

Studies in the Apocalypse *Weight, Measure, and Number* *In the Spiritual History of Mankind—Part 2*

IT WAS JUST THIS transforming of 'weight' into heaviness which took place in the destiny of the Old Indian culture-community. She forsook her "first love," and in consequence of this, the descent became a fall. "Remember from whence thou art fallen [*ekpeptokas*], and repent, and do the first works" (Rev. 2:5). In these words the Lord of Karma expresses the karmic dispensation which had become necessary because of the loss of the first love for the current of the Old Indian culture. This is the effect of karma on all who are unwilling to incarnate fully, all who resist complete incorporation: They *fall* into incarnation against their will instead of *descending* by free moral force into the sphere of karma-determining action. For the scene of those actions which determine karma lies, for men, in the physical world; the working-world is the region where the deeds of men acquire their greatest significance. For this reason the warning to the Angel of the Church of Ephesus runs: "Remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works [*ta prota erga poieson*]." This warning is addressed to all who are inclined to refuse to work energetically in the sphere of deeds—all who are inclined to shirk the full measure of their share in the responsibility for earthly happenings. For they will not allow true weight to function in their souls—the 'weight' of the spirit of sacrifice, which also gives weight to human effort and action in controlling the karma of the future.

But to be able truly to tread the path into the

future, not only is the spirit of sacrifice required to produce 'weight' in the soul, strength is also needed to carry that sacrifice to an end, persevering with it through trials. For to be ready to descend into nether *space* is not enough; it is also necessary in that 'space' to tread a path which will lead to the goal. It is necessary, too, to remain faithful to the task through a prescribed period of *time*. Following on the ideal of the "first love"—the ability to love the Earth mission of humanity—is the ideal of fidelity to this mission throughout the trials of the earthly road in 'time.' The realization of this ideal is the task of the "Angel of the Church of Smyrna," the mission of the Old Persian spiritual impulse. That is why the admonition of the second letter, the letter to the angel of the church in Smyrna, runs: "Be thou *faithful* unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life" (Rev. 2:10). For this reason the letter to the church in Smyrna no longer comes from Him "that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, and walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks," but from Him "that is the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive." For what flowed from Christ into the souls of men through the Old Persian spiritual culture is the impulse of fidelity, the longing and the hope that all obstacles, even death itself, may be overcome. "The first and the last, which was dead, and is alive", is, therefore, a formula expressing very concisely the nature of that highest longing and highest hope which constituted the spiritual and moral life-nerve of the Old Persian culture, and which persists today in the Old Persian stratum of the human soul.

This ideal of fidelity is, in its innermost essence, the spiritual content of Measure, just as the "first

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love” is the innermost essence of Weight . For the path which leads from “the first” to “the last,” from “death” to “life,” is the true ‘measure’ of human fidelity and of the magnitude of the human Earth mission. This ‘measure’ can be perceived, recognized, and realized by the free moral force of the soul; then it shines in the soul as the great, liberating goal of man’s earthly existence. If, however, it is not freely and consciously accepted, then karma, instead of appearing as the ‘measure’ of spiritual heroism, makes its appearance as a cramping and compelling influence. As the loss of the “first love” leads to the fall, when true ‘Weight’ becomes heaviness, so lack of fidelity leads to contraction, when true ‘Measure’ becomes a *constriction* of the soul: “the devil shall cast some of you into prison” (Rev. 2:10), in order, through the enforced confinement to awaken a striving after the free heroism of true ‘Measure.’

This imprisonment, which is to be brought about by Lucifer (Diabolos) is in reality the loneliness of the soul which is confined within itself because it will not unite itself with the great purpose of human evolution. Since the soul will not accept the *spiritual* ‘Measure,’ it must become, just as it stands, the ‘measure’ of its own consciousness; its own nature will draw the line which will confine its consciousness, its activity, and its world. The walls of the “prison,” into which the soul has been cast by Luciferic impulse, are boundaries drawn by itself; it is the soul’s egoism which confines it and keeps it in prison.

