

## MYSTIC LIGHT

### *Eye Hath Not Seen, Nor Ear Heard*

**T**HE HUMAN physical senses of seeing and hearing are earthly shadows of two extrasensory faculties. When referred to in the Gospels, which are first and foremost esoteric documents, seeing and hearing designate this supersensory perception, for knowledge of the spiritual worlds is conveyed by analogy (or parable), in terms of what one sees and hears in the physical world.

These two modes of earthly knowing relate to the two currents of human thought first represented by Cain and Abel. The smoke of Abel's flesh offering ascended to God. Through devotion and obedience he was vertically aligned with Jehovah. Cain's offering of plants, cultivated and harvested by his own ingenuity and effort, represented the horizontal thought stream that was directed toward the world of sense experience, enabling man to harness physical energies and to develop the earth's material elements. Cain's initiative was inspired by Lucifer, whose original deviation from the cosmic plan is characterized as "stealing" astral light (also detailed in the Prometheus myth) and constituting his being as a center for its radiation. Lucifer sought not to reflect divine light in lunar passivity but to be a primary light source. Sons of Cain, as *phree messen*, are children of light and of the light-bearer Lucifer. But this light is not the *true* light. It is still derivative and inflected. The seeing that Lucifer makes possible is an egoistic seeing, made possible by the shadow that astral egoism casts over the light issu-



From *Die Bibel in Bildern*, Julius Schnorr von Carolsfeld (1789-1853)

#### *The Offerings of Cain and Abel*

*The involuntary clairvoyance of early humanity was killed by the Cain impulse that directed the mind to sense-based thinking to transform the earth. In time voluntary clairvoyance shall be evolved from logical thinking fostered by earthly experience. The mattock symbolizes the positive mind that both "slays" innocence and makes a garden of the earth.*

ing from the spiritual world.

The two soul currents of ego-centered world seeing and the vertical devotional attitude in which egoic impulses are suppressed, making revelation possible, both reside in the individual soul as the Cain and Abel impulses, closely united and yet in opposition to each other. The ascending current of thought perception through revelation is perpetually killed by subjective thinking which is under the curse of Cain: "A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth" (Gen. 4:12). Objective human seeing must roam the earth estranged from the spiritual world until a higher form of seeing can be evolved.

Seeing and hearing each have their false or futile dimensions, depending on our susceptibility to the influence of Lucifer, the spirit of egoism, or Ahriman, the spirit of materialism, who is referred

to by John the evangelist as “the prince of this world” (14:30). Thus deceptive sights may be mirages (physical), hallucinations (etheric), or fantasies (desire world); or yet again they may be stripped-down data carrying no soul content. Ahrimanic sensation is all and nothing but denotation, mere molecular agitation. Sound doesn’t “mean” anything, doesn’t refer to anything other than what it is as quantity. All associations it may conjure are relative and arbitrary, the antics of atoms in the brain.

We tread a path between strict literalism and dreamy escapism. We clearly perceive the outer world of objects and know that it is founded on causes proceeding from superphysical worlds. We know too that these sourcing higher, worlds have an objective reality to which self-reflexive egoism is blind.

St. Paul admonishes us to try the spirits. What do the spirits tell us? We are on the right path of Christian development when we can distinguish between the Master’s voice and both the voice of the tempter, who urges *do it*, and the voice of Ahrimanic fear and trembling, which warns *don’t do it*. Lucifer beckons, “Come away from this world of sorrow and lave in well-deserved bliss. Leave your body of disease and death.” Ahriman urges, “Seek immortality of your body, you can’t do too much for it. It’s your only life. Guard against germs. Take medicines. Get gold. Fence in your property. Take out insurance on your life. Don’t talk to strangers. You can’t be too careful. Trusting others is dangerous.”

But Christ tells us that the human body is a temple and He will come to dwell in it. But He is not of this world, nor are we. Physical existence is difficult and full of tribulation, but be of good cheer, for Christ has overcome the world. Yet we must realize that only by being in the physical world can we acquire the power to become co-creators with our heavenly Father and be transformed by right suffering into beings of love, a love that lights up and vitalizes the world.

Lucifer prompts to false courage, bravado, and the legitimacy of anger. Ahriman insinuates suspicion, hate, and pessimism. Christ teaches faith, hope, and love through humility, patience, and wakefulness. His word is true. And because it is true, his own know his voice as it speaks through the Holy Spirit.

