



An Epistle on the Hymn of the Pearl

by
Frater Apollonius
4^o=7^o A.:A.:

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

"The Hymn of the Pearl" is an anti-Christian polemic. The opening of "The Acts of Thomas" has the Apostles dividing the known world amongst them, for each to travel to in the function of their evangelical ministry. In the casting of lots, Thomas gets India and immediately refuses this. Jesus appears at night and commands Thomas to travel to India. Thomas refuses to obey Jesus. As a result Jesus sells Thomas as a slave to an Indian merchant in the local slave market, and receives the appropriate bill-of-sale.

The priests of Asclepia (the cult of the snake), the temple structures associated with Asclepius were probably the authors of this and other non-canonical acts of the Apostles, as a reaction against the emperor Constantine's new state religious policy involving the canonical story of Jesus Christ. They were under political attack from Constantine, who sought to destroy them; legislating against Asclepius and the ancient temple orders in the form of a prohibition of sacrifice c.324 CE (Eusebius VC). This was a radical departure as the Roman emperor broke a long tradition of the previous forty-six Roman emperors who had sponsored the appearance of Asclepius or Salus on the imperial Roman coins of the realm. In 324 CE, the ascetic Pachomius felt compelled to travel to the wilderness and desert of Upper Egypt, far removed from Constantine's agressions in and around Alexandria, and possibly Karnak, and to establish provision for the dwellings of hundreds, and then thousands of ascetic monks. By the time of Pachomius' death c.348 CE, the figures being reported are becoming far larger.

The Hymn of the Pearl, buried within the text of the apocryphal Acts of Thomas might be as much as several centuries older; seemingly connected with the legend of Apollonius of Tyana, that could date it to a century before the birth of Jeshua bar Joseph.

The Hymn of the Pearl

When I was a little child,
and dwelling in my kingdom,
in my father's house,
and was content with the wealth and
the luxuries of my nourishers,
from the East, our home,
my parents equipped me (and)
sent me forth;

and of the wealth of our treasury
they took abundantly, (and)
tied up for me a load
large and (yet) light,
which I myself could carry,

gold of Beth-Ellaya,
and silver of Gazak the great,
and rubies of India,
and agates from Beth-Kashan,
and they furnished me with the adamant,
which can crush iron.

Apollonius of Tyana and the Seven Jewels

The list of jewels may be attributed to the list of jewels described in the [The Life of Apollonius of Tyana](#). In the hagiography of this great and ancient mage, the chief Brahman, Iarchas presents to Apollonius a gift of seven rings of differing jewels inscribed with the names of seven sacred celestial bodies. Apollonius reportedly from then on, wore the appropriate jewel or gem for each day in the week; later, returning to his home in Egypt. There, he was said to dwell amongst his fellow 'Gymnosophists,' also known as the 'Therapeutae,' with the jewels and gems becoming known as the jewels of self-knowledge. Apollonius was said to be instructed by the Brahmins of India; striving for self-realisation in the healing temples of 'Imhotep/Asclepius', characterised by the ancient use of the symbol of the snake, coiled around the staff of Asclepius; the Cadeucus.

And they took off from me the glittering robe,
which in their affection they made for me,
and the purple toga,
which was measured (and)
woven to my stature.

And they made a compact with me,
and wrote it in my heart,
that it might not be forgotten:

*"If thou goest down into Egypt,
and bringest the one pearl,*

*which is in the midst of the sea
around the loud-breathing serpent,*

*thou shalt put on thy glittering robe
and thy toga, with which (thou art) contented,*

*and with thy brother,
who is next to us in authority,
thou shalt be heir in our kingdom."*

Citizenship in the City of 'Nine Gates'

Many if not all yoga and meditation exercises emphasise that the process of calming the mind is mandatory to progress. In the anti-Christian Acts of Peter; and the Twelve Apostles (Topatta), Lithargoel, the healer says:

*"This is the name of my city, 'Nine Gates.'
Let us praise God as we are mindful that the tenth is the head."*

The City of Nine Gates is the human body; Lithargoel proclaiming himself a citizen as a soul encapsulated therein. It has nine gates, but the control of the opening and the closing of the gate of the mind is a fundamental part of the practices being presented. Awareness of other living beings, their thoughts, their mental state and their emotional and spiritual state requires that the mind be controlled, or be at least highly calm and pacific in its nature. "The flame of a windless lamp is never fitful" is attributed to the Gita, and refers to the cultivation of a calm and coherent mind, unperturbed by the chaos of external circumstances.