Thus the soul is confronted with the choice of two possible ‘measures’: either to acknowledge freely the ‘Measure’ of the spirit, or to accept its own standard as a ‘measure.’ Lucifer would guide the soul to the second choice, and that is why we are told in the Apocalypse that Lucifer (Diabolos) “shall cast some of you into prison.”

Those, however, who have chosen the true path of fidelity to man’s mission on Earth (that is, those who have chosen the spiritual ‘Measure’) are called in this letter, the “Jews” (*hoi Iudaiou*). This name really means nothing else than “human souls who are determined to minister throughout the ages to



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

Christ Jesus Manifests Himself to John

Clearly, von Carolsfeld's conception is strongly influenced by (indeed, almost identical with), Albrecht Durer's depiction, executed over 300 years earlier, of the same passage in Revelation. See Jan/Feb 2003 Rays.

the preparation and the realization of the Christ impulse.” For this is the meaning of the “eternal Israel” consisting of twelve tribes—the karmic community of human souls united through many incarnations with the Christ impulse, first in preparing for it, then in realizing it. Hence “Jews” in the sense of the Apocalypse are not members of any one nation; they are those souls who have decided for the service of the Christ impulse. But now there is a very severe trial connected with this, namely, the “blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan.” This “synagogue of Satan” is the karmic antipode of the “eternal Israel,” and the blasphemy of that community consists in their imitating all the power and activity of the Christ impulse in human life, while, at the same time, turning it into its opposite. The Ahrimanic activity (that is, in the sense of the Apocalypse, the activity of Satan) in the destiny of humanity consists primarily in the creation of a kind of caricature of the human community and order for which the Christ impulse strives. While Lucifer (Diabolos) isolates men, “casts them into prison,” Ahriman (Satanas) gathers them into a community (synagogue), just as the Christ impulse also unites them in a community (ecclesia). Instead of the

egoistic isolation brought about by Lucifer, two communities founded on a 'we-consciousness' will appear in world history. One is the community of Christ, where free ego-men will unite in a free alliance; the other, its opposite, is Ahriman's mass-organization, swallowing up the individual ego. The *blasphemy* is contained in the fact that the *true* we-consciousness of spiritual brotherhood is turned into its opposite by the mimicry of the *false* we-consciousness in the mass organization. Thus, there are "true Jews," that is, free ego-men striving for a community among themselves on a foundation of freedom, and, on the other hand, there are we-men destined to be swallowed up by a mass organization. These, however, believe "they are Jews [that is, ego-men] and are not."

This contrast first appeared in world history in the relationship between Iran and Turan during the Old Persian culture-epoch, but it has persisted down the ages, and today, as then, the two types of we-consciousness confront each other as a trial of the fidelity of man to his spiritual mission on Earth.

On the other hand, the "imprisonment by the devil" also persists. It has to last for "ten days"—and that period is not yet ended, for the Luciferic current is to continue its karmic flow until the Christ-Sun has shone ten times since the Old Persian culture-epoch. Now that Sun shines at the beginning and the end of each culture-epoch. It shines at the beginning as the fundamental impulse of the epoch, and at the end as the response to its positive result, as the benediction on its fruit, however scanty that may be. Then it is "day," as in the beginning there was the "day" of a culture-epoch. And ten such "days" occur until the Sixth culture-epoch—until those who are imprisoned either join the Philadelphian community of brothers, or are swallowed up in the 'we' of Ahrimanized humanity. The "prison," the isolation of self-sufficiency, will then cease. They will then either become really free, or they must join the Ahrimanic throng.

