AHA!

AHA! THE SEVENFOLD MYSTERY OF THE INEFFABLE LOVE; THE COMING OF THE LORD IN THE AIR AS KING AND JUDGE OF THIS CORRUPTED WORLD;

WHEREIN

UNDER THE FORM OF A DISCOURSE BETWEEN MARSYAS AN ADEPT AND OLYMPAS HIS PUPIL THE WHOLE SECRET OF THE WAY OF INITIATION IS LAID OPEN FROM THE BEGINNING TO THE END; FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF THE LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE LIGHT.

WRITTEN IN TREMBLING AND HUMILITY FOR THE BRETHREN OF THE A.·. A.·. BY THEIR VERY DUTIFUL SERVANT, AN ASPIRANT TO THEIR SUBLIME ORDER,

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THE EQUINOX OF THE GODS

THE ARGUMENTATION

A LITTLE before Dawn, the pupil comes to greet his Master, and begs instruction.

Inspired by his Angel, he demands the Doctrine of being rapt away into the Knowledge and Conversation of Him.

The Master discloses the doctrine of Passive Attention or Waiting.

This seeming hard to the Pupil, it is explained further, and the Method of Resignation, Constancy, and Patience inculcated. The Paradox of Equilibrium. The necessity of giving oneself wholly up to the new element. Egoism rebuked.

The Master, to illustrate this Destruction of the Ego, describes the Visions of Dhyana.

He further describes the defence of the Soul against assailing Thoughts, and shows that the duality of Consciousness is a blasphemy against the Unity of God; so that even the thought called God is a denial of God-as-He-is-in-Himself.

The pupil sees nothing but a blank midnight in this Emptying of the Soul. He is shown that this is the necessary condition of Illumination. Distinction is further made between these three Dhyanas, and those early visions in which things appear as objective. With these three Dhyanas, moreover, are Four other of the Four Elements: and many more.

Above these is the Veil of Paroketh. Its guardians.

The Rosy Cross lies beyond this veil, and therewith the vision called Vishvarupa-darshana. Moreover, there is the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.

The infinite number and variety of these Visions.

The impossibility of revealing all these truths to the outer and uninitiated world.

The Vision of the Universal Peacock—Atmadarshana. The confusion of the Mind, and the Perception of its self-contradiction.

The necessity to surmount Reason, as Reason has surmounted Sense.

The Second Veil—the Veil of the Abyss.

The fatuity of Speech.

A discussion as to the means by which the vision arises in the pure Soul is useless; suffice it that in the impure Soul no vision will arise. The practical course is therefore to cleanse the Soul.

The four powers of the Sphinx; even adepts hardly attain to one of them!

The final Destruction of the Ego.

The Master confesses that he has lured the disciple by the promise of Joy, as the only thing comprehensible by him, although pain and joy are transcended even in early visions.

Ananda (bliss)—and its opposite—mark the first steps of the path. Ultimately all things are transcended; and even so, this attainment of Peace is but as a scaffolding to the Palace of the King.

The sheaths of the soul. The abandonment of all is necessary; the adept recalls his own tortures, as all that he loved was torn away.

The Ordeal of the Veil of the Abyss; the Unbinding of the Fabric of Mind, and its ruin.

The distinction between philosophical credence and interior certitude.

Sammasati—the trance wherein the adept perceives his causal connection with the Universe; past, present, and future.

Mastering the Reason, he becomes as a little child, and invokes his Holy Guardian Angel, the Augoeides.

Atmadarshana arising is destroyed by the Opening of the Eye of Shiva; the annihilation of the Universe. The adept is destroyed, and there arises the Master of the Temple.

The pupil, struck with awe, proclaims his devotion to the Master; whereat the latter bids him rather unite himself with the Augoeides.

Yet, following the great annihilation, the adept reappears as an Angel to instruct men in this doctrine.

The Majesty of the Master described.

The pupil, wonder-struck, swears to attain, and asks for further instruction.

The Master describes the Eight Limbs of Yoga.

The pupil lamenting the difficulty of attainment, the Master shows forth the sweetness of the hermit's life.

One doubt remains: will not the world be able instantly to recognise the Saint? The Master replies that only imperfect Saints reveal themselves as such. Of these are

the cranks and charlatans, and those that fear and deny Life. But let us fix our thoughts on Love, and not on the failings of others!

The Master invokes the Augoeides; the pupil through sympathy is almost rapt away.

The Augoeides hath given the Master a message; namely, to manifest the New Way of the Equinox of Horus, as revealed in Liber Legis.

He does so, and reconciles it with the Old Way by inviting the Test of Experiment. They would go therefore to the Desert or the Mountains—nay! here and now shall it be accomplished.

Peace to all beings!

AHA!

OLYMPAS. Master, ere the ruby Dawn
Gild the dew of leaf and lawn,
Bidding the petals to unclose
Of heaven's imperishable Rose,
Brave heralds, banners flung afar
Of the lone and secret star,
I come to greet thee. Here I bow
To earth this consecrated brow!
As a lover woos the Moon
Aching in a silver swoon,
I reach my lips towards thy shoon,
Mendicant of the mystic boon!

MARSYAS. What wilt thou?

OLYMPAS. Let mine Angel say!
"Utterly to be rapt away!"

MARSYAS. How, whence, and whither?

OLYMPAS. "By my kiss
From that abode to this—to this!"
My wings?

MARSYAS. Thou hast no wings. But see
An eagle sweeping from the Byss
Where God stands. Let him ravish thee,
And bear thee to a boundless bliss!