*The embodied (Soul) who has controlled his nature
having renounced all actions by the mind
dwells at ease in the City of Nine Gates,
neither working nor causing work to be done.*

—Bhagvad Gita 5:13

The Pearl in the midst of the sea is the Cadeucus of Asclepius; associated with the serpent of the yoga kundalini energy in the spine of the yoga practitioner. The embodied soul arised to an understanding of its own divinity; awaking from the "sleep of external life" to become self-realised.

*I quitted the East (and) went down,
there being two guardians,
for the way was dangerous and difficult,
and I was very young to travel it.*

*I passed through the borders of Maishan,
the meeting-place of the merchants of the East,
and I reached the land of Babel,
and I entered the walls of Sarbug.
I went down into Egypt,
and my companions parted from me.*

I went straight to the serpent,
I dwelt in his abode,
(waiting) till he should lumber and sleep,
and I could take my pearl from him.

**Egypt, near the Healing temple of Imhotep/Asclepius;
to recover the pearl of Gnostic self-realization**

The journeyer travels direct to Egypt; to the abode of the serpent—one of the temples of Asclepius that were ubiquitous throughout the ancient Roman empire before Constantine. Egyptian physicians were revered from the time of Pythagoras and Hippocrates; the cult of Thoth/Hermes being equivalent to the Therapeutae of 'Imhotep/Asklepios,' who maintained these temples as healing centers, for the body and the mind. Aspirants were drawn to these temples for self-knowledge—"The Pearl"—to become an awakened one; having become alive inside one's body as an awakened soul or enlightened one.

And when I was single and alone
(and) became strange to my family,
one of my race, a free-born man,
and Oriental, I saw there,
a youth fair and loveable,
the son of oil-sellers;
and he came and attached himself to me,
and I made him my intimate friend,
and associate with whom I shared my merchandise.
I warned him against the Egyptians,
and against consorting with the unclean;
And I dressed in their dress,
that they might not hold me in abhorrence,
because I was come from abroad in order to take the pearl,
and arouse the serpent against me.

But in some way other or another
they found out that I was not their countryman,
and they dealt with me treacherously,
and gave their food to eat.

I forget that I was a son of kings,
and I served their king;
and I forgot the pearl,
for which my parents had sent me,
and because of the burden of their oppressions
I lay in a deep sleep.

But all this things that befell me
my parents perceived, and were grieved for me;
and proclamation was made in our kingdom,
that every one should come to our gate [kingdom],
kings and princes of Parthia,

and all the nobles of the East.
And they wove a plan on my behalf,
that I might not be left in Egypt;
and they wrote to me a letter,
and every noble signed his name to it:

"From thy father, the king of kings,
and thy mother, the mistress of the East,

and from thy brother, our second (in authority),
to thee our son, who art in Egypt, greeting!

Call to mind that thou art a son of kings!
See the slavery,--whom thou servest!

Remember the pearl,
for which thou was sent to Egypt!

Think of thy robe,
and remember thy splendid toga,

which thou shalt wear and (with which) thou shalt be adorned,
when thy name hath been read out in the list of the valiant,

and thy brother, our viceroy,
thou shalt be in our kingdom."

My letter is a letter,
which the king sealed with his own right hand,
(to keep it) from the wicked ones, the children of Babel,
and from the savage demons of Sarbug.

It flew in the likeness of an eagle,
the king of all birds;
it flew and alight beside me,
and became all speech.

At its voice and the sound of its rustling,
I started and arose from my sleep.

Awareness Awakes, Memory is Restored

Sooner or later, the Aspirant will awake in the archetypal world of the quest, to prevail on the journey within and obtain the pearl of Gnosis. He or she will at that point, come to understand that one had been asleep to the fact that the pearl had always existed within them, but had been forgotten. The struggle for existence is focused towards this process of becoming more and more aware; evolving an awareness of the human body to which one has been born, and the soul that is housed in that body.

