

says, God created Man in his Image, that is, he created the body, and breathed into it the breath of the Divine Effluence, of Divine Knowledge, from all the Three Principles of the Divine Manifestation.

Of the Mysterium Magnum.

The *Mysterium Magnum* is a subject of the wisdom, where the breathing word, or the working willing Power of the Divine understanding, flows forth through the wisdom, wherein also the unity of God together flows out, to its manifestation.

For in the *Mysterium Magnum* the Eternal Nature arises; and two substances and wills are always understood to be in the *Mysterium Magnum*; the first substance is the unity of God, that is, the Divine Power and Virtue, the outflowing Wisdom.

The second substance is the separable will, which arises through the breathing and outspeaking word; which will has not its ground in the unity, but in the Mobility of the Effluence and breathing forth, which brings itself into one will, and into a Desire to Nature, namely into the Properties as far as Fire and Light: in the Fire, the Natural Life is understood; and in the Light, the Holy Life, that is, a manifestation of the unity, whereby the unity becomes a Love-Fire, or Light.

And in this place or working, God calleth himself a loving, merciful God, according to the sharpened fiery burning Love of the unity; and an Angry Jealous God, according to the fiery Ground, according to the Eternal Nature.

The *Mysterium Magnum* is that *Chaos*, out of which Light and Darkness, that is, the foundation of Heaven and Hell, is flown from Eternity, and made manifest; for that foundation which we now call Hell, being a Principle of itself, is the ground and cause of the Fire in the Eternal Nature; which fire, in God, is only a burning Love; and where God is not manifested in a thing, according to the unity, there is an anguishing, painful, burning fire.

This burning Fire is but a manifestation of the Life, and of the Divine Love, by which the Divine Love, namely the unity, kindles

up, and sharpens itself for the fiery working of the Power of God.

This ground is called *Mysterium Magnum*, or a *Chaos*, because good and evil rise out of it, namely Light and Darkness, Life and Death, Joy and Grief, Salvation and Damnation.

For it is the ground of Souls and Angels, and of all Eternal Creatures, as well evil as good; it is a ground of Heaven and Hell, also of the visible world, and all that is therein: therein have lain all things in one only ground, as an Image lies hid in a piece of wood before the Artificer carves it out and fashions it.

Yet we cannot say that the spiritual world has had any beginning, but has been manifested from Eternity out of that *Chaos*; for the Light has shone from Eternity in the Darkness, and the Darkness has not comprehended it; as Day and Night are in one another, and are two, though in one.

I must write distinctly, as if it had a beginning, for the better consideration and apprehension of the Divine ground of the Divine Manifestation; and the better to distinguish Nature from the Deity; also for the better understanding, from whence evil and good are come, and what the Being of all Beings is.

Of the Center of the Eternal Nature.

By the word Center, we understand the first beginning to Nature, namely the most Inward ground, wherein the self-raised will brings itself, by a reception, into something, namely into a Natural working; for Nature is but a Tool and Instrument of God, which God's Power and Virtue works with, and yet it has its own Motion, from the outflown will of God: thus the Center is the Point or Ground of the self-reception to something; from whence something comes to be, and from thence the seven Properties proceed.

Of the Eternal Nature, and its Seven Properties.

Nature is nothing but the Properties of the Capacity and Power of receiving the own risen Desire; which Desire rises in the variation of the Breathing Word, that is, of the Breathing Power and



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WITH
AN ILLUSTRATION OF THE
DEEP PRINCIPLES OF
JACOB BOEHME

by D. A. Freher

TRANSLATED BY
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WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY
BY ADAM McLEAN

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Jacob Behmen

THE
THREE PRINCIPLES
OF THE
DIVINE ESSENCE.

OF THE
Eternal Dark, Light, and Temporary World.

SHOWING

What the SOUL, the IMAGE and the SPIRIT of the SOUL
are: As also what ANGELS, HEAVEN
and PARADISE are.

How ADAM was before the Fall, in the Fall, and after the Fall.

AND

What the WRATH of GOD, SIN, DEATH, the DEVILS, and HELL
are: How all Things have been, now are, and
how they shall be at the last.

By JACOB BEHMEN, the Tuetonic Theosopher.

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ing and knocking, I therefore write it down for a Memorial, that I might occasion a Desire in any to seek after them, and thereby my Talent might be improved, and not be hid in the Earth. But I have not written this for those that are wise beforehand, that know all Things, and yet know and comprehend nothing, for they are ^k fully satisfied already, and rich; but I have written it for the Simple, as I am, that I may be refreshed with those that are like myself.