OLYMPAS. How should I call him? How beseech?
MARSYAS. Silence is lovelier than Speech.
Only on a windless tree
Falls the dew, Felicity!
One ripple on the water mars
The magic mirror of the Stars.
OLYMPAS. My soul bends to the athletic stress
Of God's immortal loveliness.
Tell me, what wit avails the clod
To know the nearness of its God?
MARSYAS. First, let the soul be poised, and fledge
Truth's feather on mind's razor-edge.
Next, let no memory, feeling, hope
Stain all its starless horoscope.
Last, let it be content, twice void;
Not to be suffered or enjoyed;
Motionless, blind and deaf and dumb—
So may it to its kingdom come!
OLYMPAS. Dear master, can this be? The wine
Embittered with dark discipline?
For the soul loves her mate, the sense.
MARSYAS. This bed is sterile. Thou must fence
Thy soul from all her foes, the creatures
That by their soft and siren natures
Lure thee to shipwreck!
OLYMPAS. Thou hast said:
"God is in all."
MARSYAS. In sooth.
OLYMPAS. Why dread
The Godhood?

MARSYAS. Only as the thought
Is God, adore it. But the soul creates
Misshapen fiends, incestuous mates.
Slay these: they are false shadows of
The never-waning moon of love.

OLYMPAS. What thought is worthy?

MARSYAS. Truly none
Save one, in that it is but one.
Keep the mind constant; thou shalt see
Ineffable felicity.
Increase the will, and thou shalt find
It hath the strength to be resigned.
Resign the will; and from the string
Will's arrow shall have taken wing,
And from the desolate abode
Found the immaculate heart of God!

OLYMPAS. The word is hard!

MARSYAS. All things excite
Their equal and their opposite.
Be great, and thou shalt be—how small!
Be naught, and thou shalt be the All!
Eat not; all meat shall fill thy mouth:
Drink, and thy soul shall die of drouth!
Fill thyself; and that thou seekest
Is diluted to its weakest.
Empty thyself; the ghosts of night
Flee before the living Light.
Who clutches straws is drowned; but he
That hath the secret of the sea,
Lives with the whole lust of his limbs,

Takes hold of water's self, and swims.
See, the ungainly albatross
Stumbles awkwardly across
Earth—one wing-beat, and he flies
Most graceful gallant in the skies!
So do thou leave thy thoughts, intent
On thy new noble element!
Throw the earth shackles off, and cling
To what imperishable thing
Arises from the married death
Of thine own self in that whereon
Thou art fixed.

OLYMPAS. Then all life's loyal breath
Is a waste wind. All joy foregone,
I must strive ever?

MARSYAS Cease to strive!
Destroy this partial I, this moan
Of an hurt beast! Sores keep alive
By scratching. Health is peace. Unknown
And unexpressed because at ease
Are the Most High Congruities.

OLYMPAS. Then death is thine "attainment"? I
Can do no better than to die!

MARSYAS. Indeed, that "I" that is not God
Is but a lion in the road!
Knowest thou not (even now!) how first
The fetters of Restriction burst?
In the rapture of the heart
Self hath neither lot nor part.

OLYMPAS. Tell me, dear master, how the bud
First breaks to brilliance of bloom;
What ecstasy of brain and blood
Shatters the seal upon the tomb
Of him whose gain was the world's loss,
Our father Christian Rosycross!

MARSYAS. First, one is like a gnarled old oak
On a waste heath. Shrill shrieks the wind.
Night smothers earth. Storm swirls to choke
The throat of silence! Hard behind
Gathers a blacker cloud than all.
But look! but look! it thrones a ball
Of blistering fire. It breaks. The lash
Of lightning snakes him forth. One crash
Splits the old tree. One rending roar!—
And night is darker than before.

OLYMPAS. Nay, master, master! Terror hath
So fierce an hold upon the path?
Life must lie crushed, a charred black swath,
In that red harvest's aftermath!

MARSYAS. Life lives. Storm passes. Clouds dislimn.
The night is clear. And now to him
Who hath endured is given the boon
Of an immeasurable moon.
The air about the adept congeals
To crystal; in his heart he feels
One needle pang; then breaks that splendour
Infinitely pure and tender . . .
—And the ice drags him down!

OLYMPAS. But may
Our trembling frame, our clumsy clay,
Endure such anguish?

MARSYAS. In the worm
Lurks an unconquerable germ
Identical. A sparrow's fall
Were the Destruction of the All!
More; know that this surpasses skill
To express its ecstasy. The thrill
Burns in the memory like the glory
Of some far beaconed promontory
Where no light shines but on the comb
Of breakers, flickerings of the foam!

OLYMPAS. The path ends here?

MARSYAS. Ingenuous one!
The path—the true path—scarce begun.
When does the night end?

OLYMPAS. When the sun,
Crouching below the horizon,
Flings up his head, tosses his mane,
Ready to leap.

MARSYAS. Even so. Again
The adept secures his subtle fence
Against the hostile shafts of sense,
Pins for a second his mind; as you
May have seen some huge wrestler do.
With all his gathered weight heaped, hurled,
Resistless as the whirling world,
He holds his foeman to the floor
For one great moment and no more.

So—then the sun-blaze! All the night
Bursts to a vivid orb of light.
There is no shadow; nothing is,
But the intensity of bliss.
Being is blasted. That exists.

OLYMPAS. Ah!

MARSYAS. But the mind, that mothers mists,
Abides not there. The adept must fall
Exhausted.

OLYMPAS. There's an end of all?

MARSYAS. But not an end of this! Above
All life as is the pulse of love,
So this transcends all love.

OLYMPAS. Ah me!
Who may attain?

MARSYAS. Rare souls.

OLYMPAS. I see
Imaged a shadow of this light.

MARSYAS. Such is its sacramental might
That to recall it radiates
Its symbol. The priest elevates
The Host, and instant blessing stirs
The hushed awaiting worshippers.

OLYMPAS. Then how secure the soul's defence?
How baffle the besieger, Sense?