Thus the "Church in Smyrna" has a path to tread whereon it is tested by the "prison" of Diabolos, and by the "synagogue" of Satan; but he who is "faithful unto death" receives the crown of life. The crown of life is not a mere poetic expression; it is an exact description of a significant occult fact—the fact, namely, that certain changes will take place in

the future in the system of spiritual currents in the human head. As a result of these changes, the so-called "crown of death" will become the "crown of life." At present, the life-forces of man concentrate more and more in the head with advancing age, and thence radiate upwards as a kind of "crown." Then, if this concentration becomes complete, the heart ceases to function (even when there is no malady), and death supervenes. But now another process may take place in the etheric organization of the human head; namely, the concentration in the head of the downward radiating spiritual life-forces which spread out with vivifying power into the rest of the human organism. The development of such a "crown of life" is, at the same time, a sign that the Christ impulse is at work in the life body of a man. By this influence the life body of the man is preserved from the "second death," that is, from dissolution some time after the physical death; the "crown of life" is that element of the life body which is not subject to "the second death."

It is in this sense that the promise of the second letter is to be understood: "He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." (Rev. 2:11).

But the promise addressed to that karmic current which is called "the Church in Pergamos" refers neither to the "tree of life" nor to the "crown of life," but to the eating of "hidden manna" and to a "white stone" in which is written a "new name," "which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" (Rev. 2:17). For the spiritual impulse which underlies the third (the Egypto-Chaldean) culture-epoch, and which has persisted in the souls of men since that time, is a striving for the experience of immortal individuality and for the harmony of immortal individual beings one with another.

The "stone with a new name which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it" is the immortal ego-being of man. The "I" is the name which can be spoken only by the man himself. And the "hidden manna" is the community-forming force at work beyond the threshold of ordinary consciousness; it is the force which binds separate individuals into a human community. Thus Moses, for example, whose mission lay within the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, received the revelation of the "I am the I am" in the Burning Bush as the revelation of the source of the ego experience, while, on the other hand, the

Israelite community under his guidance ate of the “heavenly manna” which descended during the night and was “gathered” in the early morning. Thus Moses led the community entrusted to him to the ideal of the ego evolution; but he led it as a community, for it was united and held together as such by the eating of the “manna.” The reality of the Manas influence (that is, the “manna”) is manifested when men whose lives are based on their inner ego produce at the same time a harmony. The true ‘we’ can be realized only under the influence of the Manas (the Spirit-self [synonymous with the Human Spirit—Ed.]), when the ego-consciousness has acquired the firmness and solidity of a stone.

But there is also an anti-Manas current for the purpose of forming communities. The community-forming force of this current is not to be drawn from the super-consciousness, but from the subconscious regions. For together with the karmic union of individual beings brought into harmony by the “manna,” there is yet another force drawing men one to another and binding them together. It is the urge which comes, not through the blood from the “I am” impulse of Jahve in the past, nor from the ego as it is experienced today, but from the blood which is neither under the influence of Jahve nor yet determined by the ego. This force is the urge of sex. It was misused by Balaam, for instance (cf. Num. 25) when he counseled the Midianitish prince, Balak, to substitute other principles for those of the Israelite community so that, through the medium of the Midianite women dedicated to Baal, the Israelites might be drawn into the sphere of influence of the Baal cult. The influence was achieved by arousing this urge through the eating of “meats offered to idols”—that is, the flesh of victims prepared by ceremonial magic and invested with definite powers, thereby inducing alliances which lay outside the network of positive karma. The “doctrine of Balaam” referred to in the letter is the point of view from which the “hidden manna” is sought, not in the seclusion of the super-consciousness but in the subconscious life of impulse.

As the true harmony of the Manas activity can be falsified and superseded by the “doctrine of Balaam,” so also can a man’s striving for the experience of his own ego be falsified and superseded by the “doctrine of the Nicolaitanes.” For, as in the first

case, there is a false kind of karmic union among men, so, in the second case, there is a false kind of ego experience. Since the “Nicolaitane” current, of which we have just spoken, placed man’s consciousness right inside the body, it felt itself to be ostensibly independent and free within the body. Thus a substitute for the real ego came into existence, created by the confining influence of the body.

