence, go into the brutish or unreasonable nature; and the rest strive upward by harmony.*

61. *And to the first Zone [the Moon] it gives the power it had of increasing and diminishing.*

62. *To the second [Mercury], the machinations or plotting of evils, and one effectual deceit or craft.*

63. *To the third [Venus], the idle deceit of Concupiscence (sensual desire, lust).*

64. *To the fourth [the Sun], the desire of Rule, and insatiable Ambition.*

65. *To the fifth [Mars], profane Boldness, and the headlong rashness of confidence.*

66. *To the sixth [Jupiter], Evil and ineffectual occasions of Riches.*

67. *To the seventh Zone [Saturn], subtle Falsehood, always lying in wait.*

68. *And then being made naked of all the Operations of Harmony, it cometh to the Eighth Nature [or Sphere--the Starry World], having its proper power, and sings praises to the Father with the things that are, and all they that are present rejoice, and congratulate the coming of it; and being made like to them with whom it converses, it hears also the Powers that are above the Eighth Nature, singing Praise to God in a certain voice that is peculiar to them.*

69. *And then in order they return unto the Father, and themselves deliver themselves to the Powers, and becoming Powers they are in God.*

70. *This is the Good, and to them that know, to be desired.*

71. *Furthermore, why say you? What remains but that, understanding all men, you should become a guide and wayleader to them that are worthy; that the kind of Humanity, or Mankind, may be saved by God?*

72. When Pymander had thus said unto me, he was mingled among the Powers.

73. But I, giving thanks, and blessing the Father of all things, rose up, being enabled by him, and taught the Nature of the Nature of the whole, and having seen the greatest sight or spectacle.

74. And I began to Preach unto men, the beauty and fairness of Piety and Knowledge:

75. Oh you people, men, born and made of the earth, which have given yourselves over to drunkenness and sleep, and to the ignorance of God, be sober and cease your surfeit, whereunto you are allured and visited by brutish and unreasonable sleep.

76. And they that heard me come willingly and with one accord; and then I said further:

77. Why, O Men of the Offspring of Earth, why have you delivered yourselves over unto Death, having power to partake of Immortality? Repent and change your minds, you that have together walked in Error, and have been darkened in ignorance.

78. Depart from that dark light, be partakers of Immortality, and leave or forsake corruption.

79. And some of them that heard me, mocking and scorning me went away, and delivered themselves up to the way of Death.

80. But others casting themselves down before my feet, besought me that they might be taught; but I, causing them to rise up, became a guide of mankind, teaching them the reasons how, and by what means they may be saved. And I sowed in them the Words of Wisdom, and nourished them with Ambrosial Water of immortality.

81. And when it was evening and the Brightness of the same began wholly to go down, I commanded them to go down, I commanded them to give thanks to God; and when they had finished their thanksgiving, everyone returned to his own lodging.

82. But I wrote in myself the bounty and benevolence of Pymander; and being filled with what I most desired, I was exceedingly glad.
83. For the sleep of the body was the sober watchfulness of the mind; and the shutting of my eyes the true sight, and my silence great with child and full of good; and the pronouncing of my words the blossoms and fruits of good things.
84. And thus it happened unto me, which I received from my mind, that is also the Pymander, the Lord of the Word; whereby I became inspired by the One Mind with the Truth.
85. For which cause, with my soul and whole strength, I give praise and blessing unto God the Father.
86. Holy is Mind, the Father of all things.
87. Holy is Mind, whose will is performed and accomplished by his own powers.
88. Holy is Mind, that determines to be known, and is known of his own, or those that are his.
89. Holy art you, that by thy Word hast established all things.
90. Holy art you, of whom all Nature is the Image.
91. Holy art you, whom Nature hath not formed.
92. Holy art you, that are stronger than all power.
93. Holy art you, that art stronger than all excellency.
94. Holy art you, that art better than all praise.
95. Accept these reasonable sacrifices from a pure soul, and a heart that stretched out unto you.
96. O unspeakable, unutterable, to be praised with silence!
97. I beseech you, that I may never err from the knowledge of you; look mercifully upon me, and enable me, and enlighten with this Grace those that are in Ignorance, the brothers of my kind, but thy Sons.
98. Therefore I believe you, and bear witness, and go into the Life and Light.
99. Blessed art you, O Father; thy man would be sanctified with you, as you hast given him all power.