MARSYAS. See the beleaguered city, hurt
By hideous engines, sore begirt
And gripped by lines of death, well scored
With shell, nigh open to the sword!
Now comes the leader; courage, run

Contagious through the garrison!
Repair the trenches! Man the wall!
Restore the ruined arsenal!
Serve the great guns! The assailants blench;
They are driven from the foremost trench.
The deadliest batteries belch their hell
No more. So day by day fought well,
We silence gun by gun. At last
The fiercest of the fray is past;
The circling hills are ours. The attack
Is over, save for the rare crack,
Long dropping shots from hidden forts;—
—So is it with our thoughts!

OLYMPAS. The hostile thoughts, the evil things!
They hover on majestic wings,
Like vultures waiting for a man
To drop from the slave-caravan!

MARSYAS. All thoughts are evil. Thought is two:
The seer and the seen. Eschew
That supreme blasphemy, my son,
Remembering that God is One.

OLYMPAS. God is a thought!

MARSYAS. The *thought* of God
Is but a shattered emerod;
A plague, an idol, a delusion,
Blasphemy, schism, and confusion!

OLYMPAS. Banish my one high thought? The night
Indeed were starless.

MARSYAS. Very right!
But that impalpable inane

Is the condition of success;
Even as earth lies black to gain
Spring's green and autumn's fruitfulness.

OLYMPAS. I dread this midnight of the soul.

MARSYAS. Welcome the herald!

OLYMPAS. How control
The horror of the mind? The insane
Dead melancholy?

MARSYAS. Trick is vain.
Sheer manhood must support the strife,
And the trained Will, the Root of Life,
Bear the adept triumphant.

OLYMPAS. Else?

MARSYAS. The reason, like a chime of bells
Ripped by the lightning, cracks.

OLYMPAS. And these
Are the first sights the magus sees?

MARSYAS. The first true sights. Bright images
Throng the clear mind at first, a crowd
Of Gods, lights, armies, landscapes; loud
Reverberations of the Light.
But these are dreams, things in the mind,
Reveries, idols. Thou shalt find
No rest therein. The former three
(Lightning, moon, sun) are royally
Liminal to the Hall of Truth.
Also there be with them, in sooth,
Their brethren. There's the vision called
The Lion of the Light, a brand
Of ruby flame and emerald

Waved by the Hermeneutic Hand.
There is the Chalice, whence the flood
Of God's beatitude of blood
Flames. O to sing those starry tunes!
O colder than a million moons!
O vestal waters! Wine of love
Wan as the lyric soul thereof!
There is the Wind, a whirling sword,
The savage rapture of the air
Tossed beyond space and time. My Lord,
My Lord, even now I see Thee there
In infinite motion! And beyond
There is the Disk, the wheel of things;
Like a black boundless diamond
Whirring with millions of wings!

OLYMPAS. Master!

MARSYAS. Know also that above
These portents hangs no veil of love;
But, guarded by unsleeping eyes
Of twice seven score severities,
The Veil that only rips apart
When the spear strikes to Jesus' heart!
A mighty Guard of Fire are they
With sabres turning every way!
Their eyes are millstones greater than
The earth; their mouths run seas of blood.
Woe be to that accursèd man
Of whom they are the iniquities!
Swept in their wrath's avenging flood
To black immitigable seas!

Woe to the seeker who shall fail
To rend that vexful virgin veil!
Fashion thyself by austere craft
Into a single azure shaft
Loosed from the string of Will; behold
The Rainbow! Thou art shot, pure flame,
Past the reverberated Name
Into the Hall of Death. Therein
The Rosy Cross is subtly seen.

OLYMPAS. Is that a vision, then?

MARSYAS. It is.

OLYMPAS. Tell me thereof!

MARSYAS. O not of this!
Of all the flowers in God's field
We name not this. Our lips are sealed
In that the Universal Key
Lieth within its mystery.
But know thou this. These visions give
A hint both faint and fugitive
Yet haunting, that behind them lurks
Some Worker, greater than His works.

Yea, it is given to him who girds
His loins up, is not fooled by words,
Who takes life lightly in his hand
To throw away at Will's command,
To know that View beyond the Veil.

O petty purities and pale,
These visions I have spoken of!

The infinite Lord of Light and Love
Breaks on the soul like dawn. See! See!
Great God of Might and Majesty!
Beyond sense, beyond sight, a brilliance
Burning from His glowing glance!
Formless, all the worlds of flame
Atoms of that fiery frame!
The adept caught up and broken;
Slain, before His Name be spoken!
In that fire the soul burns up.
One drop from that celestial cup
Is an abyss, an infinite sea
That sucks up immortality!
O but the Self is manifest
Through all that blaze! Memory stumbles
Like a blind man for all the rest.
Speech, like a crag of limestone, crumbles,
While this one soul of thought is sure
Through all confusion to endure,
Infinite Truth in one small span:
This that is God is Man.

OLYMPAS. Master! I tremble and rejoice.

MARSYAS. Before His own authentic voice
Doubt flees. The chattering choughs of talk
Scatter like sparrows from a hawk.

OLYMPAS. Thenceforth the adept is certain of
The mystic mountain? Light and Love
Are Life therein, and they are his?

MARSYAS. Even so. And One supreme there is
Whom I have known, being He. Withdrawn

Within the curtains of the dawn
Dwells that concealed. Behold! he is
A blush, a breeze, a song, a kiss,
A rosy flame like Love, his eyes
Blue, the quintessence of all skies,
His hair a foam of gossamer
Pale gold as jasmine, lovelier
Than all the wheat of Paradise.
O the dim water-wells his eyes!
There is such depth of Love in them
That the adept is rapt away,
Dies on that mouth, a gleaming gem
Of dew caught in the boughs of Day!