A false ego-consciousness arose whose content was due not to the ego but to the body. Against these two errors is directed the “two-edged sword” of the mouth of him who addresses the Letter to the Angel of the Church of Pergamos, for the sword of the word of truth strikes what is immoral in the life of impulse as well as what is illusionary in materialistic ideas and concepts.

The opposite of the “two-edged sword” of the future word of truth is the principle of the power of black magic working in silence, a principle which subserves, and is based upon, the union of subconscious impulses with illusionary concepts. For this reason the occult language of the Apocalypse speaks of this union as the “throne of Satan” (*thronos to Satana*). This name signifies the principle of the evolution of Ahriman’s power over humanity, so that this principle (or “throne”) must be sought in the metabolic life of the human system. On the other hand, there have also been historical situations in which this “throne” was present externally and objectively, functioning as a center of power. The throne of Herod and Herodias, for example, was a point of departure for such activity. And the activity was manifested in the fact that those who came within the sphere of influence of that ‘throne’ (that is, of that activity functioning through illusion and the life of immoral impulse) were ‘beheaded’. They were ‘beheaded’ in the sense that they lost the ego-conscious center of the head, and were thus exposed to the influence of the subconscious depths of the metabolic organization.

Now the only way to oppose such a “throne” is to unmask the immorality of the ‘slavish’ impulse springing from it, and to overcome materialistic concepts by fidelity to the spirit even unto death. Every historical “throne of Satan” has always to be opposed by a “faithful witness” (*martys ho pistos*) of the spirit. It was so with the throne of Jezebel and Ahab, whom Naboth withstood as the “faithful

witness”; it was so also with the throne of Herodias and Herod, against whom John the Baptist was the “faithful witness”; each time the “faithful witness” had to overcome immorality by the word, and illusion by death. For the immortality of human individuality is attested, not only by teaching, but by the fact that individual beings face death as “faithful witnesses”—that human individuality can be raised above death and is thus immortal. In this sense, not only John the Baptist, but also Socrates in Athens was a “faithful witness.”

This special mission—of being a “faithful witness” against the “throne of Satan”—has a definite name. In this sense every man who has such a mission to fulfill is an “Antipas,” that is, the man whose task it is to suffer together with the victims of the “throne” (i.e., of black magic). Thus John the Baptist also suffered the fate of the victims of Herod’s throne; he was even physically “beheaded” as the other victims of that throne were inwardly “beheaded” in their soul life. In this sense, John the Baptist is “Antipas,” the fellow-sufferer, who withstood the “throne of Satan” as a “faithful witness”—and, indeed, not only at that time, but also in the past during earlier lives.

This “beheading” of men actually happens today still in the moral sense. It happens, for instance, wherever men are regarded and treated not as individuals but as a quantity, a number. For when men are regarded merely as a number they are “beheaded”; the dignity of their ego nature is taken from them. And if the units thus obtained are added up and the sum of them stated, then something is being done which is morally the opposite of community-forming through the power of the “hidden manna.”

What was originally a black-magical misuse of the impulse-life and the life of materialized concepts became later a numeration and addition of human units. For as the sin of the Church of Ephesus brought about the conversion of true ‘Weight’ into a fall consequent on heaviness; as the sin of the Church of Smyrna brought about the conversion of true ‘Measure’ into “imprisonment” within the confines of egoism; so the sin of the Church of Pergamos caused the change of true Number into



Oil on canvas, Jacques Louis David, 1787, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City

The Death of Socrates

Socrates, as John the Baptist, was a “faithful witness,” a martyr (Greek for witness) for life and truth, opposing the illusions foisted by materialism that issue from the “throne of Satan,” and affirming the undying spirit.

the beheading and the ‘mechanical unification’ of men. But true spiritual ‘Number’ is a community of individual beings ranged according to “the glory of the stars,” of which each one is not a mere unit, but a “new name” written in the “white stone, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” In the sense of true ‘Number,’ men should not and cannot be counted and added up; they ought to be called by their names and united into a community by the “hidden manna.” The consequence of the sin of the Balaamites and the Nicolaitanes is the substitution of the sum for the “manna,” and of a numerical unit for the “name.”

