

A STUDY

ON THE

HOLY

GUARDIAN

ANGEL



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A STUDY ON THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

A SHORT INTRODUCTION

I. OUTER PERSPECTIVE

Few topics in Western Occultism gained as much attention and dedication by practitioners in recent decades as the Holy Guardian Angel. Since the teachings of the sage Abramelin - written down by Abraham of Worms - were published in 1725, for many attaining knowledge and conversation with one's personal guardian angel rose to become the epiphany of the magical Arte.

Over recent decades several personal accounts of the Abramelin ritual have been published that give further insight into this practice - such as William Bloom's 'The Sacred Magician' (originally published under the pseudonym George Chevalier) or Georg Dehn's introduction to his Book of Abramelin. Also new and adjusted versions have been developed and some of them made public such as Jason Newcomb's '21st Mage - Bringing Down the Divine'. And obviously the notorious Aleister Crowley developed his own approach to the matter in his Liber Samekh, considering the operation of utmost importance for any practitioner of the Arte:

"It should never be forgotten for a single moment that the central and essential work of the Magician is the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Once he has achieved this he must of course be left entirely in the hands of that Angel, who can be invariably and inevitably relied upon to lead him to the further great step -

crossing of the Abyss and the attainment of the grade of Master of the Temple." (A.Crowley, Magic Without Tears)

However, despite all this effort the actual nature and function of this purported spiritual entity have remained highly enigmatic along the way. While some scholars closed the book by considering the entire concept a relatively late invention of romantic practitioners of the early 20th century, others meant to trace it back to older occult source-works - thus assuming a long historic and practical tradition amongst followers of the 'Yoga of the West'.

As always in magic and life truth lies in the eye of the beholder, or in our case: the practitioner. Again, Crowley summed this up in his liminal Book4:

"It is impossible to lay down precise rules by which a man may attain to the knowledge and conversation of His Holy Guardian Angel; for that is the particular secret of each one of us; a secret not to be told or even divined by any other, whatever his grade. It is the Holy of Holies, whereof each man is his own High Priest, and none knoweth the Name of his brother's God, or the Rite that invokes Him." (A.Crowley, Book 4, A Star in Sight)

So while the actual road to attaining knowledge and conversation with our HGA can be paved by our own hearts, hands and minds only - it should be possible to get a better shared understanding of this concept from a purely historic perspective.

A few of the most common questions that have remained overly ambiguous amongst many modern practitioners are the following:

- Is there but one Holy Guardian Angel for each of us or two or even three?
- Is it indifferent in nature, evil or good?
- Is it actually split into two polar entities - like the devil and angels sitting upon our shoulders?
- How does the concept relate to Socrates' idea of a *personal daimon*?

- And what about the Holy Genius and Evil Demon we know from the Divine Pymander?

II. INNER PERSPECTIVE

Back in 2009 I went through my own version of a ritual that allowed me to gain knowledge and conversation with my HGA. It was a four week long ordeal that was centered on the forces of Saturn and breaking down the false barriers of Ego and limited subjective perspectives. Fellow German magicians might know a similar ritual under the term of '*Saturn Exerzitium*'. It gives access to an inner state and experience by use of repeated Saturn-focussed rituals while during the first week living in complete silence, during the second week with very little sleep, during the third week without food and during the fourth week with all three sacrifices combined. In the end the magician is left in a state of deep isolation, yet a sense of crystal clear focus and devotion that opens some interesting gnostic doorways. On the last day it culminates in a burial rite.

It was an adjusted version of this ritual that allowed me to find access to this wonderful spiritual being that had been around me all the time, patiently waiting for my filters to break down, for my limited personalty to falter and die - in order to be resurrected from within. Since then I have learned a lot about the way we communicate with spirits - about how little importance should be attributed to the magician and how much to the forces that work for and around him.

It is also based on this background of personal experiences that I am approaching these studies. While like many others I don't have to believe but know the reality I am confronted with when communicating with my HGA I also know it is still filtered through my own personality, my time, my culture, my social background and - last but not least - the limited treasure-house of words and images stored in my mind.

It is especially the latter, this treasure-house of words and images that needs constant feeding and expansion if we are to continue to grow as magicians and human beings. Now the following three studies on ‘The Concept of the Holy Guardian Angel’ have a lot to offer when it comes to expanding this treasure-house: By looking carefully at the way the Ancient Chaldeans, the Greeks and the Zoroastrians made sense of this unique spiritual experience that we have begun to call ‘our HGA’, we as readers begin to encounter new words, new images, new thought patterns, new ideas, possibilities and realities - and continue to tear down the illusion that our own reality has any significance beyond the borders of our skin.

This is the hope in which I am sharing these brief essays.

May the serpent bite its tail.

LVX,

Frater Acher

A STUDY ON THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

AMONG THE CHALDEAN

*Evil fiends and demons that lie in wait... Pursuing after a man,
turned him from his purpose. (Horne, p.181)*

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the earliest testaments of ritual magic that has come upon us dates back to the Chaldean period. However, defining clearly what the term ‘Chaldean’ means has been a problem for scholars since decades. The main challenge is that the meaning of the term shifted repeatedly over the centuries. Originally it indicated a member of an ancient Semitic people who came to prominence in the late 8th century BC and gained rulership over Babylonia in 620 BC. For our investigation into occult lore it is interesting to note that the Chaldeans were the culture to create the magical fundament from which many later cultures drew their astrological and ritual practices such as the famous Sabians of Harran.

The name Chaldean, however, lost its meaning as the name of a specific ethnic group in 539 BC when the Babylonian Empire was absorbed into the Persian Empire. Since then we can find the term being applied much more generally referring to all people versed in occult learnings and in astrology and incantations of the planetary spirits specifically (*source: link 1/ link 2 - see Selected Literature*).

It's in light of such ambiguous historic context that we will investigate the idea of an individual spirit guardian among the Chaldeans. What we will need to keep in mind in addition is that we are referring to an ancient period from which few written records have come upon us and whose cosmology, magical practices and rites were influenced by preceding and parallel cultures such as Sumerians, Assyrians and Egyptians.

2. CHALDEAN DEMONOLOGY

On immersion into Chaldean sources of magic we immediately see that demonic forces were abundant according to their worldview. And so were the means to regulate human interaction with them.

“The gods of the Euphrates, like those of the Nile, constituted a countless multitude of visible and invisible beings, distributed into tribes and empires throughout all the regions of the universe. A particular function or occupation formed, so to speak, the principality of each one, in which he worked with an indefatigable zeal, under the orders of his respective prince or king; but, whereas in Egypt they were on the whole friendly to man, or at the best indifferent in regard to him, in Chaldea they for the most part pursued him with an implacable hatred, and only seemed to exist in order to destroy him.” (Maspero, Vol3, p. 136/137)

Thrown back on himself alone man had no realistic chance of facing and surviving the constant demonic attacks that formed the basis of everyday life. Thus protection from demons that were audacious enough to attack the gods of light themselves - as conveyed for the seven wicked Maskim, the evil subterranean demons and counter forces to the seven planetary spirits (Lenormant, p.18 / Butler, p.5-6 / Horne, p.230) - needed to be omnipresent and strongly supported by the good spirits. These existed in antagonistic yet fine balance to the evil spirits. Together they formed a dualism comparable in purity only to Zoroastrianism (Lenormant, p.145).

While similarly dualistic in nature one of the major difference between Zoroastrian and Chaldean magic is that in the latter the continuous fight of the hoards of evil and benevolent demonic spirits wasn't synthesized on a cosmic level into two antagonistic supreme beings. As we will see in a later chapter on Zoroastrianism Ahuramazda, the good creator and his antagonist Ahriman, the evil adversary are conceived as two eternally battling forces, creating the mythical blueprint for all struggles between evil and benevolent forces in the lower realms of creation (Link 3). Chaldean cosmology, however, was much more polytheistic in nature, its pantheistic divine beings residing in and bringing to life all phenomena of nature.

It has been a matter of debate among scholars whether underneath the surface of polytheistic Chaldean rites and incantations still a deeper level of divine unity and successive emanation can be assumed.

As an example for a scholar who believed to perceive a divine unity below the polytheistic surface of Chaldean cosmology we can take Lenormant.