OLYMPAS. The hearing of it is so sweet
I swoon to silence at thy feet.

MARSYAS. Rise! Let me tell thee, knowing Him,
The Path grows never wholly dim.
Lose Him, and thou indeed wert lost!
But He will not lose thee!

OLYMPAS. Exhaust
The word!

MARSYAS. Had I a million songs,
And every song a million words,
And every word a million meanings,
I could not count the choral throngs
Of Beauty's beatific birds,
Or gather up the paltry gleanings
Of this great harvest of delight!
Hast thou not heard the word aright?
That world is truly infinite.

Even as a cube is to a square
Is that to this.

OLYMPAS. Royal and rare!
Infinite light of burning wheels!

MARSYAS. Ay! the imagination reels.
Thou must attain before thou know,
And when thou knowest—Mighty woe
That silence grips the willing lips!

OLYMPAS. Ever was speech the thought's eclipse.

MARSYAS. Ay, not to veil the truth to him
Who sought it, groping in the dim
Halls of illusion, said the sages
In all the realms, in all the ages,
"Keep silence." By a word should come
Your sight, and we who see are dumb!
We have sought a thousand times to teach
Our knowledge; we are mocked by speech.
So lewdly mocked, that all this word
Seems dead, a cloudy crystal blurred,
Though it cling closer to life's heart
Than the best rhapsodies of art!

OLYMPAS. Yet speak!

MARSYAS. Ah, could I tell thee of
These infinite things of Light and Love!
There is the Peacock; in his fan
Innumerable plumes of Pan!
Oh! every plume hath countless eyes;
—Crown of created mysteries!—
Each holds a Peacock like the First.

OLYMPAS. How can this be?

MARSYAS. The mind's accurst.
It cannot be. It is. Behold,
Battalion on battalion rolled!
There is war in Heaven! The soul sings still,
Struck by the plectron of the Will;
But the mind's dumb; its only cry
The shriek of its last agony!
OLYMPAS. Surely it struggles.
MARSYAS. Bitterly!
And, mark! it must be strong to die!
The weak and partial reason dips
One edge, another springs, as when
A melting iceberg reels and tips
Under the sun. Be mighty then,
A lord of Thought, beyond wit and wonder
Balanced—then push the whole mind under,
Sunk beyond chance of floating, blent
Rightly with its own element,
Not lifting jagged peaks and bare
To the unsympathetic air!

This is the second veil; and hence
As first we slew the things of sense
Upon the altar of their God,
So must the Second Period
Slay the ideas, to attain
To that which is, beyond the brain.
OLYMPAS. To that which is?—not thought? not sense?
MARSYAS. Knowledge is but experience
Made conscious of itself. The bee,

Past master of geometry,
Hath not one word of all of it;
For wisdom is not mother-wit!
So the adept is called insane
For his frank failure to explain.
Language creates false thoughts; the true
Breed language slowly. Following
Experience of a thing we knew
Arose the need to name the thing.
So, ancients likened a man's mind
To the untamed evasive wind.
Some fool thinks names are things; and boasts
Aloud of spirits and of ghosts.
Religion follows on a pun!
And we, who know that Holy One
Of whom I told thee, seek in vain
Figure or word to make it plain.

OLYMPAS. Despair of man!

MARSYAS. Man is the seed
Of the unimaginable flower.
By singleness of thought and deed
It may bloom now—this actual hour!

OLYMPAS. The soul made safe, is vision sure
To rise therein?

MARSYAS. Though calm and pure
It seem, maybe some thought hath crept
Into his mind to baulk the adept.
The expectation of success
Suffices to destroy the stress
Of the one thought. But then, what odds?

"Man's vision goes, dissolves in God's;"
Or, "by God's grace the Light is given
To the elected heir of heaven."
These are but idle theses, dry
Dugs of the cow Theology.
Business is business. The one fact
That we know is: the gods exact
A stainless mirror. Cleanse thy soul!
Perfect the will's austere control!
For the rest, wait! The sky once clear,
Dawn needs no prompting to appear!

OLYMPAS. Enough! it shall be done.

MARSYAS. Beware!
Easily trips the big word "dare."
Each man's an Œdipus, that thinks
He hath the four powers of the Sphinx,
Will, Courage, Knowledge, Silence. Son,
Even the adepts scarce win to one!
Thy Thoughts—they fall like rotten fruits.
But to destroy the power that makes
These thoughts—thy Self? A man it takes
To tear his soul up by the roots!
This is the mandrake fable, boy!

OLYMPAS. You told me that the Path was joy.

MARSYAS. A lie to lure thee!

OLYMPAS. Master!

MARSYAS. Pain
And joy are twin toys of the brain.
Even early visions pass beyond!

OLYMPAS. Not all the crabbed runes I have conned

Told me so plain a truth. I see,
Inscrutable Simplicity!
Crushed like a blind-worm by the heel
Of all I am, perceive, and feel,
My truth was but the partial pang
That chanced to strike me as I sang.

MARSYAS. In the beginning, violence
Marks the extinction of the sense.
Anguish and rapture rack the soul.
These are disruptions of control.
Self-poised, a brooding hawk, there hangs
In the still air the adept. The bull
On the firm earth goes not so smooth!
So the first fine ecstatic pangs
Pass; balance comes.

OLYMPAS. How wonderful
Are these tall avenues of truth!

MARSYAS. So the first flash of light and terror
Is seen as shadow, known as error.
Next, light comes as light; as it grows
The sense of peace still steadier glows;
And the fierce lust, that linked the soul
To its God, attains a chaste control.
Intimate, an atomic bliss,
Is the last phrasing of that kiss.
Not ecstasy, but peace, pure peace!

