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*Presented by Author.*

*IAMBlichus' EXHORTATION TO  
THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY*

*FRAGMENTS OF IAMBlichus*

Excerpts from the Commentary of  
Proclus on the Chaldean Oracles

*PLOTINUS' DIVERSE COGITATIONS*

First Translated from the Original Greek by

*THOS. M. JOHNSON*

*Editor of The Platonist*

To which are added

*THE GOLDEN VERSES OF PYTHAGORAS*

OSCEOLA, MISSOURI, U. S. A.

1907

TO MY WIFE,  
ALICE B. JOHNSON.  
I DEDICATE THIS WORK  
AS A TOKEN OF ADMIRATION AND LOVE.

of every kind. For you will find them to be prolific and multiform, and admirably abundant; and this to one who begins from the mallows, as from a root and principle, is significant of the union and consent of the world. Not only, therefore, do not destroy or obliterate observations of this kind, but increase and multiply them as it were by transplantation.

### SYMBOL XXXIX.

This, *abstain from the use of living creatures*, exhorts to justice, with a due regard for what is of a kindred nature, and a sympathetic treatment of life which is similar to our own.

Through all the foregoing explanations, therefore, appears the mode of exhortation through symbols, containing much of the ancient and Pythagoric method. But since we have expounded all modes of exhortation, we will here conclude our treatise on the subject.

### ADDITIONAL NOTES.

[These Notes are extracted from the most instructive Commentary of Olympiodorus on the *Phaedo* of Plato, which elucidates the text of that famous and profound dialogue to the satisfaction of every genuine Platonist. Every Greek scholar who studies the *Phaedo* should have this Commentary constantly before him. It is worth all the modern comments and annotations on the *Phaedo* put together. Unfortunately no English version of it has appeared, but Taylor, in the notes to his translation of Plato, quotes copiously from it. Of all the ancient Commentaries on the *Phaedo*, by Iamblichus, Proclus, etc., that of Olympiodorus alone survives.]

P. 19. *But if this be true, they do nothing of what is right who concentrate all their energies on the acquisition of wealth but neglect justice, etc.—*....“nor prevent them from proposing to do a right action. We ought to be warned by the spectacle of their plight to avoid it ourselves, and should regard happiness not as dependent upon the acquisition of wealth but upon a particular state of the soul. Bodily blessings should not be held to consist in adornment with magnificent apparel, but in the possession of health and a sound condition, even in the absence of the other advantages previously mentioned. In the same way happiness must be attributed to the disciplined soul and to a man of such a character, not to the man who is magnificently supplied with externals and is in himself worthless. We do not consider a bad horse to be of any value

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merely because it has gold chains and costly trappings; we rather praise one that is in sound condition. Besides what we have said, too, it sometimes happens that worthless persons have both external and mental gifts, and value the former above the latter, which is the most disgraceful thing of all. For just as a man who was inferior to his own domestics would be ridiculous, so those who think their property of more value than their own nature ought to be held miserable. And this is the truth of the matter, for "satiety breeds insolence" as the proverb says, and *ignorance* combined with power breeds folly. In a bad state of the soul neither wealth nor strength nor beauty are good things, but the greater the abundance of these qualities, the more do they injure their possessor, if they are unaccompanied by reason. "Do not give a child a knife," is as much as to say, "Do not entrust bad men with power." Now reason, as all would admit, exists for the acquisition of knowledge, and seeks ends the means to which are contained in philosophy: why then should philosophy not be pursued without hesitation?"

This fine fragment of Aristotle, presumably from his *Προτρεπτικός* or Exhortation to Philosophy, is preserved by Stobæus (*Flor.* 3 54). One of the Papyri, discovered and edited by Messrs. Grenfell and Hunt (*Oxyrhynchus Papyri*, IV.), contains this Fragment with additions at the beginning and end, and a sentence in the middle omitted by Stobæus. The translation given is here reprinted, with several alterations.

P. 50. *Neither the sense of sight nor of hearing brings any truth to men, etc.* Plato says that there is no truth in Sense, because Sense does not rightly or really know: for passion is associated with its 'knowledge' by reason of its knowing through passivities. And it knows from afar, so to speak—as, for instance, the eye-ball does not see of itself but through the medium of light, and hearing acts through the medium of air—which mode of 'knowing' is the cause of inaccurate or defective 'knowledge.' In contradistinction to this, we say that intellect knows accurately, because that which knows is the same with the object of intellection. From this identity, therefore, of the knower with the object known the accuracy of intellectual or genuine knowledge arises, and by difference the falsity or inaccuracy. Moreover, Sense cannot endure the accuracy of even sensibles—as, for example, the eye cannot bear to look at that which is white in the extreme. For the excesses of sensible objects nullify the senses: wherefore Sense is said to be always fallacious. Sense, however, may be said to be always true and accurate when it is compared with assimilative information, such as the 'knowledge' given by images in mirrors. We are not persuaded by Aristotle, saying that Sense is the principle of science. For in nowise are the inferior and secondary the principles or causes of the superior and primary. But if, in accordance with the common expositions, we say that Sense is the principle of science, we must not be understood to mean *the productive principle* but only a principle to the extent that it arouses our soul to a reminiscence of universals, and performs the duties of a messenger and herald by exerting our soul to the evolution of the sciences.