Thus the statistics, which today appear so innocent, have their antecedents; the example was set by tragic facts in spiritual history, and the frame of mind which produces them owes its existence to a preparation through the medium of black magic in the past. Regarding it in this light, we can also understand why the numbering of the people ordered by King David [1Chr. 21:1] was considered so sinful by the spiritual world and brought so severe a punishment in its train; for what has now become commonplace was, at that time, a terrible breach of faith towards the conception of the human community desired by the spiritual world. Human faces and names should not be converted into numbers; it was a yielding to the sin of the Third Culture-epoch “treason against Spiritual Number.”

Moreover, in this light we can understand how tragic is the beginning of the second chapter of St. Luke's Gospel where we are told: "It came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed [counted]."

For we can understand the tragedy of the fact that Jesus should be born during a national census and regarded by the Roman state as a mere "plus one" if we can really bring to consciousness the actual meaning of 'number' as "the harmony of the ineffa-

ble name" of individual beings, and, on the other hand, the consequence of the 'fall of number' into mechanism; that is to say, the misuse of impulses and illusions. But it was necessary that Jesus should be born in an age when 'Weight,' 'Measure' and 'Number' were already divorced from their true significance: the birthplace of Jesus was a stable, with the animals.

The spiritual impulse and its history during that culture-epoch in which Christ Jesus appeared will be the subject of the next section. (Continued) □

The Prison, a Myth

THERE WAS A TIME when humans had light swords, which could instantaneously fry anything they were directed at. These humans had the elixir of life, so they themselves could not be killed. They rode on winged horses which could travel faster than light. But what they didn't have was a sense of responsibility. They flew around the universe causing destruction wherever they went. And the poor angels could hardly keep up with the job of putting things back together, healing wounds, and restoring order in the wake of the humans passing through.

When God saw what was happening, he decided something needed to be done. First He created an earth, and put a gravitational field around the earth so that all things near the earth would get pulled toward the surface. Then He put a number of "cages" on the earth (which we now call physical bodies), and told the angels to collect all the humans, take their light swords and elixir of life and winged horses away from them, and fasten one human inside each cage.

The cages were provided with all the amenities that cages of that type can have—eyes to see, ears to hear, mouths with which to eat, and feet and hands for walking and doing work. The humans still had enough motion to gather food, clothing, and shelter and to interact with one another, but the power and range of their destructiveness was now limited to the regions in the vicinity of their cages on the surface of the earth. Even so, humans still frequently got out of control, and God found it necessary to place further restrictions on some humans

by visiting them with various plagues, floods, fires, earthquakes, winds and other "natural" disasters. To make life in the cages bearable, God occasionally let the humans out (what we call death), but when they were out they were still held on leashes and their light swords and elixir and winged horses were not returned to them. Also, they were required to return to the cages after some time out.

How can humans get free from their cages and get their light swords and elixir and winged horses returned to them? The first requirement is that they learn how to behave. They must cease acting irresponsibly, cease destroying without rebuilding, and cease harming others. They must be committed to living in harmony with the rest of the universe. Only then will God be able to release them without fear of their again causing great havoc.

God, however, has an additional aim. He wants the prison to be not only a prison but also a school. At the same time that people are learning not to do harm, he wants them also to learn to be constructive forces in the universe. He wants them to develop such qualities as courage, initiative, helpfulness to others, and creativity. Thus, God has added the requirement that to attain release, people also need to be able to pass graduation requirements in these fields.

When people have earned their release, their light swords and elixir and winged horses will be returned to them, and they will be rewarded also with the mystic marriage. Then instead of being the villains of the universe, they will be the heroes. □

—Elsa Glover