Further of the Sulphur, Mercurius, and Sal.

7. The Word [or Syllable] S U L, signifies and is the Soul of a Thing; for in the Word it is the Oil or Light that is generated out of the Syllable P H U R; and it is the Beauty or the ¹ Welfare of a Thing, that which is lovely and dearest in it: In a Creature it is the Light by which the Creature sees [or perceives:] and therein Reason and the Senses consist, and it is the Spirit which is generated out of the P H U R. The Word or Syllable P H U R, is the *Prima Materia* [or first Matter,] and contains in itself in the third Principle the ^m *Macrocosm*, from which the elementary Dominion, or Region, or Essence is generated: But in the first Principle it is the Essence of the most inward Birth, out of which God generates or begets his Son from Eternity, and from thence the Holy Ghost proceeds; understand out of the S U L and out of the P H U R. And in Man also it is the Light which is generated out of the syderial Spirit, in the ⁿ second center of the *Microcosm*; but in the *Spiraculum* and Spirit of the Soul, in the most inward Center, it is the Light of God, which that Soul only has which is in the Love of God, for it is only kindled and blown up from the Holy Ghost.

8. Observe now the Depth of the divine ^o Birth; there is no Sulphur in God, but it is generated from him, and there is such a Virtue or Power in him. For the Syllable P H U R is [or signifies] the most inward Virtue or Power of the original Source or Spring of the Anger of the fierce Tartness, or of the Mobility, as is mentioned in the first Chapter, and that Syllable P H U R has a fourfold Form [Property or Power] in it, as first Harshness [or Astringency,] and then Bitterness, Fire, and Water: The Harshness is attractive, and is rough, cold and sharp, and

^k That is, wise in their own Conceit, and in their Blindness think they see well enough.

¹ Well-doing, or flourishing.

^m Or great World.

ⁿ Or second Ground to the little World.

^o Or of the eternal divine Working.

makes all hard, hungry, and full of Anguish; and that Attracting is a bitter Sting or Prickle, very terrible, and the first Swelling or Boiling up exists in the Anguish; yet because it cannot rise higher from its Seat, but is thus continually generated from beneath, therefore it falls into a Turning or Wheeling, as swift as a Thought, in great Anguish, and therein it comes to be a twinkling Flash, as if a Steel and Flint or Stone were strongly struck together, and rubbed one against another.

9. For the Harshness is as hard as a Stone [or Flint,] and the Bitterness rushes and rages like a ^p breaking Wheel, which breaks the Hardness, and stirs up the Fire, so that all comes to be a terrible ^q Crack of Fire, and flies up; and the Harshness or Astringency breaks in Pieces, whereby the dark Tartness is terrified and sinks back, and becomes as it were feeble or weak, or as if it were killed and dead, and runs out, becomes thin, and yields itself to be overcome: But when the strong Flash of Fire shines back again upon or into the Tartness, and is mingled therein, and finds the Harshness so thin and overcome, then it is much more terrified; for it is as if Water was thrown upon the Fire, which makes a Crack: Yet when the Crack or Terror is thus made in the overcome Harshness, thereby it gets another Source, [Condition or Property,] and a Crack, or Noise of great Joy proceeds out of the wrathful Fierceness, and rises up in fierce strength, as a kindled Light: For the Crack in the Twinkling of an Eye becomes white, clear, and light; for thus the Kindling of the Light comes in that very Moment as soon as the Light (that is, the new Crack of the Fire) is infected or ^r impregnated with the Harshness, the Tartness or Astringency kindles, and shrieks, or is affrighted by the great Light that comes into it in the Twinkling of an Eye, as if it did awake from Death, and becomes soft or ^t meek, lively and joyful; it presently loses its dark, rough, harsh, and cold Virtue, and leaps or springs up for Joy, and rejoices in the Light; and its Sting or Prickle, which is the Bitterness, that triumphs in the turning Wheel for great Joy.

10. Here observe, the Shriek or Crack of the Fire is kindled in the Anguish in the Brimstone Spirit, and then the Shriek flies up triumphantly; and the aking, or anxious Harshness, or Brimstone-Spirit, is made thin and sweet by the Light. For as the Light or the Flash becomes clearer or brighter from the Crack

^p As the Wheel by turning round.

^q Rumbling, or Thunder-Clap.