“Underneath the exterior garb of a coarse polytheism (...) were the conceptions of a higher order from which it had originated; and foremost among them the fundamental idea of a divine unity, although disfigured by the monstrous illusions of pantheism, which confounded the creature with the Creator, and transformed the Divine Being into a multitude of derivate gods who were manifested in all the phenomena of nature.” (Lenormant, p.111-112)

However, most scholars today seem to disagree with Lenormant's speculation and clearly determine the Chaldean religion as polytheistic in essence. An early example of this view is already given by Lenormant's coeval, the respected egyptologist Gaston Maspero:

“If the idea of uniting all these divine beings into a single supreme one, who would combine within himself all their elements and the whole of their powers, ever for a moment crossed the mind of some Chaldaean theologian, it never spread to the people as a whole.”
(Maspero, Vol3, p.154)

What remained undisputed among scholars of the field until today, however, is that the practical aspects of Chaldean cosmology, i.e. their rites and magic can best be described as an overflowing “adoration of the elementary spirits” (Lenormant, p.143). And if there had been any supreme beings from whom other gods were born - such as the god Ilu - they never became the centre of a cult or fellowship among Chaldeans (Lenormant, p.113-114).

The centre of the Chaldean rites and religion always remained the demonic and divine forces as represented by nature and the celestial night sky. Adoration of the planets, their divine spirits as well as protection from their evil subterranean counterpart forms the centre of the Chaldean texts and artifacts (Lenormant, p.112).

“There can be no doubt of the Sabaeism of the Chaldees, and apparently of the early Assyrians, whose pantheon, from its fusion of human and animal forms, resembles the Egyptian and Hindhu. The relation of religion with astronomy is, however, more striking in Assyria than in Egypt; the system of the latter country being solar, while the Assyrian worship was rather astral. On the Babylonian cylinders and monuments, the sun and moon constantly occur, and often seven stars arranged more in the manner of the Pleiads than of the Great Bear, but probably the latter. Zodiacal signs are frequently placed in the area along with the sun, moon, and seven stars, and show unequivocally that the Greeks derived their notions and arrangements of the Zodiac from the Chaldees.” (Layard, Vol2, p.440)

Devotion to and magical practice for the planetary spirits formed an essential corner stone of Chaldean rites. However, in all their efforts to engage with, predict and control the influence of the planetary and elementary spirits man always remained in his original place - deeply confined by his own nature and in continuous search for magical empowerment through divine or demonic assistance. The idea of direct ascension of man, of changing man’s (spiritual) nature to become like the gods wasn’t part of the Chaldean cosmology or magical practice. Just as they didn’t strive to synthesize the plethora of gods into a single higher divine

being, so they didn't strive to free man from the confines of his essential nature - caught in the eternal struggle between chthonic and celestial forces. The outspoken goal of Chaldean magic was to win this battle, one day, one demonic assault at a time, not to transcend it in nature.

It were later magical systems that introduced the idea of theurgy into magic, i.e. of ascension of man towards the divine and 'spiritualize' his nature in order to govern and direct inferior divine emanations independently (Lenormant, p. 74 & 107). For Chaldean magicians theurgy wasn't part of their armamentarium. The Akkadian man remained bound into the natural realm without any chances of struggling free from the demonic dualism he was constantly surrounded by.

“Upon this dualistic conception rested the whole edifice of sacred magic, of magic regarded as a holy and legitimate intercourse established by rites of divine origin, between man and the supernatural beings surrounding him on all sides. Placed unhappily in the midst of this perpetual struggle between the good and the bad spirits man felt himself attacked by them at every moment; his fate depended upon them. All his happiness was the work of the former, all the evils to which he was subject were attributable to the latter.” (Lenormant, p.146)

Understanding the basic belief-system of the Chaldeans is essential for everything to follow. Only in light of this can we understand their perspective and meaning of a personal spirit guardian assigned to each human being. However, before looking at this specific category of spiritual beings, let's take a closer look at the way Chaldeans understood the nature of demons in general.

Anybody familiar with Jewish, Gnostic, Christian, Muslim or Neoplatonistic cosmology knows that the basic principle of cosmic organization and hierarchy rests in the relation of each part of creation towards its creator. Thus the various ranks of angels are defined by their closeness to God's throne, demons are ordered in descending ranks into increasing darkness hidden away from God's eternal light. The neoplatonistic chains of emanation - maybe the purest example of this cosmological

principle - stretch out from the eternal source of creation into the abundant diversity of the material realm, creating order and alignment in what would seem lost in chaos otherwise. The principle of cosmic organization pivots on its creator. Only in relation to this supreme being can we understand the true identity of each object and being as well as its function in creation.

This principle doesn't apply in polytheistic cultures. Such spiritual dependency can neither be traced in the early pantheons of the Egyptians or Greeks, nor among the ancient Chaldean gods. While even polytheistic religions develop, protect and pass on their mythical lore of divine succession and creation these stories tend to carry little meaning and emphasis in their daily cultic practices.

Thus in Chaldean magic we can find distinct divine hierarchies and stories of creation of sky and earth out of chaos as well as their overthrow through their own offspring similar to the mythical lore of the Greeks. However, these sacred stories are of little importance and value in the actual rites as well as the cults of local gods. What mattered most to Chaldeans was the actual relationship they developed with specific gods, spirits or demons - not where these emerged from originally. Even though on a larger scale gods were as time-bound as humans - generations of divine beings handed over cultic devotees once their time had passed and the stars of their offspring were rising - things were as fluid and unstable in the spiritual realm as they were on the material one. As below so above.

So while Chaldean gods and demons couldn't hope for eternal stability of their rulership they were free from the intricate dependency on a supreme being so well known in later monotheistic religions.

3. PERSONAL SPIRIT RELATIONS AMONG THE CHALDEANS

From what we have learned from the above we can conclude that according to Chaldean worldview each spirit existed in its own right. Every plant, stone and mineral, every animal or artifact created by humans,

anything that exists had a spiritual being attached to it. Yet these weren't organized in sympathetic chains as we find it in later Hellenistic times (Reiner, p.141).

What mattered most to the magician wasn't where gods or demons came from, but to strike a positive alliance with the benevolent and strike a deadly blow at the wicked ones. What mattered most was the personal impact each spirit could make on the living - not their genealogy. Just as man in Chaldean times didn't strive to ascent into heavens through theurgy, so their magic was aimed at the here and now. The focus of any spiritual action was the immediate effect, not re-creating bounds with distant primordial divinities that first set forth the eternal motion of creation. For Chaldeans Kether always rested in Malkuth solidly.

It is this context that explains why we search in vain among Chaldeans for the idea of a transcendent or supra-lunar personal daimon assigned to each human being from birth. Chaldeans most likely would have frowned upon the Thelemic saying 'Every man and woman is a star'. Much rather than thinking of humans - or their higher selves - as stars they would have searched for magical means to bind the spirit of a specific star to a human or sacred object (Reiner, p.127/128/139). For Chaldean magic to work the difference between the human and the realm of the stars was essential. As it were the latter who acted as messengers from and to the divine (Reiner, p.16) which had to be invoked into the human realm as needed exactly because they were different in nature.

“Stars function in a dual role in relation to man: they exert a direct influence and serve as mediators between man and god. Directly, through astral irradiation, they transform ordinary substances into potent ones that will be effective in magic, medicine, or ritual, as materia medica, amulets, or cultic appurtenances. Stars also provide reliable answers to the query of the diviner. More important, in their second role stars are man's medium of communication with the divine.” (Reiner, p.15)

Thus for the Chaldean mind - being deeply pragmatic - creating deliberately chosen and often changing spirit bounds as seem fit in any given situation was much more natural than claiming a single transcendent spirit union by birthright. Good luck, health, wealth and longevity were things to be gained through deliberately chosen magical patrons, spirit alliances and demon traps rather than a higher state of being that could be unlocked through mystical ascension.

So if we look for traces of the concept of a holy guardian angel among Chaldeans we do not find any proof of its existence - as long as we refer the term to a spiritual being of supra-lunar or celestial nature that is assigned to man by birthright. We do find, however, many traces of spirits acting as patrons to humans for both good and evil purposes (Reiner, p.109).

As mentioned above spirit alliances were crucial for survival in Chaldean times. As the most intimate form of spirit communion human possession thus was not only possible but rather common. It was dreaded and warded off by the evil and often magically induced by favorable demons.

Here is an example incantation to protect from evil possession:

“The wicked god, the wicked demon, the demon of the desert, the demon of the mountain, the demon of the sea, the demon of the marsh, the evil genius, the enormous uruku, the bad wind itself, the wicked demon which seizes the body, which disturbs the body. Spirit of the heavens, conjure it! Spirit of the earth conjure it!” (Lenormant, p.3)

And here is an example incantation to induce beneficial possession:

“The king, the shepherd of his people, may he (hold) the sun in his right hand, may he (hold) the moon in his left hand. May the favorable demon, the favorable giant, which governs the lordship and the crown, penetrate into his body!”

However, in all case demonic influences were perceived as completely external interventions. Demonic influences were drawn from the outside in

and not connected to man's soul by nature. It was the everyday interaction with beings and objects as part of an animistic world full of spirit influences that could lead to negative infliction, bad fate ,various forms of diseases or its opposites.

“They, the productions of the infernal regions, On high they bring trouble, and below they bring confusion. Falling in rain from the sky, issuing from the earth, they penetrate the strong timbers, the thick timbers; they pass from house to house. Doors do not stop them, Bolts do not stop them, They glide in at the doors like serpents, They enter by the windows like the wind.” (Lenormant, p.30)

So while the idea of a inborn demon patron - may it be beneficial or evil - didn't exist in Chaldean times, the Babylonian sorcerers knew how to create similar spirit bonds deliberately at a later point in life. Thus in Chaldean times demon patrons were demonic spirits bound into either talismanic objects or into a human person itself.

Here is an example incantation to the guardian spirit of king Esarhaddon (a king of Assyria who reigned 681 – 669 BC):

“May the guardian bull, the guardian genius, who protects the strength of my throne, always preserve my name in joy and honour until this feet move themselves from their place.” (Lenormant, p.54)

4. SUMMARY

This first chapter of our short study of the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel thus concludes with a few major findings.

As one of the earliest cultures to influence our Western magical lore the Chaldeans did not know the concept of a Holy Genius and Evil Daimon as it emerged in later centuries.

However, we did encounter a potential source of this idea in the concept of demon patrons or guardian spirits that was well known in Chaldean magic and formed an essential measure in attaining protection and warding of evil influences.

Furthermore - and maybe even more distinctly - we learned that the idea of individual mystical or magical ascension of the practitioner was unknown to Chaldean mages. In a world where spiritual genealogy meant little and actual curses and protection charms everything man's goal wasn't to spiritualize himself nor to ascend above the physical boundaries of his human existence. Rather than aspiring to reconnect with one's personal star Chaldean mages aspired to connect with the most helpful stars to resolve the actual problem at hands. In essence during Chaldean times magic wasn't a means to deify the constitution of the human soul yet it was an everyday tool for protection and to resolve real-life crisis.

5. SELECTED LITERATURE

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A STUDY ON THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

AMONG THE ZOROASTRIAN

1. PREAMBLE

An ancient tradition like Zoroastrianism has many voices. It is a strong tree with many branches and multiple deep strands of roots. Trying to identify a single line of tradition or ritual practice would not only be naive but also neglecting the beauty such a rich tradition has to offer. A living choir instead of a single dead voice.

During my journey to learn about the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel among the Zoroastrian this was one of the most fascinating yet also difficult aspects: Reducing multiple layers of time, meaning and tradition into one. And while it was challenging it also was a wonderful reminder that all kinds of magic have to be brought to life in practice and through practice alone - rather than in books. Because it is just in our subjective experience that all these layers can co-exist. Only when we project what we felt in our hearts and saw in our minds and lived through in our dreams on the pages of a book all living dimensions fade away. And what we are left with is the track instead of the game.

Nevertheless every journey needs a starting point. And I hope this is what the following report can be: a humble addition to the keys that open many more doors to creating Knowledge and Conversation with our Holy Guardian Angel.

Finally, in this report you will find quite a lot of quotes. Feel free to skip over them and you should still be able to follow the text. I decided to include them as the primary and secondary sources on Zoroastrianism are vast and still relatively unknown among Western magicians. And as some of the findings reported may be surprising I want to give you the chance to form your own opinion based on a rich field of scholarly voices rather than mine.

2. INTRODUCTION

Researching how our current Western esoteric concept of the Holy Guardian Angel evolved would be impossible without understanding the deep influence of Zoroastrianism. Just as Zoroastrianism itself influenced later monotheistic religions in the West (Moore, p.181 / Scheftelowitz, Vorwort) we will see that so did its ideas about personal spirit guardians our Western occult lore.

“Zoroastrianism had its origin in a branch of the great Iranian race. It rose to power as the religion of the Medo-Persian empire, and while it spread widely among the subject peoples, particularly in Asia Minor, its strongholds were always the Iranian lands (...)” (Moore, p. 181)

On trying to locate Zoroastrianism on the timeline between other ancient religions such as the Hindu, Egyptian and Chaldean as well as later monotheistic religions such as Judaism and Christianity we are faced with an essential problem. That is that the actual origin of Zoroastrianism still couldn't be mapped down in the history of Ancient Persia. Surprisingly we find vast variations of about 2000 years - locating the origins of this ancient religion anywhere between 3000 and 600 BCD. This problem seems mainly due to the fact that Zoroastrianism even though being much older entered recorded history only by the mid-5th century BCD (Kingsley, p. 245). However, even this earliest historic record dating Zoroaster back to the 6th century BCD seems to be flawed.

“By now it is agreed by almost all scholars actively working in the field that this date is in fact fictitious, calculated piously but quite erroneously by Persian Magi, perhaps early in the Christian era, in order to place Zoroaster in a historical setting and so make him equal in this respect with Jesus and the gnostic prophets of that time.” (Boyce, quoted after Kingsley, p.245)

Thus the dispute about the actual age and origin of Zoroastrianism has a long history all the way back to the Magi in antiquity as well as the Greek philosophers (Kingsley, p. 245). Irrespective of its exact date of origin, however, we do know a lot about the actual content and cosmology of Zoroastrianism. Probably the most important source are the Ghatas, a compendium of loosely connected ancient hymns that are said to have been composed by Zoroaster himself.

From these early sources we learn that according to Zoroastrianism the most distinct aspect of creation is an eternal struggle between two opposing forces, played out on various levels of existence. On the divine level we find the concepts of ‘ahuras’ and ‘daevas’. (Blois, p.3: The latter term survives in modern Persian as dew, Western Persian div, "demon").

First and foremost among the ahuras is Ahura Mazda or Spenta Mainyu (Holy Spirit, ref. Dhalla, 1914, p.48) the principal creator god and the only ahura mentioned by name in the Ghatas. (Note: this is also why Zoroastrianism is also called Mazdaism, according to the principle divine being of AHura Mazda). The eternal struggle between him, Ahura Mazda and his devil opponent Ahriman or Angra Mainyu (i.e. Evil Spirit, ref. Dhalla, 1914, p.48) forms the fundament and background of all events and fates on earth as well as the central divine dynamic within Zoroastrianism (Panati, p.252/358).

“Life is co-operation with good and conflict with evil. Good and evil are co-existing polarities. Man can think of things only in terms of their opposites. Light is light because of darkness. Health is a coveted boon, as its loss heralds sickness. Life is valued as Ahura Mazda's most incomparable gift, as lurking death threatens its extinction. Happiness is

pleasant, for misery is unbearable. Riches rise in worth owing to the dread of poverty. Joy is gratifying, for sorrow aims at killing it. Virtue is the health of the spirit, for vice is its disease. Righteousness is the life of the spirit, for wickedness spells its death. There can be no compromise between good and evil. Incessant warfare is raging between good and evil. Man's duty is to commend good and co-operate with it; to condemn evil and enter into conflict with it.” (Dhalla, 1938, Chapter X, link)

As we learn from this quote man is given an active role to play in this transcendent battle. He is placed right in the middle between the two opposing forces of truth and order facing chaos, falsehood and destruction. Based on his free will it is his active choice to support either the forces of Ahura Mazda or Ahriman that can tip of the scales and decide about the fate of life and all of creation ultimately. Thus the necessity for an ethical life is deeply embedded in Zoroastrian religion and pursuing truth and order through good thoughts, good words, and good deeds became one of the central pillars of its everyday practice. Furthermore, the position of man towards the divine is less of a subordinate and more of a devoted partner or co-creator of reality (Winston, BBC 2005).

This eternal battle between Ahura Mazda and his devil opponent Ahriman forms the most transcendent layer of creation where these two opposing forces collide. Yet, as we will see later it is on the next lower layer, the one closely connected to the nature of the human soul where this struggle is fought just as hard (Blois, p.4) - and we shall encounter possibly one of the earliest version of the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel.

Before that, however, it will be helpful to take a brief look at the fundamentals believes of Mazdian Demonology.

3. MAZDIAN DEMONOLOGY

“In the ninth-century Pahlavi books, this dualism is omnipresent. Good and evil forces are presented in an almost perfect symmetry, and for each good creature a symmetrical evil corresponds.” (Moazami, p.301)

According to the dualistic Mazdian cosmology the primal evil being Ahriman or Angra Mainyu (destructive spirit) is the creator of all things evil, destructive and chaotic. Assigning all evil creations directly to him solved a lot of complex theological problems for Zoroastrians (Russel, p.73).

As they simply assumed that nothing evil could ever emanate from a genuinely positive creator god such as Ahura Mazda they didn't had to deal with all the complex ramifications of explaining how evil came into existence in a world with a positive creator. For most Zoroastrian sources - just like the Vendidad or the 12th century Bundahishn - the answer was straight forward: It was Ahriman himself who brought forth all chaos, evil, sicknesses and first and foremost the evil demons called daevas.

“The infernal crew. The diabolic spirits who have entered into a compact with Angra Mainyu to mar the good creation of Ahura Mazda are the Daevas, or demons. They are the offspring of the Evil Mind and spread their mischief over all the seven zones. The Evil Spirit has taught them to mislead man through evil thought, evil word, and evil deed.” (Dhalla, 1914, p.49)

Next to Ahriman himself source texts mention six and more rarely seven main daevas. Beyond this inner circle of evil spirits vast hordes of additional evil spirits of lower ranks are spread out into the material realm. Their numbers extend into infinity as constantly new demons are brought to life by the evil deeds of all creatures:

“Various new devas are those who spring on to the creatures, ever and anon, out of the sins which they commit. “ (Bundahishn XXVII.51)

Alternative Name	Meaning	Daeva (Evil Demon)	Amesha Spenta (Divine spark)	Meaning	Rulership over
--	'evil thought'	Akoman	Vohu Manah	'good purpose'	animals
Andar	'who freezes the mind'	Indar	Aša Vahišta	'best truth / righteousness'	fire
Sawar	'oppression'	Sarvar	Xšaθra Vairya	'desirable dominion'	metals and minerals
Noanghaithya	'discontent'	Nanghait	Spanta Ārmaiti	'holy devotion'	earth
Tauriz	'destruction'	Tawrich	Haurvatāt	'wholeness'	water
Zairich, Zarich	'who poisons plants'	Zariz	Amərətāt	'immortality'	plants

Sources: Wikipedia - Dhalla, 1914 p.52 - <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/658081/Zoroastrianism>

The basic source of all these evil demons is Ahirman's relentless desire to counter the benign creation of Ahura Mazda. This motive becomes particularly clear in the creation of the main six daevas - each of whom is an antithesis to one of the six Amesha Spentas (see table above), the 'bounteous immortals' (literal translation) or divine sparks of Ahura Mazda.

“As Ahura Mazda holds his council of celestial beings, so Angra Mainyu maintains in his infernal court a retinue of male and female demons. In opposition to every archangel and angel (...) the younger literature sets up a corresponding fiend. These form exact counterparts of the powers of goodness, and always act in direct opposition to them. We do not find the symmetry of diametric opposites between these rival forces carried out to completion in the extant Gathic literature. The names of not all the corresponding demons, who are the opponents of Mazda's ministering angels, are found.” (Dhalla, 1914, p.49)

The basic antagonism of these six highest Zoroastrian angels and demons mirrors the cosmological war between the two eternal divine principles Ahura Mazda and Ahriman on a lower cosmological level, one step closer to creation. And it is this principle of antagonistic demonic and angelic forces that we rediscover in the Solomonic Tradition of magic centuries later.

3.1 THE SOLOMONIC CONNECTION

For Western practitioners of the Arte the matching of the 72 spirits of the Goetia to the 72 angels of the Shemhamephorash will be the most famous

examples of such pure dualism between angelic and demonic forces, each balanced by the power of its opponent. From what we know today it was Dr. Thomas Rudd who first shared evidence of this practical approach in his angelic magic in the 17th century by matching the seals of the Goetic demons with the corresponding angelic seals (Skinner, Rankine, p.73). A full overview of all 72 antagonisms can be found in Carroll Runyon's 'The Book of Solomon's Magick' (consolidated in the 'Master Mandala') or in Stephen Skinner and David Rankine's 'The Goetia of Dr Rudd' ,table, M15, p. 366-377.

Adam McLean in his 'A Treatise on Angel Magic' clearly over-simplifies the explanation of the dualism present in Rudd's works. In his eyes they are nothing but an expression of a "primitive dualism" (McLean, p.15) which he interprets as an unfortunate legacy of the "Jewish patriarchal religion" (McLean, p.13). According to McLean this dualism can be unveiled as an expression of the inability of our ancestors to understand 'evil' as "being nothing else but an encounter of the magician with his unconscious mind" (McLean, p.14). It is this projection that "must be integrated in order to avoid pathological conditions arising through repressing in a dualistic way a side of our being" (McLean, p.13).

While trying not to judge McLean's highly Eurocentric take on ritual magic and demonic evocations in particular it has to be pointed out that his identification of the Jewish influences as the root cause for the historic dualism is at least shortsighted. While he claims that "before this period magicians could work naturally to invoke spirits without any inner qualms" (McLean, p.13) we know that this wasn't true amongst many cultures before the Christian area already. As we have seen in the previous chapter on Chaldean magic even thousands of years before the Jewish religion took form the spiritual realm was divided into benevolent and malefic spirits. And performing evocations of the latter type was sanctioned even in ancient times. This is especially true among Zoroastrians (Kiesewetter, p.123).

Thus the actual term 'magi' for the devotees of Zoroastrianism as well as Pliny the elder's comment of Zoroaster as the inventor of magic are both

highly misleading. Sorcery is condemned in the harshest way in all Zoroastrian source texts that mention it. Zoroaster himself labelled magicians as the hands, the feet, eyes and ears of the evil spirit Ahriman (Kiesewetter, p.123). While the mythical figure of Zoroaster always had a strong reputation as a master of astrology the connotation with magic was deliberately introduced later by the Greeks (Beck, 2002).

Rather than ritual magic it were detailed cleansing and purification rites that evolved as part of Zoroastrian cult and practice. In order to understand why this development took place we need to take a closer look at the nature of matter and substance itself according to Zoroastrian sources.

3.2. THE NATURE OF MATTER

“In Zoroastrian literature, the Evil Spirit’s creation has a negative character because it begins in opposition to that of the Beneficent Spirit. The material state is the creation of the Beneficent Spirit; the Evil Spirit can only attack, contaminate, and corrupt it.” (Moazami, p.316)

The world with all its human, animal and elemental realms had already been fully created when the first evil spiritual beings came into existence. Before the daevas arrived all of creation was in perfect harmony; the event of a human or divine fall as known in e.g. Lurianic Kabbala is unknown to Zoroastrianism. Only on arrival of the daevas and due to their conscious impact did evil start to exist and actively affect humans as well as all of the material realm. This means, however, that according to Zoroastrianism matter itself is perfect and pure in its very nature.

Demons can only affect the living world of creation by penetrating through matter in order to affect the life forces encapsulated in it. According to Mazdian cosmology every evil demonic being depends on matter to materialize itself on any level of creation. Thus the nature of demons is parasitic. They depend on a foreign body or shell to dwell in. Their primal

and most deeply rooted urge is to enter the world of substance in order to be clothed in matter and take effect (ref. Bruce Lincoln during a lecture at Duke University in 2010).

Once the demons have achieved to break into a body they take direct influence on the spirit residing in it. In accordance with their own way of being they change the feelings, behavior and thoughts of the spirit whose body they inflicted and trigger a process of moral and physical corruption that ultimately leads to decay.

This process is not only restricted to the human realm but similarly affects the animal, plant, metal and mineral kingdoms. Especially in the animal realm this influence can be shown clearly as according to Zoroastrianism all animals can be divided into beneficial and maleficent animals. This divide among animals weights even heavier given the fact that all animals were considered to be intermediary between the human and the divine world - either angelic or demonic in nature (Moazami, p.317)

3.3 THE DEMONIC ANIMAL

“The animal world is likewise divided between “beneficial” animals, creatures of the Beneficent Spirit, and “maleficent” animals, creatures of the Evil Spirit. The partition of animals as beneficial or maleficent represents one of the most important and original aspects of the ancient Iranian religious worldview.” (Moazami, p.301)

While their physical bodies were originally created by Ahura Mazda their spirits have been overtaken by the sinfulness and malevolence of Ahriman. Thus maleficent animals (xrafstars) had infiltrated the benign creation and turned into agents of the Evil Spirit. Their influence and impact, however, wasn't directed against the benevolent creatures only but also against the raw elements of creation themselves: water, fire, earth and all plants. Evil animals therefore work as parasitic forces of pollution, impurity and destruction from within creation itself (Moazami, p.301/302).

“The Bundahisn (...) divides evil animals by whether they live in the water, on earth, or in the air—of the water, the frog; of the earth, the many-headed dragon; and of the air, the winged snake are the worst.” (Moazami, p.302)

The killing of evil animals developed into an important form of devotion among the Magi. Not only was it done collectively during important dates in their ritual calendar to honor the feminine angelic spirit of earth, Spandarmad but also as a means of atonement for grave individual sins. Given the fact that the long lists of evil animals are assigned to the night in general and contain most species of snakes, reptiles, amphibians and flying and crawling insects it is worth wondering if we still find a shadow of the idea of demonic animals in the convoluted recipes of the medieval witch cults? Moreover, as Zoroastrian sources specifically call out that the bodies of dead evil animals can be used in the composition of remedies. This is because once they are dead the malevolent spirit is cut from the material body. The pure physical remains, however, are made from the benevolent elements of water, earth, wind and fire (Moazami, p.308).

Another striking similarity to the medieval image of the witch in the West is that the cat specifically was an evil animal associated with demons and sorcerers. However, considering that ancient Iranians were nomads it can be understood that they would have considered cats ambiguous, restive and perfidious in comparison to the loyal dogs that watched their cattle and tents (Moazami, p. 314).

From the above two central characteristics of Zoroastrian cult become obvious:

First, this is its deeply entrenched dualism which leaves no space for any shades of grey. That means it was impossible to contact any spiritual being through prayer whose nature wasn't clearly marked as either good or evil. As we can see from the quote below the demarcation line of good and evil even crossed through the land of the fairies... Just like in everyday life so became

every ritual act a testament to the practitioners intent to side with the forces of good or evil.

Secondly, the main corpus of Zoroastrian cult was aimed towards cleansing and purification of substance and matter. After all, the eternal divine battle was fought over immanence in matter, i.e. whether creation could maintain its inborn purity and benevolence through the guard of watchful angelic beings or lost it due to the malice, cunning and destruction of evil spirits (Russell, p.76/ Kiesewetter, p.120/ p.134).

“A class of bewitching fairies has been created by Angra Alaiyu to seduce men from the right path and injure the living world. Nimble as birds they go along flying in the shape of shooting stars between the earth and the heavens. They come upon fire, water, trees, and other creations from which they are to be driven away by the recital of spells.” (Dhalla, 1914, p. 172)

4. THE CONSTITUTION OF MAN

Having discussed the main aspects of Mazdian demonology it became clear that man played a crucial role in ending the siege of evil and help the forces of Ahura Mazda to overcome the eternal fiend. However, as mentioned earlier this struggle between good and evil took place on all levels of creation - the divine, the demonic and angelic as well as on the human level itself.

So not surprisingly we can find that even man carried two demons bound into his own nature: an evil demon and an beneficial angel. The Zoroastrian texts call these elements twins (Blois, p.4/ Carnoy, p.864), the ‘animal’ and ‘angel’ within men or simply the lower and the higher self. While the higher self supports the evolution of man towards light and righteousness the animal within is constantly laying pitfalls into his way hoping he will stumble over the desires, the false needs and deceiving emotions he hides under.

“Man was animal but yesterday. Today he is man, though not devoid of animal traits. His destiny is to be angel, and tomorrow he shall be that also. Everyone has in his or her power to be a saint. But the way to attain sainthood and divinity is distant and beset with countless difficulties. Every step in advance is a struggle. The animal in man is obdurate and persistent, cunning and resourceful. To escape from his grip, to destroy his power, to eliminate him, man has to fight a hundred battles. Man's inner life is a perpetual warfare between animal and human within his breast. A violent struggle is going on in every human heart between the higher impulses to renounce animal appetites, and the lower instincts to satisfy them. Man is a divided self, divided mind, divided will, and feels within him the conflict of two opposing natures. The one half of man's being is always at war with his other half. When the Good Spirit first met the Evil Spirit, he said that he was opposed to him in his thoughts and words and deeds and faith and conscience and soul and every thing. The same complete polarity obtains between the higher self and the lower self in man.” (Dhalla, 1938, Chapter X)

It is here that we possibly encounter the first example of what turned into the philosophy of the ‘Holy Genius and Evil Demon’ as portrayed by the Divine Pymander in the Corpus Hermeticum in the second or third century:

“(...) for I the Mind (the logos or holy genius, ed. Frater Acher) come unto men that are holy and good, pure and merciful, and that live piously and religiously; and my presence is a help unto them. (...) But to the foolish, and evil, and wicked, and envious, and covetous, and murderous, and profane, I am far off, giving place to the revenging Demon, which applying unto him the sharpness of fire, tormenteth such a man sensible, and armeth him the more to all wickedness, that he may obtain the greater punishment. And such an one never ceaseth, having unfulfiled desires, and unsatisfiable concupiscences, and always fighting in darkness; for the Demon always afflicts and tormenteth him continually, and increaseth the fire upon him more and more.” (Westcott, p.27/28)

Thus the notion that man is torn between the inner guidance of two opposing spiritual beings can be traced from Zoroastrianism all the way to the Hermetica. Moreover, we also find evidence of it in the early Christian scriptures such as the Shepherd of Hermes from the first or second century:

“‘Hear now,’ saith he, ‘concerning faith. There are two angels with a man, one of righteousness and one of wickedness.’ ‘How then, Sir,’ say I, ‘shall I know their workings, seeing that both angels dwell with me?’ ‘Hear,’ saith he, ‘and understand their workings. The angel of righteousness is delicate and bashful and gentle and tranquil. When then this one enters into thy heart, forthwith he speaketh with thee of righteousness, of purity, of holiness, and of contentment, of every righteous deed and of every glorious virtue. When all these things enter into thy heart, know that the angel of righteousness is with thee. These then are the works of the angel of righteousness. Trust him therefore and his works. Now see the works of the angel of wickedness also. First of all, he is quick tempered and bitter and senseless, and his works are evil, overthrowing the servants of God. Whenever then he entereth into thy heart, know him by his works.’” (Shepherd of Hermas, Mandate 6:2)

And still thirteen hundred years later we encounter the same philosophy of mans’ soul in the main compendium of medieval Western magic, Agrippa of Nettesheim Three Books of Occult Philosophy:

“As therefore there is given to every man a good spirit, so also there is given to every man an evil Diabolicall spirit, whereof each seeks an union with our spirit, and endeavors to attract it to it self, and to be mixed with it, as wine with water; the good indeed, through all good works conformable to it self, change us into Angels, by uniting us, as it is writ of John Baptist in Malachi: behold I send mine Angel before thy face: of which transmutation, and union it is writ elsewhere; He which adheres to God is made one spirit with him. An evil spirit also by evil works, studies to make us conformable to it self, and to unite, as Christ saith of Judas, Have not I chosen twelve, & one of you is a devil? And this is that which Hermes saith, when a spirit hath influence upon the soul of man, he scatters the seed of his own notion, whence such a soul being sown with seeds, and full of fury, brings forth thence

wonderful things, and whatsoever are the offices of spirits: for when a good spirit hath influence upon a holy soul, it doth exalt it to the light of wisdom; but an evil spirit being transfused into a wicked soul, doth stir it up to theft, to man-slaughter, to lusts, and whatsoever are the offices of evil spirits.” (Agrippa, Book3, Chapter XX, p.521/522)

On taking a closer look at the constitution of man according to Mazdian sources (see table on next page) we find a distinction of five specific elements.

We don't know exactly on which level the fight between the lower and higher self of man occurs. It could be within each of these levels or between specific elements of his constitution, i.e. between his animal nature captured in boadhagh (body) and the higher conception of man in aghva (prototype).

This latter interpretation of the roots of the lower and higher self could find support in the Jewish tradition of the 'good and evil urge'. Both the Talmud and the Zohar know this principle that often keeps man caught in-between good and evil, unable to fulfill his true fate. According to the Zohar the good inclinations spring from the highest level of the soul, Neshamah (Prophet, p.167) whereas the evil urge is attaching itself to the body of the newborn during its moment of birth (Müller, p.152). Given the influence Zoroastrianism exerted on the formation of Judaism this could point toward the interpretation that even in Mazdian times the higher self was identified with aghva, the prototype of the humans?

In either case we learn from Zoroastrian scriptures that it is first and foremost the urvan , the soul of man that needs protection from the afflictions of evil (Anklesaria, p.58) in order not to degenerate and decay:

“And in that wind he saw his own religion and deeds as a profligate woman, naked, decayed, gapping, bandy-legged, lean-hipped, and unlimitedly spotted so that spot was joined to spot, like the most hideous, noxious creature, most filthy and most stinking. Then that wicked soul spoke thus: "Who art thou, than whom I never saw any one of the creatures of Auharmazd and Akharman uglier, or filthier, or more stinking? To him she spoke thus: "I am thy bad actions, O youth of evil thoughts, of evil words, of evil deeds, of evil religion. It is on

account of thy will and actions that I am hideous and vile, iniquitous and diseased, rotten and foul-smelling, unfortunate and distressed, as appears to thee.” (The Book of Arda Viraf (A.D. 226 to A.D. 640), Chapter XVII, quoted after Mueller p.205)

Luckily in this fight against evil within and around him man had a strong ally set next to his side. According to Mazdian tradition this is his fravashi, his personal guardian angel.

Element	Translation	Purpose	After death returns to...	Description acc. to Baynes
<i>baodhagh</i>	body	connection to matter	earth	man's physical force and nature
<i>ushtana</i>	life	connection to wind & complexion	wind	vital principle
<i>urvan</i>	soul	connection to the mind and senses	fravashi	characterizing individuality, conscious mind
<i>aghva</i>	prototype	connection to the Sun	Sun	self, the seat of life
<i>fravashi</i>	fravashi	connection to Ahura Mazda	--	supreme spiritual principle

sources: Anklesaria, p.58/ Baynes, p.430

4. THE FRAVASHIS - THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGELS OF ZOROASTRIANISM

“The fravashi, or guardian-spirit, is a totally distinct spiritual adjunct which every individual and object of the good creation possesses; it is a kind of primary idea, and is the spiritual counterpart of a deceased person, that is invoked, or revered, in certain ceremonies. Its duty is to protect the body which it represents.” (West, p.606)

The only known portrait of the prophet Zoroaster (Müller, p.64)The essential antidote against all demonic afflictions are the fravashis. On creation all things that emerged embedded into matter were assigned a “double or spirit form” (Horne, p.2). In this intricate relationship between the fravashis and the material body they guard over we find another proof of the positive connotations of matter in Zoroastrianism: having a physical body was the

pre-requirement to be assigned to a personal spirit guardian. Thus the fravashis are individual spirit patrons of all things created of substance and embody “the simple essence of all things, the celestial creatures corresponding with the terrestrial, of which they were the immortal types.” (Lenormant, p.199)

For anybody familiar with Platon’s theory of forms this might sound strangely similar to his concept of ‘ideas’? As a disciple of Socrates Plato evolved and wrote about his teacher’s theory on how material forms are connected to the realm of the essential good or divine. In his eyes material forms are just shadows of ideal forms. These ideal forms exist as living entities and possess the highest and most fundamental kind of reality - different to the world of change we are bound into - yet they are also impossible to know. Thus reality of the material realm wasn’t considered a complete illusion - just like a shadow exists somewhere between illusion and representation of the object itself. And just like a shadow can give a hint about the form of the actual object so the material realm allowed conclusions about the shape and nature of reality on the highest realm. Thus the material realm of change is caught in a process of constantly ‘miming’ the good or divine forms from which it originally emerged. And from this man’s purpose can easily be derived:

“Man's proper service to the Good is cooperation in the implementation of the ideal in the world of shadows; that is, in miming the Good.” (Wikipedia)

Such seeming affinity between Zoroastrian and Platonic philosophy was noted early in history already. Not only did it lead to the belief that Zoroaster had been the chief authority behind Plato but it also ensured a lasting popularity of Zoroaster’s name among a long line of scholars, especially during the 15th and 16th century (Wouter, p.1183).

Returning to our subject of the fravashis, however, we do not find confirmation for the assumption that their relationship with the being they guarded over resembled the one of object and shadow. Both, the material

being as well as its spirit double had ontological reality only on different levels. While humans, animals, plants and crystals were mortal creatures on the material realm, the fravashis were their immortal counterparts on the celestial level. And while the latter formed the matrix of life for the former both of them were filled with independent, individual life - one of them ephemeral, the other eternal.

Here now we can find the potentially earliest notion of each man having his own individually assigned 'star' in the skies above. Crowley's later formulation that 'Every man and woman is a star' has to be considered a direct or indirect derivative from this early Mazdian doctrine. The essential point is that the fravashis - just like the stars - were created long before the individual being they were meant to watch over came into life. Thus every created being has its fixed point or own guiding star in the shape of its individually assigned fravashi.

"They (the fravashis, - ed. Fra.Acher) are like guardian-angels of all individual persons. They are a duplicate of the soul, existing before birth and uniting themselves to the soul after death. The name seems to mean 'confession', 'conscience' and may be an equivalent of daena, 'conscience', 'religion' which survives a man and is shaped after his conduct during life." (Carnoy, p.865)

Interesting enough, according to Zoroastrian philosophy the question if man either has a 'Holy Genius and Evil Demon' attached to his soul or alternatively a single immortal 'Holy Guardian Angel' was not perceived as mutually exclusive.

Man was constantly tormented by his evil urge and had to battle demonic attacks from within and around him to fulfill his purpose in creation, i.e. to follow his good urge with 'good thoughts, good words and good deeds'. This dualistic dynamic wasn't resolved for him but presented his essential purpose in creation. However, in the fravashi each man had his own celestial ally, a safe place of powerful protection against evil, a place of personal guidance and counsel. Thus in the concept of the fravashi we can find one of the

earliest forms of the personal daimon as conceived by Socrates during the Greek period. As the individually assigned “unseen agent” (Mueller, p.205) for the first time we encounter the idea of an immortal self-conscious higher being that is completely dedicated to guiding and protecting its mortal counterpart through the struggles of everyday life.

As mentioned above, in Mazdaism, however, not only humans had their own genius, but so did all things created, including the stars and the gods. To illustrate the glory and praise that the influence and powers of the fravashi receive in Mazdian ritual practice let’s read a longer quote from the Fravardin Yasht (probably 559–330 BC):

“Ahuramazda spoke to Spitama Zarathushtra: To thee alone I shall tell the power and strength, glory, usefulness, and happiness of the holy guardian angels, the strong and victorious, O righteous Spitama Zarathushtra! how they come to help me. By means of their splendor and glory I uphold the sky which is shining so beautifully and which touches and surrounds this earth; it resembles a bird which is ordered by God to stand still there; it is high as a tree, wide-stretched, iron-bodied, having its own light in the three worlds. Ahuramazda, together with Mithra, Rashnu, and Spenta Armaiti, puts on a garment decked with stars and made by God in such a way that nobody can see the ends of its parts. By means of the splendor and glory of the Fravashis I uphold the high strong Anahita (the celestial water) with bridges, the salutary who drives away the demons, who has the true faith and is to be worshipped in the world. If the strong guardian-angels of the righteous should not give me assistance then cattle and men, the two last of the hundred classes of beings, would no longer exist for me; then would commence the devil's power, the devil's origin, the whole living creation would belong to the devil. By means of their splendor and glory the ingenuous man Zarathushtra who spoke such good words, who was the source of wisdom, who was born before Gotama, had such intercourse with God. By means of their splendor and glory, the sun goes on his path; by means of their splendor and glory the moon goes on her path; by means of their splendor and glory the stars go on their path.” (Mueller, 205-206)

Upon death the soul returns to the fravashi and unites with it (Anklesaria, p.58 / Carnoy, p.868). However, even though the fravashis are immortal in nature it seems their relationship to the creature they watch over can be affected by the thoughts, words and deeds of the latter. Whether or not this idea was a later development in Zoroastrianism doesn't seem to be evident. Yet the relationship to one's personal fravashi seemed not only important in order to gain support in the struggle between the evil and good urge within every man - but to ensure the continued support and favor of one's own guardian angel in the first place.

“Similarly, the Fravashis or Guardian Spirits are the most helpful genii, but on condition that man propitiates them with sacrifices. When satisfied they are of indescribable help but once offended they are hard to deal with. They are to be approached with religious awe. They are to be feared rather than loved. This fear of the celestial beings may engender obedience in man, but not devotion. And devotion is the higher of the two virtues.” (Dhalla, 1914, p.79)

5. THE RITUAL PRACTICE

Looking at the forms this devotion took in daily life we discover the spiritual practices that Zoroastrians took to engage with their Holy Guardian Angel. It is here that we find a most interesting fact for Western practitioners of the ritual art: In Zoroastrianism invocation of the fravashi formed a crucial element of spiritual life and practice (Lenormant, p.199) - it was not at all an occult or secret practice and didn't require extended periods of purification or preparation.

As mentioned earlier the ritual setup in Zoroastrianism is kept to the most basic components: the sacred fire that continuously is kept burning in each temple and devotee's house - ideally fed with sandal-wood only - some incenses to be sprinkled into the flames, a possible offering of bread and milk and the baresman or bundle of twigs that is held in hands while prayers are

recited (Carnoy, p.868). This is all it takes to invoke one's personal guardian angel as the sacred books of Zoroastrianism repeatedly show us in their prayers. As just one example we quote from The Vendidad (probably 600 to 400 B.C.):

"Invoke, O Zarathushtra! my Fravashi, who am Ahura Mazda, the greatest, the best, the fairest of all beings, the most solid, the most intelligent, the best shapen, the highest in holiness, and whose soul is the holy Word! Invoke, Zarathushtra ! this creation of mine, who am Ahura Mazda. Zarathushtra imitated my words from me, and said: I invoke the holy creation of Ahura Mazda." (Horne, p.144)

From a Western ritual point of view it makes good sense that we never encounter evocations but only invocations of the fravashis and other gods in Zoroastrian literature. A religion that tried to overcome the tribal cults of the nomadic ancestors focussed on prayer and devotion as its main tool of liturgic practice. And as the battle between good and evil took place on all layers of creation - from the most divine to the most common - the powers of the fravashi were needed first and foremost where it mattered most to every human being: within themselves. Only if the fravashi was kept in close contact and in favor of one's thoughts, words and deeds could the devotee hope to achieve an increasing assimilation between his being and the powers of his fravashi. Such was the belief of the Zoroastrians that the forces of the fravashi had to be drawn into one's own being and soul repeatedly in order to fully benefit from the divine power of one's Holy Guardian Angel.

But not only one's own fravashi could be invoked. We also find proof of invocation of the fravashi of other people, especially of the powerful and righteous ancestors (Horne. p.148). Irrespective towards whom the invocation was directed - one's own fravashi, the fravashi of the righteous or the powers of stars or gods - each prayer had to be saturated with profound devotion. In fact the praise and devotion did not stop at the actual object of one's spiritual practice. Yet it was extended to include all things present in the ceremony, both on a material and spiritual level:

“The following are the objects that come in for a share of invocation in the ritual : Haoma, Aesma or the wood for the fire altar, Baresman or the sacred twigs, Zaothra or libations, one's own soul and Fravashi, the Gathas, the chapters of the Yasna Haptanghaiti, meters, lines, words of the chapters of the Haptanghaiti, intellect, conscience, knowledge, and even sleep. Thus the creator and his creature, angel and man, ceremonial implements and scriptural texts are all alike made the objects of adoration and praise.” (Dhalla, p.80)

The power that emanated from the prayers of the devotee clearly dissolved the boundaries between the objective and subjective features of the ritual. The actual paraphernalia used but also one's soul, one's fravashi, one's conscious, intellect, knowledge and even sleep - they all merged and became one in prayer and adoration. What we really find in this early Zoroastrian practice is a description of a state of deep devotional trance.

This interpretation is supported by one last feature of Zoroastrian ritual practice we will look at. The only word in the quote above whose meaning isn't explained is the first in the list, haoma.

“Besides this there was, despite Zoroaster's ban upon it, the sacrifice of haoma (= Skr. soma), an intoxicating plant of which the stems were crushed in a mortar and the juice strained off; this was presented before the fire and drunk by the officiating priest and his acolytes.” (Carnoy, p.868)

Much dispute has been going on around the botanical nature of haoma until it was identified as a variant of Ephedra in the 19th century. When drunk as an extract it had a mildly intoxicating and hallucinogenic effect. We also know that the twigs that were held while in prayer were also taken from the haoma plant. Finally, the name haoma was not only used to describe the plant itself but also its divinity, i.e. the spirit of the plant...

So this spiritual practice that we rediscover in ancient Zoroastrianism is creating a unique synthesis between a tradition of liturgic prayer invocation and deeply shamanistic trance techniques.

“Shamanism is an anthropological term for a range of beliefs and practices relating to communication with the spirit world. A shaman is a person regarded as having access to, and influence in, the world of good and evil spirits, who typically enters a trance state during a ritual, and practices divination and healing.” (Wikipedia)

And now bring this image to life in your mind: The Mazdian priest is standing in the half-light of the temple, the sacred haoma twigs in his folded hands, reciting long lines of prayers from heart while staring motionless into the flames of the sacred fire. Clouds of incense rise from the flames and while his gaze is deeply fixed into the blaze, prayers flowing like water from his lips the hallucinogenic effect of the drunken potion slowly takes effect... This was the way of the Zoroastrians to achieve knowledge and communion with their Holy Guardian Angels.

While not directed at the effect of drunken potions but inhaled incenses it is revealing what Christian Rätsch, one of the leading botanists on hallucinogens has to say about the ancient spiritual goal of such practices:

“It was in the smoke or odor of the incense that one realized the actions of gods, demons, angels, spirits, souls of the plants and others. They manifested within man once they were inhaled. This is why the smoke of certain sacred plants was breathed in or inhaled in order to give space in one’s own body to the related spiritual beings.” (Rätsch, p.27)

In light of this we can assume that the effect of drinking the haoma potion, staring into flames for extended periods and reciting the related prayers were the tools Zoroastrians leveraged to create a spirit vessel of their own bodies for the powers invoked. Just like the ancient Egyptians and Greeks created spirit dwellings within statues it seems so did the Zoroastrians within themselves by invoking the powers of their fravashis, their personal guardian angels.

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A STUDY ON THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

AMONG THE ANCIENT GREEK

“The unexamined life is not worth living.” (Socrates)

1. INTRODUCTION

Preparing this chapter has been like finding a path through an overgrown garden. The deeper I walked into it, the more it turned it a maze. It's only looking backward that the byways and sideways make sense and I can hardly see from a distance how one coils around the other in mutual influence.

The maze, therefore, will always be present on our journey - and equally reflected by the structure of the essay. The specific timespan we will examine is relatively short, it stretches from 469 until 291 BC, that is from the times of Socrates to the ones of Menandes. On our journey, however, we will move forward and backward in time as all paths of the maze coil around its centre. For this particular study the centre is the work of Plato - one of the most influential philosopher of all times - whose work not only became a cornerstone of Western science but also of the occult lore of Occident and Orient alike.

So before we walk out into the garden, let me share the milestones of the path I have laid out for us. As with the exploration of any maze, it can only be the starting point for your own adventures:

We will start by examining the essential makeup of the soul according to Plato. How is the soul of man constructed? What are the dynamics it participates in? And what occult influences are hidden in it, veiled from everyday views?

From there we will continue to take a closer look at the ideas the ‘Ancient Greeks’ had about the demonic. Which place did demons hold in their cosmology? Were moral categories attributed to demons? And how was one believed to experience the work of demons in one’s own life?

Once we have built this fundament we will continue to explore Socrates’ specific doctrine of his personal daimonion. Much has been written about it already. But can we learn from it with regards to our modern ideas of a Holy Guardian Angel?

We are reaching the centre of the maze by returning to Plato, Socrates’ most famous pupil. Here we will examine how Plato extended and deepened the ideas of his teacher on the demonic and the foundation of our current concept of a HGA will become visible.

Finally, we will get to know one of Plato’s lesser known disciples, Xenocrates. It is with his writings that we will conclude, studying how his interpretation of the demonic became essential for the current darker shades in which we perceive this term - and how he gave substance to the lore of the ‘evil daimon’.

So in brief this will be our path. If you walk all the way with me to the centre of the maze, I’ll be delighted. What a wonderful garden it is.

2. PLATO’S ELEMENTS OF THE SOUL - LOGOS, EROS AND THUMOS

To start out let us begin with something very simple. As so often Plato is a great source for making complex matters accessible for everyone:

“Concerning the immortality of the soul this is enough; but about its form we must speak in the following manner. To tell what it really is would be a matter for utterly superhuman and long discourse, but it is within human power to describe it briefly in a figure; let us therefore speak in that way. We will liken the soul to the composite nature of a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the horses and charioteers of the gods are all good and of good descent, but those of other races are mixed; and first the charioteer of the human soul drives a pair, and secondly one of the horses is noble and of noble breed, but the other quite the opposite in breed and character. Therefore in our case the driving is necessarily difficult and troublesome.” (Plato, Phaedrus, 246a/b)

So Plato compares the human soul to a charioteer and two winged horses. The charioteer can be identified with the rational mind or reason, the noble horse represents a concept called thumos - which we will explore shortly - while the unruly horse depicts our biological appetites, called eros.

When looking at the constitution of the human soul among the ‘Ancient Greeks’ this is as simple as it gets (see diagram on next page).

Here is a more detailed explanation of Plato’s allegory by Mr.Greer from the fabulous Scarlet Imprint release ‘The Blood of the Earth’:

“One horse represents what we may as well call the biological self, guided by what Romantics called the instincts and Platonists called the appetites. The other horse, though, represents what the ancient Greeks called thumos, the spirited or irascible part of the self, the part that responds nonrationally to praise or blame from others, and more generally is guided by the pressures and influences of the community to which the individual belongs. To use a phrase Plato didn’t, where the first horse is the biological self, the second horse can be described as the social self.” (Greer, p.38f)

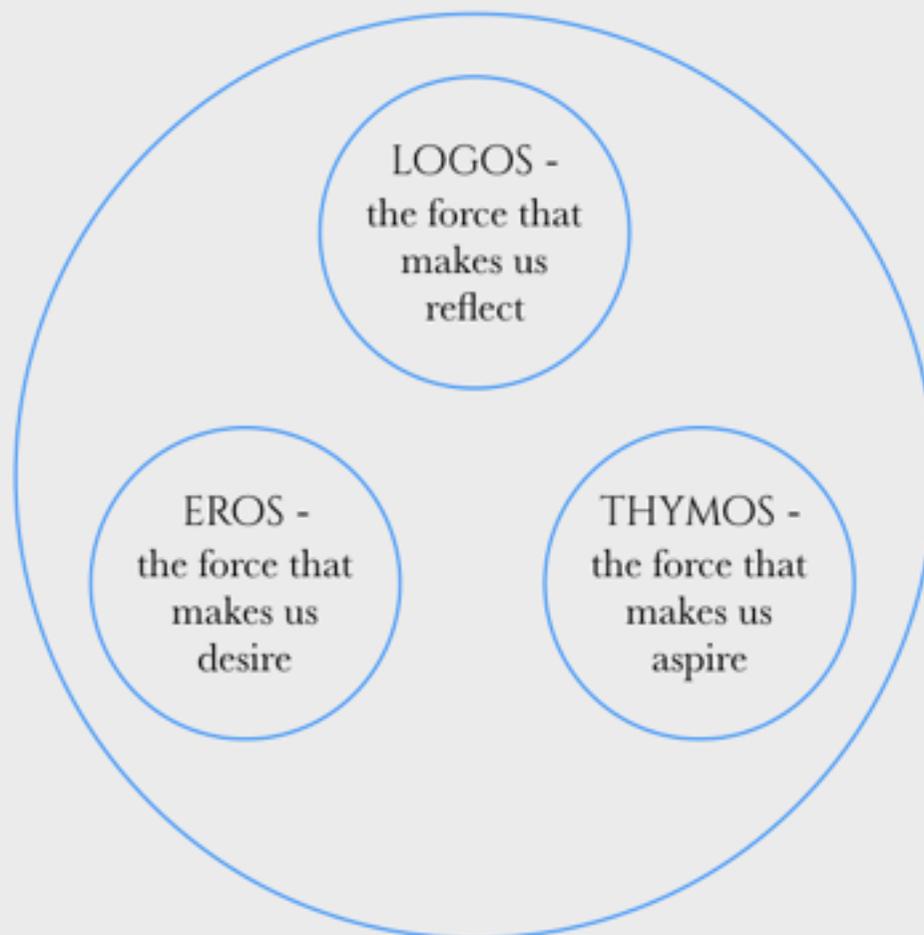
To better understand the interplay between these two non-rational aspects of ourselves, I strongly recommend reading the full chapter in Greer’s book.

As simple as it might seem at first glance, it is an important element of the ‘Ancient Greek’s’ understanding of the soul.

Thumos or thymos can best be translated with the English spiritedness or courage. From an etymological point of view it indicates a physical association with breath or blood and is also used to express the human desire for social recognition. Thus the ‘noble’ of the two dominating non-rational driving forces in the human soul is intricately connected to the social environment anyone grew up in. As far as I know there is no analogy to this idea in neither Christianity, nor Judaism, nor Kabbala itself? What we find here is a term that describes the non-rational and nonverbal patterns in our behavior which are shaped and energetically charged by the specific social standards we are born into. Thus the collective being of a tribe or society leaves a significant imprint on the individual. In other words - it is in the thumos where the microcosm of ourselves reflects the social macrocosm we were brought up in. Again, let’s ensure we understand this idea thoroughly and look at what Mr.Greer has to say about it:

“This second horse (...) is as potent a force as the biological appetites, and tangles up with them in complicated ways - the intricacies of sexuality, for example, have a good deal more to do with the social self and influences absorbed in childhood than they do with the relatively simple biological drive to mate. In evolutionary terms, the social self (...) is a good deal older than the rational mind; we share it with the whole range of mammals that live in groups, and more especially with social primates such as chimps and baboons. (...) it is no easier to change it by rational thought than it is to turn the mating drive on and off the same way.” (Greer, p.39)

Now, this explains why according to Plato the thumos depicts the ‘noble’ horse. Nobility, honor, glory, virtues and even basic values are all results of social norms and interactions - condensed and imprinted into the thumos of our soul. Following its impulses, even if irascible, violent and untamed in their expression, was the only way to achieve social reputation. It is what drove warriors into battle and what was fueled by the gods in their devotees. (Note:



For a more in depth look at the relation of the thumos and the fury of the warriors also compare the concept of ‘menos’ as located within the thumos (see Bremmer, p.58f). This is also why the thumos of a human should not be perceived as a social mark or construct only. