

## **2 more pages of excerpts from Plotinus *The Enneads***

### **4.3.12.**

... And thus the cosmic content is carried forward to its purpose, everything in its co-ordinate place, under one only Reason-Principle operating alike in the descent and return of souls and to every purpose of the system.

We may know this also by the concordance of the souls with the ordered scheme of the Cosmos; they are not dependent, but, by their descent, they have put themselves in contact, and they stand henceforth in harmonious association with the cosmic circuit--to the extent that their fortunes, their life-experiences, their choosing and refusing, are announced by the patterns of the stars--and out of this concordance rises as it were one musical utterance: the music, the harmony, by which all is described (the harmony of the spheres), is the best witness to this truth.

Such a consonance can have been procured in one only way:

The All must, in every detail of act and experience, be an expression of the Supreme, which must dominate alike its periods and its stable ordering and the life-careers varying with the movement of the souls as they are sometimes absorbed in that highest, sometimes in the heavens, sometimes turned to the things and places of our earth. All that is Divine Intellect will rest eternally above, and could never fall from its sphere but, poised entire in its own high place, will communicate to things here through the channel of Soul. Soul in virtue of neighbourhood is more closely modelled upon the Idea uttered by the Divine Intellect, and thus is able to produce order in the movement of the lower realm, one phase (the World-Soul) maintaining the unvarying march (of the cosmic circuit), the other (the Soul of the Individual) adapting itself to times and seasons.

### **3.8**

3.8.5 The primal phase of the Soul--inhabitant of the Supreme and, by its participation in the Supreme, filled and illuminated--remains unchangeably There; but in virtue of that first participation, that of the primal participant, a secondary phase also participates in the Supreme, and this secondary goes forth ceaselessly as Life streaming from Life; for energy runs through the Universe and there is no extremity at which it dwindles out. But, travel as far as it may, it never draws that first part of itself from the place whence the outgoing began: for if it abandoned its prior (the Intellectual-Principle), it would no longer be everywhere (its continuous Being would be broken and) it would be present at the end, only, of its course.

**6. Action, thus, is set towards contemplation and an object of contemplation, so that even those whose life is in doing have seeing as their object; what they have not been able to achieve by the direct path, they hope to come at by the circuit.**

Thus once more, action is brought back to contemplation: for (mind or) Soul is a Reason-Principle and anything that one lays up in the Soul can be no other than a Reason-Principle, a silent thing, the more certainly such a principle as the impression made is the deeper.

This vision achieved, the acting instinct pauses; the mind is satisfied and seeks nothing further; the contemplation, in one so conditioned, remains absorbed within as having acquired certainty to rest upon. The brighter the certainty, the more tranquil is the contemplation as having acquired the more perfect unity; and--for now we come to the serious treatment of the subject--

In proportion to the truth with which the knowing faculty knows, it comes to identification with the object of its knowledge.

As long as duality persists, the two lie apart, parallel as it were to each other; there is a pair in which the two elements remain strange to one another, as when Reason-Principles laid up in the mind or Soul remain idle.

Hence the Reason-Principle must not be left to lie outside but must be made one identical thing with the Soul of the novice so that he finds it really his own.

#### **4.8.5**

Thus, in sum, the Soul, a divine being and a dweller in the loftier realms, has entered body: it is a god, a later phase of the divine: but, under stress of its powers and of its tendency to bring order to its next lower, it penetrates to this sphere in a voluntary plunge: if it turns back quickly all is well; it will have taken no hurt by acquiring the knowledge of evil and coming to understand what sin is, by bringing its forces into manifest play, by exhibiting those activities and productions which, remaining merely potential in the unembodied, might as well never have been even there, if destined never to come into actuality, so that the Soul itself would never have known that suppressed and inhibited total.

The act reveals the power, a power hidden, and we might almost say obliterated or non-existent, unless at some moment it became effective: in the world as it is, the richness of the outer stirs us all to the wonder of the inner whose greatness is displayed in acts so splendid.