The poets are Parmenides, Empedocles and Epicharmus. For these say that Sense knows nothing accurately—as, for instance, Epicharmus says that "intellect sees, and intellect hears: all other things are blind and deaf." And the Poet [Homer: *Iliad*, Lib. v. 127. sq.], speaking about Diomedes, says that Athena purged his eyes from the

mist which was before on them, in order that he might know well. For unless he had received the aid of Athena, he would not have seen accurately.

P. 50. *Moreover, in acquiring Wisdom (insight) the body is an impediment, if one should take it with him as a companion in the search.* There are three energies of the soul: for it either converts itself to things subordinate, thereby acquiring a knowledge of sensibles; or reverting to itself, it sees all things in itself, because it is an omniform image containing the reasons or productive principles of all things; or it extends itself to the intelligible, and beholds ideas. Though therefore there are three energies of the soul, we must not suppose that the politic, cathartic and theoretic characters differ from each other in this, viz. that the political character knows sensibles; the cathartic the reasons in the soul; and the theoretic ideas—since no one is in reality a philosopher who has not a knowledge of the principles of all things: \* \* \* but they differ because the political philosopher is conversant with pleasures and pains; for he attends to the body as an instrument, and the end of his work is not an absolute subjugation but a moderation of the passions. But the cathartic and theoretic philosophers attend to the body as a neighboring trifle, in order that it may not become an impediment to their energies; and the end with them is a liberation from the passions.

P. 51. *Here, therefore, the soul of the philosopher most despises the body, and flies from it, and seeks to become and live alone per se. But this will be specially evident from the contemplation of ideas.*

The energy of our soul is triple: for it either converts itself to things subordinate, obtaining a knowledge of and adorning them; or it converts itself to itself, and acquires a knowledge of itself; or it converts itself to natures more excellent than its own. Socrates, therefore, having shown that the philosopher is willing to die from a conversion to things subordinate, because he flies from the body, despising it; and also having shown this from a conversion to himself, since he attends to the body no further than extreme necessity obliges him, he now also shows that he is willing to die from a conversion to things more excellent: for he wishes to know ideas. But it is impossible for the soul to know ideas while energizing with the body, or having this as an associate in the investigation of them. For if Sense has something of the impartible, which is evident from the collected nature of its perception—for it knows, for instance, at once, that this particular thing is white and not black; since, if it knew this divisibly, it would be just as if I should perceive one part of a thing and you another,\*—much more, therefore, does the rational soul perceive impartibly. It differs, however, from sense by reason of the fact that sense knows but does not know that it knows—for it is not converted to itself, since neither body, nor the things which have their being in body, are converted to themselves—but the rational soul knows both sensibles and itself: *for it knows that it knows.* If this be the case, then, the soul will not take as its associate in investigation either the body or the senses, or the instruments of sense, if it wishes to know things impartibly and accurately.

\* For these partible perceptions would never produce a perception of that which is white, as one thing.

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P. 51. *For innumerable are the impediments which the body throws in our way, etc.* The *vital irrational* element of our nature is an impediment to the rational soul. But this is twofold: for it is either beheld about the body alone, as fears, desires and loves—or about things external, as wars and the accumulation of wealth. The *gnostic irrational* part also becomes an impediment,—as, for instance, the phantasy, which is always an hindrance to our intellectual conceptions. But there are two passions which it is difficult to eliminate, viz. the phantasy in knowledge, and ambition in life; since these are the things with which the soul first becomes invested, and which she last lays aside. For the first tunic of the soul in life is ambition, and in knowledge the phantasy. Hence Odysseus needed the aid of the Hermaemoly and Right Reason in order to escape Kalypso, the phantasy, which like a cloud becomes an impediment to reason, the sun of the soul. For the phantasy is a veil, and hence some one calls it *long-veiled*. Hence Odysseus first came to Circe, Sense, who is the daughter of the Sun. The phantasy, therefore, is an impediment to our intellectual conceptions; and when we are inspired by the influence of Divinity the enthusiastic energy ceases, if the phantasy intervenes: for enthusiasm and the phantasy are contrary to each other. Should it be asked, whether the soul is able to energize without the phantasy? We reply that its perceptions of universals prove that it is able to do so. It has perceptions, therefore, independent of the phantasy; at the same time, however, the phantasy attends it in its energies, just as a storm pursues him who sails on the sea.