Invisible the dew sublimes
From the great mother, subtly climbs
And loves the leaves! Yea, in the end,

Vision all vision must transcend.
These glories are mere scaffolding
To the Closed Palace of the King.

OLYMPAS. Yet, saidst thou, ere the new flower shoots
The soul is torn up by the roots.

MARSYAS. Now come we to the intimate things
Known to how few! Man's being clings
First to the outer. Free from these
The inner sheathings, and he sees
Those sheathings as external. Strip
One after one each lovely lip
From the full rose-bud! Ever new
Leaps the next petal to the view.
What binds them but Desire? Disease
Most dire of direful Destiny's!

OLYMPAS. I have abandoned all to tread
The brilliant pathway overhead!

MARSYAS. Easy to say. To abandon all,
All must be first loved and possessed.
Nor thou nor I have burst the thrall.
All—as I offered half in jest,
Sceptic—was torn away from me.
Not without pain! THEY slew my child,
Dragged my wife down to infamy
Loathlier than death, drove to the wild
My tortured body, stripped me of
Wealth, health, youth, beauty, ardour, love.
Thou hast abandoned all? Then try
A speck of dust within the eye!

OLYMPAS. But that is different!

MARSYAS. Life is one.
Magic is life. The physical
(Men name it) is a house of call
For the adept, heir of the sun!
Bombard the house! it groans and gapes.
The adept runs forth, and so escapes
That ruin!

OLYMPAS. Smoothly parallel
The ruin of the mind as well?

MARSYAS. Ay! Hear the Ordeal of the Veil,
The Second Veil! . . . O spare me this
Magical memory! I pale
To show the Veil of the Abyss.
Nay, let confession be complete!

OLYMPAS. Master, I bend me at thy feet—
Why do they sweat with blood and dew?

MARSYAS. Blind horror catches at my breath.
The path of the abyss runs through
Things darker, dismaller than death!
Courage and will! What boots their force?
The mind rears like a frightened horse.
There is no memory possible
Of that unfathomable hell.
Even the shadows that arise
Are things too dreadful to recount!
There's no such doom in Destiny's
Harvest of horror. The white fount
Of speech is stifled at its source.
Know, the sane spirit keeps its course
By this, that everything it thinks
Hath causal or contingent links.

Destroy them, and destroy the mind!
O bestial, bottomless, and blind
Black pit of all insanity!
The adept must make his way to thee!
This is the end of all our pain,
The dissolution of the brain!
For lo! in this no mortar sticks;
Down comes the house—a hail of bricks!
The sense of all I hear is drowned;
Tap, tap, isolated sound,
Patters, clatters, batters, chatters,
Tap, tap, tap, and nothing matters!
Senseless hallucinations roll
Across the curtain of the soul.
Each ripple on the river seems
The madness of a maniac's dreams!
So in the self no memory-chain
Or causal wisp to bind the straws!
The Self disrupted! Blank, insane,
Both of existence and of laws,
The Ego and the Universe
Fall to one black chaotic curse.

OLYMPAS. So ends philosophy's inquiry:
"Summa scientia nihil scire."

MARSYAS. Ay, but that reasoned thesis lacks
The impact of reality.
This vision is a battle axe
Splitting the skull. O pardon me!
But my soul faints, my stomach sinks.
Let me pass on!

OLYMPAS. My being drinks

The nectar-poison of the Sphinx.
This is a bitter medicine!

MARSYAS. Black snare that I was taken in!
How one may pass I hardly know.
Maybe time never blots the track.
Black, black, intolerably black!
Go, spectre of the ages, go!
Suffice it that I passed beyond.
I found the secret of the bond
Of thought to thought through countless years,
Through many lives, in many spheres,
Brought to a point the dark design
Of this existence that is mine.
I knew my secret. *All I was*
I brought into the burning-glass,
And all its focussed light and heat
Charred *all I am*. The rune's complete
When *all I shall be* flashes by
Like a shadow on the sky.

Then I dropped my reasoning.
Vacant and accursed thing!
By my Will I swept away
The web of metaphysic, smiled
At the blind labyrinth, where the grey
Old snake of madness wove his wild
Curse! As I trod the trackless way
Through sunless gorges of Cathay,
I became a little child.
By nameless rivers, swirling through

Chasms, a fantastic blue,
Month by month, on barren hills,
In burning heat, in bitter chills,
Tropic forest, Tartar snow,
Smaragdine archipelago,
See me—led by some wise hand
That I did not understand.
Morn and noon and eve and night
I, the forlorn eremite,
Called on Him with mild devotion,
As the dew-drop woos the ocean.

In my wanderings I came
To an ancient park aflame
With fairies' feet. Still wrapped in love
I was caught up, beyond, above
The tides of being. The great sight
Of the intolerable light
Of the whole universe that wove
The labyrinth of life and love
Blazed in me. Then some giant will,
Mine or another's, thrust a thrill
Through the great vision. All the light
Went out in an immortal night,
The world annihilated by
The opening of the Master's Eye.
How can I tell it?

OLYMPAS. Master, master!
A sense of some divine disaster
Abases me.

MARSYAS. Indeed, the shrine
Is desolate of the divine!
But all the illusion gone, behold
The One that is!

OLYMPAS. Royally rolled,
I hear strange music in the air!

MARSYAS. It is the angelic choir, aware
Of the great Ordeal dared and done
By one more Brother of the Sun!

OLYMPAS. Master, the shriek of a great bird
Blends with the torrent of the thunder.

MARSYAS. It is the echo of the word
That tore the universe asunder.

OLYMPAS. Master, thy stature spans the sky.

MARSYAS. Verily; but it is not I.
The adept dissolves—pale phantom form
Blown from the black mouth of the storm.
It is another that arises!

OLYMPAS. Yet in thee, through thee!

