IV ¶ D

THE TETRAGRAM

GEBURAH CHESED PORTA LIBRARUM ELEMENTA

In Nature there are two forces producing equilibrium, and these three constitute a single law. Here, then, is the triad resumed in unity, and by adding the conception of unity to that of the triad we are bought to the tetrad, the first square and perfect number, the source of all numerical combinations and the principle of all forms. Affirmation, negation, discussion, solution: such are the four philosophical operations of the human mind. Discussion conciliates negation with affirmation by rendering them necessary to each other. In the same way, the philosophical triad, emanating from the antagonism of the duad, is completed by the tetrad, the four-square basis of all truth. According to consecrated dogma, there are Three Persons in God, and these Three constitute one only Deity. Three and one provide the conception of four, because unity is required to explain the three. Hence, in almost all languages, the name of God consists of four letters, and in Hebrew these four are really three, one of them being repeated twice, that which expresses the Word and the creation of the Word.

Two affirmations make two corresponding denials either possible or necessary. The fact of being is affirmed, and that of nothingness is denied. Affirmation as Word produces affirmation as realization or incarnation of the Word, and each of these affirmations corresponds to the denial of its opposite. Thus, in the opinion of the Kabalists, the name of the demon or of evil is composed of the same letters as the Name of God or goodness, but spelt backwards. This evil is the lost reflection or imperfect mirage of light in shadow. But all which exists, whether of good or evil, of light or darkness, exists and manifests by the tetrad. The affirmation of unity supposes the number four, unless it turns in unity itself as in a vicious circle. So also the triad, as we have observed already, is explained by the duad and resolved by the tetrad, which is the squared unity of even numbers and the quadrangular base of the cube, regarded as unity of construction, solidity and measure.

The Kabalistic Tetragram, JODHEVA, expresses God in humanity and humanity in God. The four astronomical cardinal points are, relatively to us, the yea and the nay of light – East and West – and the yea and nay of warmth – South and North. As we have said already, according to the sole dogma of the Kabalah, that which is in visible Nature reveals that which is in the domain of invisible Nature, or secondary causes are in strict proportion and analogous to the manifestations of the First Cause. So is this First Cause revealed invariably by the Cross – that unity made up of two, divided one by the other in order to produce four; that key to the
mysteries of India and Egypt, The Tau of the patriarchs, the divine sign of Osiris, the Stauros of the Gnostics, the keystone of the temple, the symbol of Occult Masonry; the Cross, central point of the junction of the right angles of two infinite triangles; the Cross, which in the French language seems to be the first root and fundamental substantive of the verb to believe and the verb to grow, thus combining the conceptions of science, religion and progress.

The Great Magical Agent manifests by four kinds of phenomena, and has been subjected to the experiments of profane science under four names – caloric, light, electricity, magnetism. It has received also the names of TETRAGRAM, INRI, AZOTH, ETHER, OD, Magnetic Fluid, Soul of the Earth, Lucifer, etc. The Great Magical Agent is the fourth emanation of the life-principle, of which the sun is the third form – see the initiates of the school of Alexandria and the dogma of Hermes Trismegistus. In this way the eye of the world, as the ancients called it, is the mirage of the reflection of God, and the soul of the earth is a permanent glance of the sun which the earth conceives and guards by impregnation. The moon concurs in this impregnation of the earth by reflecting a solar image during the night, so that Hermes was right when he said of the Great Agent: “The sun is its father, the moon its mother.” Then he adds: “The wind has borne it in the belly thereof,” because the atmosphere is the recipient and, as it were, the crucible of the solar rays, by means of which there forms that living image of the sun which penetrates the whole earth, fructifies it and determines all that is produced on its surface by its emanations and permanent currents, analogous to those of the sun itself. This solar agent subsists by two contrary forces – one of attraction and one of projection, whence Hermes says that it ascends and descends eternally. The force of attraction is always fixed at the centre of bodies, that of projection in their outlines or at their surface. By this dual force all is created and all preserved. Its motion is a rolling up and an enrolling which are successive and unlimited, or, rather, Simultaneous and perpetual, by spirals of opposite movements which never meet. It is the same movement as that of the sun, at once attracting and repelling all the planets of its system. To be acquainted with the movement of this terrestrial sun in such a manner as to be able to apply its currents and direct them, is to have accomplished the Great Work and to be master of the world. Armed with such a force you may make yourself adored: the crowd will believe that you are God.