^r Or reflects.

^s Or filled.

^t Or lovely.

of the Fire in the vanquished harsh Tartness, and loses its wrathful fierce ^u Property, so the Tartness loses its Authority by the Infection or Mixture of the Light, and is made thin or transparent, and sweet by the white Light: For in the Original the Harshness or Astringency was altogether dark, and aking with Anguish, by Reason of its hardness and attracting; but now it is wholly light, and thereupon it loses its own Quality or Property, and out of the wrathful Harshness there comes to be an ^x Essence that is sharp, and the Light makes the Sharpness altogether sweet.]

*The * Gates of God.*

11. Behold now, when the Bitterness, or the bitter Sting [or Prickle,] (which in the Original was so very bitter, raging and tearing, when it took its Original in the Harshness,) attains this clear Light, and tastes now the Sweetness in the Harshness, which is its Mother, then it is so joyful, and cannot rise or swell so any more, but it trembles and rejoices in its Mother that bare it, and triumphs like a joyful Wheel in the Birth. And in this Triumph the Birth attains the fifth Form, and then the fifth Source springs up, *viz.* the ^y friendly Love; and so when the bitter Spirit tastes the sweet Water, it rejoices in its Mother [the sour tart Harshness,] and so refreshes and strengthens itself therein, and makes its Mother stirring ^z in great Joy; where then there springs up the sweet Water-Spirit a very sweet pleasant Source or Fountain. For the Fire-Spirit (which is the Root of the Light, which was a strong [fierce rumbling Shriek, Crack, or] Terror in the Beginning) that now rises up very lovely, pleasantly and joyfully.

12. And here is nothing but the Kiss of Love, and Wooing, and here the Bridegroom embraces his beloved Bride, and is no otherwise than when the pleasing Life is born or generated in the sour, tart, or harsh Death; and the Birth of Life is thus in a Creature. For from this stirring, moving, or wheeling of the Bitterness in the Essence of the harsh astringent Tartness of the Water-Spirit, the Birth attains the sixth form, *viz.* the Sound or Noise of the Motion. And this sixth ^a Form is rightly called

^u Dominion, or Jurisdiction.

^x Or springing Substance.

* The divine everlasting Gates or Doors, by which we have Entrance

to the Deity.

^y Or loving Favour.

^z With, or for.

^a Property, Virtue, or Power.

Mercurius; for it takes its Form, Virtue, and Beginning, in the aking or anxious Harshness, by the Raging of the Bitterness; for the Rising it takes the Virtue of its Mother (that is, the ^b Essence of the sweet Harshness) along with it, and brings it into the Fire-Flash, from whence the Light kindles. And here the Trial [or Experience] begins, one Virtue beholding the other in the Trial [or Experience], one [Virtue] feels the other by the Rising up, by the Stirring they one hear another, in the Essence they one taste another, and by the pleasant, lovely [Source, Spring, or] Fountain, they one smell another, from whence the Sweetness of the Light springs up out of the Essence of the sweet and harsh Spirit, which from henceforth is the Water-Spirit. And out of these six Forms, now in the Birth, or Generating, comes a six-fold self-subsisting Essence, which is inseparable; where they one continually generate another, and the one is not without the other, nor can be, and without this Birth or Substance there could be nothing; for the six Forms have each of them now the Essences of all their sixfold Virtue in it, and it is as it were the only one Thing, and no more; only each Form has its own Condition.

13. For observe it, although now [in the Harshness there be Bitterness, Fire, Sound, Water, and that out of the springing Vein of the Water there flows Love (or Oil) from whence the Light arises and shines] yet the ^c Harshness retains its first Property, and the Bitterness its Property, the Fire its Property, the Sound or the Stirring its Property, and the overcoming the first harsh or tart Anguish, (*viz.* the returning down back again) or the Water-Spirit, its Property, and the springing Fountain, the pleasant Love, which is kindled by the Light in the tart or sour Bitterness, (which now is the sweet [Source or] springing Vein of Water,) its property; [and yet this is no separable Essence parted asunder, but all one whole Essence or Substance in one another. And each Form or Birth takes its own Form, Virtue, Working and Springing up from all the Forms,] and the whole Birth now retains chiefly but these four Forms in its generating or bringing forth; *viz.* the rising up, the falling down, and then through the turning [of the Wheel in the sour, harsh,] tart Essence, the putting forth on this Side, and on that Side, on both Sides like a Cross; or, as I may so say, the going forth from

^b The Substance that springs or buds out of the Tartness.