Ahriman teaches that only the material world exists. He promotes the scientific skepticism of the doubting Thomases who believe only what they can see and touch. Paul refers to Ahriman as “the god of this world [who] has blinded the minds of them who believe not” (2 Cor. 4:4). Paul also asserts that if the gospel is hid, it is hid to them who are lost (2 Cor. 4:3); that is, them who are unwilling to believe. For spiritual vision is entirely a voluntary attainment, not a given, as physical sight. When Peter identifies Jesus as the Christ, he proves he has spiritual sight, for flesh and blood cannot directly reveal spirit.

Lucifer’s light would dazzle and overwhelm us. It is exuberant, magical, sensational. Christ’s light is interior, withheld, yet the very basis for consciousness, for it is the light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is the light that reveals but itself is hidden. If Lucifer is the false light, Ahriman enshrines physical sight and would bind us to what we see to the extent that we become prisoners of our seeing. Luciferic egoism vaunts, “I can do anything I want.” The Christed ego says, “I can do all things *through* Christ Who strengthens me. Not I, but Christ, He doeth the works.”

As faculties of the physical body, hearing was elaborated before seeing in the Saturn revolution of the Earth period, before the creation of light. Seeing was introduced during the Sun revolution of the Earth period, when light was first brought forth.

The whole enterprise of planting and harvesting, while a consequence of the fall, is a figure for the planting of human consciousness in the physical world, that experience may be gleaned and understanding extracted. This arduous process describes the route to revelation. But it is spiritual knowledge gained by choice, in freedom, through conscious, deliberate effort. And since the visible world, when rightly perceived, mirrors the activity of invisible spirit beings, through their sensory involvement in the physical world humans become self-educators and free agents in their own enlightenment. To the extent that the fruits of human endeavor are offered as shewbread and incense to the God within will man develop the cognitive faculties enabling him to enter into direct communion through speech, seeing, and hearing in the Holy of Holies. To the extent that man’s earthly activities become ends in themselves,

or are but expressions of his will-to-power and self-love will he erect towers of babel and make of the earth another cinder like the moon.

As faculties that can increasingly give witness to the presence of the Creator, hearing and seeing are to be used in full consciousness, purposefully, respectfully, as if they were articles in the sanctuary of the temple—“for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” (I Cor. 3:17)

Hearing and seeing refer to the content and result of listening and looking. One may listen, but not hear, as one may look, but not see. One may also see and hear, but not understand. A good listener has control of both the tongue and its trigger, the desire nature. As the apostle James remarks (3:2), the man who does not offend in word is able also to bridle the whole body. Vacuous looking, gazing while pre-

Being able to hear truly presumes that one has “heard oneself out,” has confronted and overcome all the saturnine voices of fear and avoidance and can resist the siren sounds of temptation and trespass. One has “heard it all,” all the insults and negative verdicts that can assail one. As the occult precept states, “before the eyes can see, they must become incapable of tears.” Why? Tears blind. More correctly, ungoverned emotions blind. He who is ruled by his emotions in the desire world, the world of spiritual “seeing,” would be quickly led astray and become the dupe and victim of its inhabitants. Likewise, “before the ears can hear, they must have lost their sensitiveness,” all egoism. Before we can enter the World of Thought, true Spirit world, we must have lost our self, have nothing to relate to or identify with. Utter annihilation

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occupied or dreaming, or unfocused looking, yield nothing. Animals look and see, but do not understand in the cognitive sense of being conscious that they are seeing. *That* consciousness rests with the animal Group Spirits in the Desire World.

The faculty of seeing is more aggressive and more subject to control than hearing. It involves a willed effort to locate, register, and abstract a visible content in space. Hearing is more ingressive. Sounds in space locate the hearer and enter his consciousness, as it were, unbidden. But intentional, accurate hearing and seeing require conscious control of their respective functions, for it is the mind that directs them and assesses the value of the messages that these two sensory angels deliver.

Christian knowing continues the Cain-Abel streams and is characterized in the prologue to Luke’s Gospel as consisting of “eye-witnesses” and “ministers of the word”—referring to those who had evolved extrasensory vision (like Peter), and others whose clairaudience could discern the Word made flesh and acknowledge His Truth.

seems imminent. As we become wise, ignorance is dissolved in tears. On the road to wisdom, we will encounter, in the words of William Wordsworth, “thoughts that lie too deep for tears.” We also learn to turn a deaf ear to any sounds that demean or merely distract. Falsehood can no longer simulate sincerity by adjusting the tone and inflection of its voice or mislead by donning the appearance of beauty or shallow brightness.