MARSYAS. I am not.

OLYMPAS. For me thou art.

MARSYAS. So that suffices
To seal thy will? To cast thy lot
Into the lap of God? Then, well!

OLYMPAS. Ay, there is no more potent spell.
Through life, through death, by land and sea
Most surely will I follow thee.

MARSYAS. Follow thyself, not me. Thou hast
An Holy Guardian Angel, bound
To lead thee from thy bitter waste

To the inscrutable profound
That is His covenanted ground.

OLYMPAS. Thou who hast known these master-keys
Of all creation's mysteries,
Tell me, what followed the great gust
Of God that blew his world to dust?

MARSYAS. I, even I the man, became
As a great sword of flashing flame.
My life, informed with holiness,
Conscious of its own loveliness,
Like a well that overflows
At the limit of the snows,
Sent its crystal stream to gladden
The hearts of men, their lives to madden
With the intoxicating bliss
(Wine mixed with myrrh and ambergris!)
Of this bitter-sweet perfume,
This gorse's blaze of prickly bloom
That is the Wisdom of the Way.
Then springs the statue from the clay,
And all God's doubted fatherhood
Is seen to be supremely good.

Live within the sane sweet sun!
Leave the shadow-world alone!

OLYMPAS. There is a crown for every one;
For every one there is a throne!

MARSYAS. That crown is Silence. Sealed and sure!
That throne is Knowledge perfect pure.
Below that throne adoring stand

Virtues in a blissful band;
Mercy, majesty and power,
Beauty and harmony and strength,
Triumph and splendour, starry shower
Of flames that flake their lily length,
A necklet of pure light, far-flung
Down to the Base, from which is hung
A pearl, the Universe, whose sight
Is one globed jewel of delight.
Fallen no more! A bowered bride
Blushing to be satisfied!

OLYMPAS. All this, if once the Eye unclose?

MARSYAS. The golden cross, the ruby rose
Are gone, when flaming from afar
The Hawk's eye blinds the Silver Star.

O brothers of the Star, caressed
By its cool flames from brow to breast,
Is there some rapture yet to excite
This prone and pallid neophyte?

OLYMPAS. O but there is no need of this!
I burn toward the abyss of Bliss.
I call the Four Powers of the Name;
Earth, wind and cloud, sea, smoke and flame
To witness: by this triune Star
I swear to break the twi-forked bar.
But how to attain? Flexes and leans
The strongest will that lacks the means.

MARSYAS. There are seven keys to the great gate,
Being eight in one and one in eight.

AHA!

First, let the body of thee be still,
Bound by the cerements of will,
Corpse-rigid; thus thou mayst abort
The fidget-babes that tease the thought.
Next, let the breath-rhythm be low,
Easy, regular, and slow;
So that thy being be in tune
With the great sea's Pacific swoon.
Third, let thy life be pure and calm
Swayed softly as a windless palm.
Fourth, let the will-to-live be bound
To the one love of the Profound.
Fifth, let the thought, divinely free
From sense, observe its entity.
Watch every thought that springs; enhance
Hour after hour thy vigilance!
Intense and keen, turned inward, miss
No atom of analysis!
Sixth, on one thought securely pinned
Still every whisper of the wind!
So like a flame straight and unstirred
Burn up thy being in one word!
Next, still that ecstasy, prolong
Thy meditation steep and strong,
Slaying even God, should He distract
Thy attention from the chosen act!
Last, all these things in one o'erpowered,
Time that the midnight blossom flowered!
The oneness is. Yet even in this,
My son, thou shalt not do amiss

If thou restrain the expression, shoot
Thy glance to rapture's darkling root,
Discarding name, form, sight, and stress
Even of this high consciousness;
Pierce to the heart! I leave thee here:
Thou art the Master. I revere
Thy radiance that rolls afar,
O Brother of the Silver Star!

OLYMPAS. Ah, but no ease may lap my limbs.
Giants and sorcerers oppose;
Ogres and dragons are my foes!
Leviathan against me swims,
And lions roar, and Boreas blows!
No Zephyrs woo, no happy hymns
Pæan the Pilgrim of the Rose!

MARSYAS. I teach the royal road of light.
Be thou, devoutly eremite,
Free of thy fate. Choose tenderly
A place for thine Academy.
Let there be an holy wood
Of embowered solitude
By the still, the rainless river,
Underneath the tangled roots
Of majestic trees that quiver
In the quiet airs; where shoots
Of the kindly grass are green,
Moss and ferns asleep between,
Lilies in the water lapped,
Sunbeams in the branches trapped
—Windless and eternal even!
Silenced all the birds of heaven

By the low insistent call
Of the constant waterfall.
There, to such a setting be
Its carven gem of deity,
A central flawless fire, enthralled
Like Truth within an emerald!
Thou shalt have a birchen bark
On the river in the dark;
And at the midnight thou shalt go
To the mid-stream's smoothest flow,
And strike upon a golden bell
The spirit's call; then say the spell:
"Angel, mine angel, draw thee nigh!"
Making the Sign of Magistry
With wand of lapis lazuli.
Then, it may be, through the blind dumb
Night thou shalt see thine angel come,
Hear the faint whisper of his wings,
Behold the starry breast begemmed
With the twelve stones of the twelve kings!
His forehead shall be diademed
With the faint light of stars, wherein
The Eye gleams dominant and keen.
Thereat thou swoonest; and thy love
Shall catch the subtle voice thereof.
He shall inform his happy lover;
My foolish prating shall be over!

OLYMPAS. O now I burn with holy haste.
This doctrine hath so sweet a taste
That all the other wine is sour.

MARSYAS. Son, there's a bee for every flower.

Lie open, a chameleon cup,
And let Him suck thine honey up!