P. 91. *For the most ancient thinkers, and those who were contemporary with and disciples of Pythagoras himself, etc.*—The Ancients did veil the Secrets of their Religion and Philosophy, counting it a profane thing to prostitute the hidden matters of either unto vulgar apprehension. For the Gods and Nature would not themselves have hidden so many things from us, if they had intended them for common understandings, or that others should treat of them, after an easy and perspicuous way. Hence was it that the learned men of former times were so generally inclined to involve all their learning in obscure and mysterious expressions. Thus did the Egyptian Priests, the Pythagoreans, Platonics, and almost all other Sects and professions.—Bishop Wilkins: Secret and Swift Messenger.

With the peculiar and characteristic language would vanish the peculiar and characteristic doctrines.... For example, who complains of the Platonic Theology for its peculiar vocabulary? Or, what reproach has it ever been to Iamblichus, to Proclus, to Plotinus, to Synesius, etc., that they wrote almost a sealed dialect to the profane?—DeQuincey.

### THE GOLDEN VERSES.

The famous Golden Verses, attributed to Pythagoras, may not have originated with him, as the majority of critics assert, but they contain an epitome of his philosophy, enunciating his chief Precepts in a harmonious, elegant and concise form. If these Precepts were put into practice the result would be a moral and intellectual revolution in human life, which would be of an inestimable benefit to mankind. The Golden Verses have been often edited, and translated into many languages. The best edition of the original text is that by Mullaeh, Berol.,

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## PLOTINUS' DIVERSE COGITATIONS.

(ENNEAD III. LIB. IX.)

Translated from the original Greek.

Intellect, says Plato, beholds ideas residing in the Living itself. Hence the Artificer dianoetically conceived that whatever ideas of a certain quality and quantity Intellect contemplates in the Living itself, such and so many this Universe should contain. Does Plato say therefore that ideas (forms) are prior to Intellect and that they, already existing, are contemplated by Intellect? Primarily therefore the nature of Living itself must be investigated,—whether it is Intellect or something other than Intellect. Now Intellect is that which essentially contemplates, and it may appear therefore that the Living itself is not Intellect but should be termed the Intelligible, and that Intellect possesses external to itself those things which it contemplates. If, however, Ideas are prior to Intellect, Intellect will only possess in itself images or representations of true things and not true things themselves, if they exist there; for he says that Truth is in Real Being itself, where each thing in its ideal form exists. [But this theory is unnecessary], for Intellect and the Intelligible are not essentially apart or twofold but are differentiated in thought alone. Moreover, it is not inconsistent with the conception that both are one to say that they are only divided in thought, for True Being is essentially one, but by and through its functions and operations it is partly Intelligible and partly Intellect. Accordingly when Plato says that Intellect contemplates ideas he does not mean that it beholds ideas wholly in another principle, but that it possesses the Intelligible in itself. There is no reason why

the Intelligible should not likewise be Intellect, but Intellect in position, unity, and repose: Intellect contemplating its own nature in the form of a certain energy which emanates as it were from it. Contemplating the Intelligible Intellect becomes similar to it, and the Intelligible is in Intellect because Intellect essentially apprehends it: intellectually apprehending the Intelligible it is in one respect Intellect, and in another Intelligible, by imitation or representation. This is the dianoetic conception of Intellect which produces in this world the four genera of animals which it beholds in the intelligible sphere. Here, however, Plato seems to mystically pronounce the dianoetic Principle to be different from the other two principles—while to others it appears evident that these three, viz. the Living itself, Intellect, and the Dianoetic conception, are essentially one. Perhaps, as in many other things, he conceives them from one point of view to be one, and from another to be three. Two of these principles [Intellect and the Intelligible or Living itself] have already been set forth,—but what is the third, which dianoetically determined to excite, produce and distribute the things beheld by Intellect, which abide in the Living itself? Is it possible that in one respect Intellect is the distributor, and that in another the distributor is not Intellect? So far as those things proceeding from Intellect are divided, Intellect is the dividing principle: so far as Intellect remains in itself indivisible and the things proceeding from it, viz. souls, are divided, Soul itself is the cause of the division into many particular souls. Hence Plato said that the division is the work of the third principle and in the third, to which is assigned the function of dianoetic thinking: not that dianoetic thinking is the proper function of Intellect, because it is the peculiar function of a soul having a partible or divisible activity (energy) in a divisible nature.

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II. As the totality of a science may be divided into particular propositions or theorems without any essential separation or partition of the science itself—for each proposition contains potentially the whole where the beginning and the end are the same—so it is necessary that the division be so constituted as that there may be to each proposition principles, ends, and wholes,—and, finally, that all things should be led back to the highest part of their nature (*i. e.* to Intellect.) For every thing which becomes or attains to this dwells there—because every thing which possesses the Intelligible by the highest part of its nature apprehends it.

III. The Universal Soul was neither generated nor did it come hither, for it was not in any particular place from whence it could come [but everywhere,] but body approaching to participated of it: hence the soul is not in body—nor does Plato say that it is—but body is in the soul. Other souls have an origin, for they came from Soul itself. Moreover, they descend and transmigrate: they also re-ascend to the Intelligible Region. The Soul of the Universe always dwells above, where its essential nature is. The Universe is subject to it: it is vivified by its proximity to it, like a body under the Sun is illuminated by its rays. A particular soul is illuminated when it ascends to that which is superior to it, for there it meets with True Being itself: when it declines to that which is inferior to itself it falls into non-being: it does this whenever it descends to its lower self. For desiring to become intimate with itself it produces that which is inferior to itself viz. an image of itself, which we call non-being, [the body.] It falls as it were into a vacuum, becomes indeterminate, and the image of this image [matter] is indefinite and entirely obscure. For it is absolutely devoid of all rational and intellectual nature, and is most distant from real being. The soul occupies an intermediate region [between Intellect and

body] which is its own proper domain: when it again looks to the inferior region by a second glance of the eyes as it were it forms an image [the body] and, delighted with this image, enters into it.

IV. How therefore does multitude proceed from the One, since the One is everywhere and yet in no place? For there is no place where it is not: it therefore fills all things. It is accordingly many things; or, rather, it is even now all things [and all species.] For if the One was simply everywhere it would be all things [and so not one]; but since it is also nowhere all things come into existence through the One because it is everywhere, though they are differentiated from the One because it is also nowhere. Why therefore is the One not only everywhere but also nowhere? Because it is necessary that it should be prior to all things. It is requisite therefore that the One should causally animate and form all things, but not that it should be all the things which it makes.

V. It is necessary that soul should be as it were sight or vision, and that the object seen by it should be Intellect,—sight is indeterminate before it sees, but its natural function is to see and understand. The relation of the soul to Intellect is the same as that of matter to form.

VI. Contemplating ourselves it is plain that we either behold an intellectual nature or we are deceived as to the apprehension. If therefore we think, and think ourselves, we unquestionably think an intellectual nature. Wherefore prior to this intellection there is another intellection which is as it were quiescent. And this is the intellection of essence and of life. So that prior to this life and essence there is another life and essence. These therefore are seen as so many energies. But if intellects are energies or activities whose essential function is self-contemplation or self-comprehension we will

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VII. The First Principle (the One) is the fountal power of motion and repose, and to these it is therefore superior. The second Principle is related to the First through its functions of motion and repose. And this is Intellect: for existing as one it directs its thought to and upon another, but the First is above thought. The thinking principle is twofold [because it contains the thinker and the thing thought:] it thinks itself and is therefore deficient, because it has its well-being (peculiar good) in intellectual action and not in pure super-intellectual existence.

VIII. That which is in activity is in harmony with that which proceeds from potentiality into activity, and remains always the same so long as it exists. It is likewise perfect, and a quality similar to this subsists with bodies, such as fire. But it cannot exist always, since it is connected with matter. But that which is essentially in activity is simple (uncompounded,) and therefore always exists. That which is in activity may be the same being in potentiality, according to another mode of existence.

IX. But neither are the Gods on high (which incline to beings) the first. Intellect is beings wherein are both movement and repose. The First indeed is not occupied or concerned about anything else, but other things repose and are moved about and in relation to it. Movement is appetite: but the First desires nothing. For what can the highest desire? Does it therefore not think even itself? Perhaps, so far as it possesses itself it is also said to think: but a being is not said to think by 'possessing itself' but by contemplating the First. The First Principle is therefore primary energy and thought itself. If therefore this is first, there cannot be anything prior. The fount of thought exists prior to thought: intellect therefore is secondary to its source, (the First.)

For neither is intellect to be venerated as the first. Nor is every intellection to be venerated, but only the intellection of the Good: and therefore above and beyond intellect is the Good. Is it therefore self-intellective? But why should it be? Is not the Good prior to self-intellection? And is it not still the Good? If accordingly it is the Good, it was the good before self-intellection: if self-intellection produces good it is not good prior to this: wherefore neither will self-intellection exist, since it will not be of the Good. What, then? Does it not live? Perhaps [strictly speaking] it cannot be said to live, since it is the fount of life. But that which self-reflects and thinks is secondary in rank: for it self-reflects in order that by this act it may associate with itself. It necessarily follows, therefore, that, if the Good intellectually apprehends itself, it meets with this apprehension as ignorant of itself and defective in its nature, but becomes perfected by this self-intellection. Self-intellection or apprehension therefore must be expelled from the Good: for every addition introduces ablation and deficiency.

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Iamblichus's exhortation to th

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