What bearing has all this on our daily affairs? It is precisely these affairs that prepare us to hear and see truly by maintaining our presence of mind in all the dramas and drudgeries that our senses script for us. As Max Heindel explains, the first two steps on the path of esoteric development are observation (*observe*) and discrimination. Our ears and eyes *serve* or correctly register the *object*. Then we process the sensory images and become adept at distinguishing between the important and the trivial, the true and the false, the enduring and the ephemeral.

One danger posed by material seeing is that its content will be viewed as an ultimate reality. So

regarded, all physical seeing is idolatry. For this reason the Holy of Holies in the ancient Tabernacle in the wilderness was dark, signifying that ultimate realities are not seen in the illusory light of day. In that sacred precinct one sees only if one has evolved the light that makes spiritual seeing possible. One enters purged of worldly images. And one hears. *Debir*, the Hebrew name for this westernmost enclosure, derives from the word *to speak*.

The notion that spiritual realities can be proved by eye evidence shows an ignorance that Christ Jesus never gratified. It was a wicked generation that would not believe unless it saw signs and wonders. In other words, authentic belief is founded on an inner seeing, a knowing independent of physical sight, able to cast a blind eye upon all contrary appearances. To see what one wants to see means that the eyes are directed by the mind and are capable of seeing what is not and not seeing what is. While one may see correctly, the conclusions drawn from observation may be erroneous. Also, one may see selectively, due to bias or ignorance. So do suspicion, fear, naivete, blind optimism, and pessimism gather false reports through the senses.

The abuses of hearing are perhaps more dangerous because this sense is more intimate and interior. We can close or unfocus our eyes or turn our head, but closing the ears is not as easy. So we learn either to not listen, as a child who attempts to ignore parents who continually fight, as neighbors come to disregard him who cries wolf too many times, or as we inwardly adjust to phase out the din of some popular music (so-called). The faculty of concentration is to be developed to the point where the ego can choose to hear no outer sound. Indeed, entering the Great Silence at the threshold to the World of Thought assumes this degree of mind control.

When should we not lend an ear? Whenever we encounter gossip, tales told of another that impugn or disparage. Since we don't know what another will say, we will in good faith be open, but we will not inwardly engage what we hear until we have a clear and, if necessary, independent basis for doing so.

On earth we see through a glass, darkly. To see "face to face" describes soul perceiving soul. A yet higher form of cognition is to know as we are known. The Rosicrucian term for seeing in the



Woodcut, c.1496, Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528)

#### ***The Seven Trumpet Angels***

*Before John the Apocalyptist saw the seven angels with trumpets, "there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour." (8:1) So does he indicate entry into the World of Thought, where objective reality is perceived as "silent sound." From this "causal world" issue events that manifest in lower worlds.*

Desire World is *Imagination*. This does not refer to imaginary images, as in dreams and fantasies. Rather do we perceive images which are more real than any sense-based picture. Imagination is superseded by *Inspiration*, the technical term used to describe knowledge derived from spiritual hearing in the region of concrete thought. There spiritual beings speak to us through archetypal cosmic processes and relationships. Knowledge obtained in the region of abstract thought is conveyed by the supersensible faculty technically called *Intuition*, which, like Imagination and Inspiration, has none of the vagueness or elusiveness associated with the term's popular use. It signifies luminous clarity and indubitable certainty of the spiritual being with whom one identifies. Through

Intuition one is in the other being as that being, yet without canceling one's individual identity. This attainment is possible only after one has first summoned the strength to exist in the nothingness at the portal to the World of Thought without giving way to the experience of annihilation.

As our senses and sensibilities are developed and refined, much of what we encounter through seeing and hearing on the material plane becomes increasingly afflicting or affecting. Human pettiness and coldness, ill-spoken or self-serving words, crude gestures, disrespect of the earth and all its creatures, slovenly attitudes, the cartoon representation of human affairs that devalues life and demeans human dignity—these sensory affronts, visual vulgarities and crass sounds, litter our mental landscape and are aggravated by the ubiquitous print, video, and electronic media. While many people are largely unconscious of these conditions, they are but a prelude to the unseemly, indeed hellish, conditions prevailing in the lower Desire World, which the evolving ego will surely encounter: first in dreams; then in the Guardian of the Threshold, the embodiment of one's capacity for and total past generation of evil and ugliness; and finally in the Desire World itself.

The biblical fall describes that time when darkness fell on the worlds of Spirit and day dawned in the physical world. When the Lucifer impulse entered into fledgling humanity, the nascent I-principle fell victim to astral egoism and cast itself down into the egoistic instincts of the desire body. Man was no longer translucent to the cosmic light of the Spirit, for egoism formed an obstacle to that light.

From one vantage, the first to see in the physical world were the blessed, the pioneers. They were thus the first to lose the gift of etheric vision. Some of them have become the first to regain—by conscious effort, moral development, and spiritual discernment—both positive clairvoyance and the faculty of hearing the Voice of the Shepherd, which is the essential condition for acceptance of the Christ-impulse, for that *is* the Shepherd's Voice.

Like the man born blind (John 9) we are born blind to spirit worlds and to the presence of the living Christ. Our destiny is, for a time, to be blinded to these higher worlds so that we may develop the moral and mental capacities to consciously discern



Artist unknown, 19th century

#### ***Christ Jesus Healing the Man Blind from Birth***

*“I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.”—John 9:39*

Him, capacities acquired in the very physical world that occults spiritual being!

In silence a person learns to think, as in curbing the urge to movement he learns to speak. When speaking is economized and even suppressed, that action reverberates in the mental sphere where it gives impetus to thinking. Indiscriminate talkers are both poor listeners and poor thinkers. A yet higher transformation of movement—on the continuum through speech and thought—occurs when thought itself is held in check, concentrated on one point. In this exercise the faculty for spiritual seeing is evolved.

We can see and hear only as much as we know. Words have no meaning if one does not know the language. The Apocalypse is written in the language of symbols for which the science of spirit provides keys. At present the book of Revelation conceals as much as it reveals. With many passages we echo the

## The Birth Out of Silence

This day, as I was walking amidst the utterances of my soul in search of the fairest one to bestow upon men, I met Life.

And Life said to me: "Listen to my voice and be still."

I answered, "Am I not an utterer? And art Thou not speaking through me?"

A smile brushed the lips of Life as bird wings the roses. The silence rang with ecstatic fragrance.

And Life murmured: "Beloved! He who speaketh of me loseth Me."

My heart beat sadly as a crimson sunset speared with black clouds. The air became heavy with the sighs of things undone. And I answered: "He who loseth Life findeth Love."

The silence grew deeper beyond all stillness. Sheer mountain walls flung themselves at the light to crush the sky away from my soul. The dark became poignant with utter emptiness; and I stood, naked, shorn of all gifts, even of the fairest, the gift of giving.

Time wound itself round the mazes of Space. There came nothing to see, nothing to hear and nothing to feel. The "I" waned small, small beyond perception—lost.

And when all there was had shrunk into the "had been," when all future was lost into the eternal, a Tone began to wax out of the No-thing.

And the Tone chanted its soul to itself. And the Tone gave birth to its own utterance. The walls of the mountains grew golden with radiance. The Empty became rich with fullness inexhaustible.

And that which has been "I" soared on the wings of tone; soared inward, soared upward, soared everywhere, until all space became filled with that radiance and that tone that had surged out of the death of Time and the death of Self.

And Space became great with the child of Life and Love.

—Rudhyar

disciples' words, "This is a hard saying. Who can hear it?" (John 6:60). Each of the angel's letters to the seven churches, sent through John, concludes with the challenge, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the spirit says unto the churches." Here the Spirit of Truth is addressing our spiritual understanding. In time higher hearing will admit living truth and conform the soul to it, even as do the words that Christ speaks, for "They are spirit and they are life." (John 6:63)

If human seeing is to reascend to the immaterial worlds, it must know how to be blind to the material world. It must unbind itself from the pull of things. Of course things pull, have visual gravity, only because desire gives them value—to the point where they may become possessive of sight. The energies that man would expend in worldly actions must be husbanded and interiorized, not with the aim of avoiding or reducing one's worldly duties, but that they may be better accomplished. In the Christian Rosicrucian school the law of restraining the lower force in order that it may be transformed into a higher one is the principle of crucifixion (or initiation). Effective meditation operates on this principle. The

forces of thinking, feeling, and willing are curbed or bound. They are not lessened by being held in absolute check—nailed, as it were, to immovable purpose. For they maintain the same intensity that characterizes their free activity; but they become so concentrated that they are able to pass through the needle's eye, a process known as the mystic death. Bringing soul powers to a critical mass that higher consciousness may be born is referred to in the Gospels as "the narrow path." In fact, Max Heindel describes this path as narrow as a razor's edge from which one can only grasp at the cross—the door to the higher worlds.

Neither has the eye seen nor the ear heard the things that God has planned for them that love Him. That love is the condition for and substance out of which spiritual seeing and hearing are being developed. The same love which in outward deeds of self-forgetting service builds the luminous soul body also generates the light by which the worlds of spirit are illumined and raises the soul to the worlds of celestial tone which resound with the words of eternal life. □

—C.W.