OLYMPAS. There is one doubt. When souls attain
Such an unimagined gain
Shall not others mark them, wise
Beyond mere mortal destinies?

MARSYAS. Such are not the perfect saints.
While the imagination faints
Before their truth, they veil it close
As amid the utmost snows
The tallest peaks most straitly hide
With clouds their holy heads. Divide
The planes! Be ever as you can
A simple honest gentleman!
Body and manners be at ease,
Not bloat with blazoned sanctities!
Who fights as fights the soldier-saint?
And see the artist-adept paint!
Weak are those souls that fear the stress
Of earth upon their holiness!
They fast, they eat fantastic food,
They prate of beans and brotherhood,
Wear sandals, and long hair, and spats,
And think that makes them Arahats!
How shall man still his spirit-storm?
Rational Dress and Food Reform!

OLYMPAS. I know such saints.

MARSYAS. An easy vice:
So wondrous well they advertise!
O their mean souls are satisfied

With wind of spiritual pride.
They're all negation. "Do not eat;
What poison to the soul is meat!
Drink not; smoke not; deny the will!
Wine and tobacco make us ill."
Magic is life; the Will to Live
Is one supreme Affirmative.
These things that flinch from Life are worth
No more to Heaven than to Earth.
Affirm the everlasting Yes!

OLYMPAS. Those saints at least score one success:
Perfection of their priggishness!

MARSYAS. Enough. The soul is subtlier fed
With meditation's wine and bread.
Forget their failings and our own;
Fix all our thoughts on Love alone!

Ah, boy, all crowns and thrones above
Is the sanctity of love.
In His warm and secret shrine
Is a cup of perfect wine,
Whereof one drop is medicine
Against all ills that hurt the soul.
A flaming daughter of the Jinn
Brought to me once a wingèd scroll,
Wherein I read the spell that brings
The knowledge of that King of Kings.
Angel, I invoke thee now!
Bend on me the starry brow!
Spread the eagle wings above

The pavilion of our love! . . . .
Rise from your starry sapphire seats!
See, where through the quickening skies
The oriflamme of beauty beats
Heralding loyal legionaries,
Whose flame of golden javelins
Fences those peerless paladins.
There are the burning lamps of them,
Splendid star-clusters to begem
The trailing torrents of those blue
Bright wings that bear mine angel through!
O Thou art like an Hawk of Gold,
Miraculously manifold,
For all the sky's aflame to be
A mirror magical of Thee!
The stars seem comets, rushing down
To gem thy robes, bedew thy crown.
Like the moon-plumes of a strange bird
By a great wind sublimely stirred,
Thou drawest the light of all the skies
Into thy wake. The heaven dies
In bubbling froth of light, that foams
About thine ardour. All the domes
Of all the heavens close above thee
As thou art known of me who love thee.
Excellent kiss, thou fastenest on
This soul of mine, that it is gone,
Gone from all life, and rapt away
Into the infinite starry spray
Of thine own Æon . . . Alas for me!

I faint. Thy mystic majesty
Absorbs this spark.

OLYMPAS. All hail! all hail!
White splendour through the viewless veil!
I am drawn with thee to rapture.

MARSYAS. Stay!
I bear a message. Heaven hath sent
The knowledge of a new sweet way
Into the Secret Element.

OLYMPAS. Master, while yet the glory clings
Declare this mystery magical!

MARSYAS. I am yet borne on those blue wings
Into the Essence of the All.
Now, now I stand on earth again,
Though, blazing through each nerve and vein,
The light yet holds its choral course,
Filling my frame with fiery force
Like God's. Now hear the Apocalypse
New-fledged on these reluctant lips!

OLYMPAS. I tremble like an aspen, quiver
Like light upon a rainy river!

MARSYAS. Do what thou wilt! is the sole word
Of law that my attainment heard.
Arise, and lay thine hand on God!
Arise, and set a period
Unto Restriction! That is sin:
To hold thine holy spirit in!
O thou that chafest at thy bars,
Invoke Nuit beneath her stars
With a pure heart (Her incense burned

Of gums and woods, in gold inurned),
And let the serpent flame therein
A little, and thy soul shall win
To lie within her bosom. Lo!
Thou wouldst give all—and she cries: No!
Take all, and take me! Gather spice
And virgins and great pearls of price!
Worship me in a single robe,
Crowned richly! Girdle of the globe,
I love thee! Pale and purple, veiled,
Voluptuous, swan silver-sailed,
I love thee. I am drunkenness
Of the inmost sense; my soul's caress
Is toward thee! Let my priestess stand
Bare and rejoicing, softly fanned
By smooth-lipped acolytes, upon
Mine iridescent altar-stone,
And in her love-chaunt swooningly
Say evermore: To me! To me!
I am the azure-lidded daughter
Of sunset; the all-girdling water;
The naked brilliance of the sky
In the voluptuous night am I!
With song, with jewel, with perfume,
Wake all my rose's blush and bloom!
Drink to me! Love me! I love thee,
My love, my lord—to me! to me!

OLYMPAS. There is no harshness in the breath
Of this—is life surpassed, and death?

MARSYAS. There is the Snake that gives delight

And Knowledge, stirs the heart aright
With drunkenness. Strange drugs are thine,
Hadit, and draughts of wizard wine!
These do no hurt. Thine hermits dwell
Not in the cold secretive cell,
But under purple canopies
With mighty-breasted mistresses
Magnificent as lionesses—
Tender and terrible caresses!
Fire lives, and light, in eager eyes;
And massed huge hair about them lies.
They lead their hosts to victory:
In every joy they are kings; then see
That secret serpent coiled to spring
And win the world! O priest and king,
Let there be feasting, foining, fighting,
A revel of lusting, singing, smiting!
Work; be the bed of work! Hold! Hold!
The stars' kiss is as molten gold.
Harden! Hold thyself up! now die—
Ah! Ah! Exceed! Exceed!

OLYMPAS. And I?

MARSYAS. My stature shall surpass the stars:
He hath said it! Men shall worship me
In hidden woods, on barren scaurs,
Henceforth to all eternity.

OLYMPAS. Hail! I adore thee! Let us feast.

MARSYAS. I am the consecrated Beast.
I build the Abominable House.
The Scarlet Woman is my Spouse—

OLYMPAS. What is this word?
MARSYAS. Thou canst not know
Till thou hast passed the Fourth Ordeal.
OLYMPAS. I worship thee. The moon-rays flow
Masterfully rich and real
From thy red mouth, and burst, young suns
Chanting before the Holy Ones
Thine Eight Mysterious Orisons!
MARSYAS. The last spell! The availing word!
The two completed by the third!
The Lord of War, of Vengeance
That slayeth with a single glance!
This light is in me of my Lord.
His Name is this far-whirling sword.
I push His order. Keen and swift
My Hawk's eye flames; these arms uplift
The Banner of Silence and of Strength—
Hail! Hail! thou art here, my Lord, at length!
Lo, the Hawk-Headed Lord am I:
My nemyss shrouds the night-blue sky.
Hail! ye twin warriors that guard
The pillars of the world! Your time
Is nigh at hand. The snake that marred
Heaven with his inexhaustible slime
Is slain; I bear the Wand of Power,
The Wand that waxes and that wanes;
I crush the Universe this hour
In my left hand; and naught remains!
Ho! for the splendour in my name
Hidden and glorious, a flame

Secretly shooting from the sun.
Aum! Ha!—my destiny is done.
The Word is spoken and concealed.

OLYMPAS. I am stunned. What wonder was revealed?

MARSYAS. The rite is secret.

OLYMPAS. Profits it?

MARSYAS. Only to wisdom and to wit.

OLYMPAS. The other did no less.

MARSYAS. Then prove
Both by the master-key of Love.
The lock turns stiffly? Shalt thou shirk
To use the sacred oil of work?
Not from the valley shalt thou test
The eggs that line the eagle's nest!
Climb, with thy life at stake, the ice,
The sheer wall of the precipice!
Master the cornice, gain the breach,
And learn what next the ridge can teach!
Yet—not the ridge itself may speak
The secret of the final peak.

OLYMPAS. All ridges join at last.

MARSYAS. Admitted,
O thou astute and subtle-witted!
Yet one—loose, jaggèd, clad in mist!
Another—firm, smooth, loved and kissed
By the soft sun! Our order hath
This secret of the solar path,
Even as our Lord the Beast hath won
The mystic Number of the Sun.

OLYMPAS. These secrets are too high for me.

MARSYAS. Nay, little brother! Come and see!
Neither by faith nor fear nor awe
Approach the doctrine of the Law!
Truth, Courage, Love, shall win the bout,
And those three others be cast out.

OLYMPAS. Lead me, Master, by the hand
Gently to this gracious land!
Let me drink the doctrine in,
An all-healing medicine!
Let me rise, correct and firm,
Steady striding to the term,
Master of my fate, to rise
To imperial destinies;
With the sun's ensanguine dart
Spear-bright in my blazing heart,
And my being's basil-plant
Bright and hard as adamant!

MARSYAS. Yonder, faintly luminous,
The yellow desert waits for us.
Lithe and eager, hand in hand,
We travel to the lonely land.
There, beneath the stars, the smoke
Of our incense shall invoke
The Queen of Space; and subtly She
Shall bend from Her infinity
Like a lambent flame of blue,
Touching us, and piercing through
All the sense-webs that we are
As the æthyr penetrates a star!
Her hands caressing the black earth,

Her sweet lithe body arched for love,
Her feet a Zephyr to the flowers,
She calls my name—she gives the sign
That she is mine, supremely mine,
And clinging to the infinite girth
My soul gets perfect joy thereof
Beyond the abysses and the hours;
So that—I kiss her lovely brows;
She bathes my body in perfume
Of sweat . . . . O thou my secret spouse,
Continuous One of Heaven! illume
My soul with this arcane delight,
Voluptuous Daughter of the Night!
Eat me up wholly with the glance
Of thy luxurious brilliance!

OLYMPAS. The desert calls.

MARSYAS. Then let us go!
Or seek the sacramental snow,
Where like an high-priest I may stand
With acolytes on every hand,
The lesser peaks—my will withdrawn
To invoke the dayspring from the dawn,
Changing that rosy smoke of light
To a pure crystalline white;
Though the mist of mind, as draws
A dancer round her limbs the gauze,
Clothe Light, and show the virgin Sun
A lemon-pale medallion!
Thence leap we leashless to the goal,
Stainless star-rapture of the soul.

So the altar-fires fade
As the Godhead is displayed.
Nay, we stir not. Everywhere
Is our temple right appointed.
All the earth is faery fair
For us. Am I not anointed?
The Sigil burns upon the brow
At the adjuration—here and now.

OLYMPAS. The air is laden with perfumes.

MARSYAS. Behold! It beams—it burns—it blooms.

* * * * *

OLYMPAS. Master, how subtly hast thou drawn
The daylight from the Golden Dawn,
Bidden the Cavernous Mount unfold
Its Ruby Rose, its Cross of Gold;
Until I saw, flashed from afar,
The Hawk's Eye in the Silver Star!

MARSYAS. Peace to all beings. Peace to thee,
Co-heir of mine eternity!
Peace to the greatest and the least,
To nebula and nenuphar!
Light in abundance be increased
On them that dream that shadows are!

OLYMPAS. Blessing and worship to The Beast,
The prophet of the lovely Star!

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THE EQUINOX

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