The absolute secret of this direction has been in the possession of certain men, and can yet be discovered. It is the Great Magical Arcanum, depending on an incommunicable axiom and on an instrument which is the grand and unique athanor of the highest grade of Hermetists. The incommunicable axiom is enclosed kabalistically in the four letters of the Tetragram, arranged in the following manner:
In the letters of the words AZOTH and INRI written kabalistically; and in the monogram of Christ as embroidered on the Labarum, which the Kabalist Postel interprets by the word ROTA, whence the adepts have formed their Taro or Tarot, by the repetition of the first letter, thus indicating the circle, and suggesting that the word is read backwards. All magical science is comprised in the knowledge of this secret. To know it and have the courage to use it is human omnipotence; to reveal it to a profane person is to lose it; to reveal it even to a disciple is to abdicate in favour of that disciple, who, henceforward, possesses the right of life and death over his master – I am speaking from the magical standpoint – and will certainly slay him for fear of dying himself. But this has nothing in common with deeds qualified as murder in criminal legislation; the practical philosophy which is the basis and point of departure for our laws does not recognize the facts of bewitchment and of occult influences. We touch here upon extraordinary revelations, and are prepared for the unbelief and derision of incredulous fanaticism; voltairean religion has also its fanatics, pace the great shades who must now be lurking sullenly in the vaults of the Pantheon, while Catholicism, strong ever in its practices and prestige, chants the Office overhead.

The perfect word, that which is adequate to the thought which it expresses, always contains virtually or supposes a tetrad: the idea, with its three necessary and correlated forms, then the image of the thing expressed, with the three terms of the judgement which qualifies it. When I say: “Being exists,” I affirm implicitly that the void is nonexistent. A height, a breadth which the height subdivides longitudinally, a depth separated from the height by the intersection of the breadth, such is the natural tetrad, composed of two lines at right angles one to another. Nature has also four motions, products of two forces which sustain each other by their tendency in an opposite direction. Now, the law which rules bodies is analogous to that which governs minds, and that which governs minds is the very manifestation of God's secret – that is to say, of the mystery of the creation. Imagine a watch having two parallel springs, with an engagement which makes them work
in an opposite direction so that the one in unwinding winds up the other. In this way, the watch will wind up itself, and you will have discovered perpetual motion. The engagement should be at two ends and of extreme accuracy. Is this beyond attainment? We think not. But when it is discovered the inventor will understand by analogy all the secrets of Nature PROGRESS IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO RESISTANCE The absolute movement of life is thus the perpetual consequence of two contrary tendencies which are never opposed. When one seems to yield to the other, it is like a spring which is winding up, and you may expect a reaction, the moment and characteristics of which it is quite possible to foresee and determine. Hence at the period of the greatest Christian fervour was the reign of ANTICHRIST known and predicted. But Antichrist will prepare and determine the Second Advent and final triumph of the Man-God. This again is a rigorous and kabalistic conclusion contained in the Gospel premises. Hence the Christian prophecy comprises a fourfold revelation: 1. Fall of the old world and triumph of the Gospel under the First Advent; 2. Great apostasy and coming of Antichrist; 3. Fall of Antichrist and recurrence to Christian ideas; 4. Definitive triumph of the Gospel, or Second Advent, designated under the name of the Last Judgement. This fourfold prophecy contains, as will be seen, two affirmations and two negations, the idea of two ruins or universal deaths and of two resurrections: for to every conception which appears upon the social horizon an East and a West, a Zenith and a Nadir, may be ascribed without fear of error. Thus is the Philosophical Cross the key of prophecy, and all gates of science may be opened with the pantacle of Ezekiel, the centre of which is a star formed by the interlacement of two crosses.