^c Or astringent Attraction.

lies in the third Chapter of the Evangelist St. *John*, in these Words; *You must be born anew by Water, and by the Holy Ghost*. This Spirit is the Key: When you attain it, receive it, and go before the first Principle, out of which this World and all Creatures are created, and open the first Root, from which such visible and sensible Things did spring.

31. But you will say, this is only God, and he is a Spirit, and has created all Things out of nothing. It is very true, he is a Spirit, and in our Sight he is as nothing: And if we had not some Knowledge of him by the Creation, we should know nothing of him at all. And if he himself had not been from all Eternity, there could nothing have ever been.

32. But what do you think there was before the Times of the World, out of which the Earth and Stones proceeded, as also the Stars and Elements? That out of which these proceeded was the Root. But what is the Root of these Things? Look, what do you find in these Things? Nothing else but Fire, Bitterness, and Harshness, [or astringent Sourness,] and these three are but one Thing, and hence all Things are generated. Now this was but a Spirit before the Times of the World, and yet you cannot find God in these three Forms. The pure Deity is a Light which is incomprehensible, and unperceivable, also almighty and all-powerful, where is it then that Men may find God?

33. Here open your noble Mind, see and search further. Seeing God is only good, from whence comes the Evil? And seeing also that he alone is the Life, and the Light, and the holy Power, as it is undeniably true, from whence comes the Anger of God? From whence comes the Devil, and his [evil] Will? Also Hell-fire, from whence hath that its Original? [Seeing there was nothing before the Time of this World, but only God, who was and is a Spirit, and continues so in Eternity, from whence then is the first *Materia*, or Matter of Evil? For Reason gives this Judgment, that there must needs have been in the Spirit of God a Will to generate the Source or Fountain of Anger.]

34. But now the Scripture saith, *The Devil was a holy Angel*. And further, it saith, *Thou art not a God that willeth Evil*. And in *Ezekiel*, *As sure as I live, I will not the Death of a Sinner*. This is testified by God's earnest severe punishing of the Devils, and all Sinners, that he is not pleased with Death.

35. What then moved the Devil to be angry, and evil? What is the first Matter [of it] in him, seeing he was created out of the original eternal Spirit? Or from whence is the Original of

Hell, wherein the Devils shall remain for ever, when this World, with the Stars, and Elements, Earth, and Stones, shall perish in the End?

36. Beloved Reader, open the Eyes of your Mind here, and know, that no other [anguish] Source will spring up in him [and torment him] than his own ^aQuality; for that is his Hell out of which he is created and made; and the Light of God is his eternal Shame, and therefore he is God's Enemy, because he is no more in the Light of God.

37. Now you can here produce nothing more, that God should ever use any Matter out of which to create the Devil, for then the Devil might justify himself, that he made him evil, or of evil Matter. For God created him out of nothing, but merely out of his own Essence or Substance, as well as the other Angels. As it is written, *Through him, and in him, are all Things*: And His only is the *Kingdom*, the *Power*, and the *Glory*; and all in him, as the holy Scripture witnesses. And if it was not thus, no Sin would be ^bimputed to the Devil, nor Men, if they were not eternal, and both in God, and out of God himself.

38. For to a Beast, (which is created out of Matter,) no Sin may be imputed, for its Spirit reaches not the first Principle; but it has its Original in the third Principle, in the elementary and infernal Kingdom, in the Corruptibility, and it reaches not the Deity, as the Devil and the Soul of Man do.

39. And if you cannot believe this, take the holy Scripture before you, which tells you, that when Man was fallen into Sin, God sent him his own Heart, Life, or Light, out of himself into the Flesh, and opened the Gate of the Birth of his Life, wherein he was united with God; and being broken off in the Light [Part] (yet continued in the Original of the first Principle) he has blinded that Light, and so united himself to Man again.

40. If the Soul of a Man was not [sprung] out of God the Father out of his first Principle, but out of another Matter, he could not have bestowed that highest Earnest or Pledge of his own Heart and Light upon him, as himself witnesses, saying, *I am the Light of the World, and the Life of Man*; but he could very well have redeemed or helped him some other Way.

41. But what do you think that he brought to Man into the Flesh when he came? Nothing else but what *Adam* and our Mother *Eve* had lost in Paradise; the same did the Treader upon the serpent bring again to the monstrous Birth, and delivered

^a Or working Property.

^b Or accounted Sin.