I took it up and kissed it,
and I began (and) read it;
and according to what was traced on my heart
were the words of my letter.

I remembered that I was a son of royal parents,
and my noble birth asserted itself.

I remembered the pearl,
for which I had been sent to Egypt,
and I began to charm him,
the terrible loud breathing serpent.

I hushed him asleep and lulled him into slumber,
for my father's name I named over him,
and the name of our second (in power),
and the of my mother, the queen of the East.
And I snatched away the pearl,
and turned to go back to my father's house.

The Extended Moments of Intense Wakefulness

The yogic path requires the command over the breath that stands between the body and the soul. Inside the body also is the serpent energy; the terrible loud speaking serpent that illuminates the depth of the ALL within ourselves. After ardent striving, with perfect memory and cognition of all faculties, the moment finally arrives for the adept at which he or she becomes a fully enlightened soul.

And their filthy and unclean dress I stripped off,
and left it in their country;
and I took my way straight to come
to the light of our home in the East.

And my letter, my awakener,
I found before me on the road;
and as with its voice it had awakened me,
(so) too with its light it was leading me.

It, that dwelt in the palace,
gave light before me with its form,
and with its voice and its guidance
it also encouraged me to speed,
and with its love it drew me on.

I went forth (and) passed by Sarbug;
I left Babel on my left hand;
and I came to the great Maisan,
to the haven of merchants,
which sitteth on the shore of the sea.

And my bright robe, which I had stripped off,
and the toga that was wrapped with it,
from Rantha and Reken[?]
my parents had sent thither
by the hand of their treasures,
who in their truth could be trusted therewith.

And because I remembered not its fashion,—
for in my childhood I had left it in my father's house,—
on a sudden, when I received it,
the garment seemed to me to become like a mirror of myself.

I saw it all in all,
and I to received all in it,
for we were two in distinction
and yet gain one in one likeness.

The Body as a Robe of Glory of the Self-Realised Soul

The different yogic centers of the body, now functioning at optimum levels, enable the fully illumined vision of the components of the inner world; fully integrated to ONE (the Monad). The seven jewels of Apollonius are perceived to be naturally endowed upon the self-realized, embodied soul. He or she is covered by the Hermetic clothing of rich communication with the divine; prophecy.

And the treasurers too,
who brought it to me, I saw in like manner
to be two (and yet) one likeness,
for one sign of the king was written on them (both),
of the hands of him who restored to me through them
my trust and my wealth,
my decorated robe, which
was adorned with glorious colors,
with gold and beryls
and rubies and agates
and sardonyxes, varied in color.
And it was skillfully worked in its home on high,
and with diamond clasps
were all its seams fastened;
and the image of the king of kings
was embroidered and depicted in full all over it,
and like the stone of the sapphire too
its hues were varied.

And I saw also that all over it
the instincts of knowledge were working,
and I saw too that it was preparing to speak.
I heard the sound of its tones,
which it uttered with its (illegible word), (saying):

"I am the active in deeds,
whom they reared for him
before my father;

and I perceived myself,
that my stature grew
according to his labors."

And in its kingly movements
it poured itself entirely over me,

and on the hand of its givers
it hastened that I might take it.

And love urged me too run
to meet it and receive it;

and I stretched forth and took it.
With the beauty of its colors I adorned myself,

and I wrapped myself wholly in my toga
of brilliant hues.

I clothed myself with it,
and went up to the gate
of salutation and prostration;

I bowed my head and worshipped the majesty
of my father who sent me,—
for I had done his commandments, and
he too had done what he promised,—
and the gate of his (illegible word),

I mingled with his princes,
for he rejoiced in me and received me,
and I was with him in his kingdom,
and with the voice of (illegible word)
all his servants praised him.

And he promised that to the gate too
of the king of kings with him I should go,
and with my offering and my pearl
with him should present myself to our king.

The Journey Home - the Royal Path

The Aspirant takes the pearl obtained within the city of the Nine Gates to the tenth gate; that is the mind to gain that self-realisation that is Gnosis; becoming so fully aware that the body shines with the light (and the healing powers) of the Adept. He or she becomes adorned; taking on the "toga of brilliant hues" (i.e., the coat of many colors) that is embodied soul.

Love is the law, love under will.

Translated by William Wright (1871)