Does not human life present itself also under these four phases or successive transformations – birth, life, death, immortality? And remark here that the immortality of the soul, necessitated as a complement of the tetrad, is kabalistically proved by analogy, which is the sole dogma of truly universal religion, as it is the key of science and the universal law of Nature. As a fact, death can be no more an absolute end than birth is a real beginning. Birth proves the preexistence of the human being, since nothing is produced from nothing, and death proves immortality, since being can no more cease from being than nothingness can cease to be nothingness. Being and nothingness are two absolutely irreconcilable ideas, with this difference, that the idea of nothingness, which is altogether negative, issues from the very idea of being, whence even nothingness cannot be understood as an absolute negation, whilst the notion of being can never be put in comparison with that of nothingness, and still less can it come forth therefrom. To say that the world has been produced out of nothing is to advance a monstrous absurdity. All that is proceeds from what has been, and consequently nothing that is can ever more cease to be. The succession of forms is produced by the alternatives of movement; they are the phenomena of life which replace without destroying one another. All things change; nothing perishes. The sun does not die when it van-
ishes from the horizon; even the most fluidic forms are immortal, subsisting always in the permanence of their raison d'être, which is the combination of light with the aggregated potencies of the molecules of the first substance. Hence they are preserved in the astral fluid, and can be evoked and reproduced according to the will of the sage, as we shall see when treating of second sight and the evocation of memories in necromancy or other magical works. We shall return also to the Great Magical Agent in the fourth chapter of the Ritual, where we shall complete our indications of the characteristics of the Great Arcanum, and of the means of recovering this tremendous power.

Here let us add a few words on the four magical elements and elementary spirits. The magical elements are: in alchemy, Salt, Sulphur, Mercury and Azoth; in Kabalah, the Macroprosopus, the Microprosopus and the two Mothers; in hieroglyphics, the Man, Eagle, Lion and Bull; in old physics, according to vulgar names and notions, air, water, earth and fire. But in magical science we know that water is not ordinary water, fire is not simply fire, etc. These expressions conceal a more recondite meaning. Modern science has decomposed the four elements of the ancients and reduced them to a number of so-called simple bodies. That which is simple, however, is the primitive substance properly so-called; there is thus only one material element, which manifests always by the tetrad in its forms. We shall therefore preserve the wise distinction of elementary appearances admitted by the ancients, and shall recognize air, fire, earth and water as the four positive and visible elements of Magic.

The subtle and the gross, the swift and slow solvent, or the instruments of heat and cold, constitute, in occult physics, the two positive and negative principles of the tetrad, and should be thus tabulated:

Thus, air and earth represent the male principle; fire and water are referable to the female principle, since the Philosophical Cross of pantacles, as affirmed already, is a primitive and elementary hieroglyph of the lingam of the gymnosophists. To these four elementary forms correspond the four following philosophical ideas Spirit, Matter, Motion, Rest. As a fact, all science is comprised in the understanding of these four things, which alchemy has reduced to three – the Absolute, the Fixed and the Volatile – referred by the Kabalah to the essential idea of God, Who is absolute reason, necessity and liberty, a threefold notion expressed in the occult books of the Hebrews. Under the names of KETHER, CHOKMAH and BINAH for the Divine World; of TIPHERETH, CHESED and GEBURAH in the moral
world, and of JESOD, HOD and NETSAH in the physical world, which, together with the moral, is contained in the idea of the Kingdom or MALKUTH, we shall explain in the tenth chapter this theogony as rational as it is sublime.

Now, created spirits, being called to emancipation by trial, are placed from their birth between these four forces, two positive and two negative, and have it in their power to affirm or deny good, to choose life or death. To discover the fixed point, that is, the moral centre of the Cross, is the first problem which is given them to resolve; their initial conquest must be that of their own liberty. They begin by being drawn, some to the North, others to the South; some to the right, others to the left; and in so far as they are not free, they cannot have the use of reason, nor can they take flesh otherwise than in animal forms. These unemancipated spirits, slaves of the four elements, are those which the Kabalists call elementary daimons, and they people the elements which correspond to their state of servitude. Sylphs, undines, gnomes and salamanders really exist therefore, some wandering and seeking incarnation, others incarnate and living on this earth. These are vicious and imperfect men. We shall return to this subject in the fifteenth chapter, which treats of enchantments and demons.

That is also an occult tradition by which the ancients were led to admit the existence of four ages in the world, only it was not made known to the vulgar that these ages are successive and are renewed, like the four seasons of the year. Thus, the golden age has passed, and it is yet to come. This, however, belongs to the spirit of prophecy, and we shall speak of it in the ninth chapter, which is concerned with the initiate and the seer. If we now add the idea of unity to the tetrad, we shall have, together and separately, the conceptions of the divine synthesis and analysis, the god of the initiates and that of the profane. Here the doctrine becomes more popular, as it passes from the domain of the abstract: the grand hierophant intervenes.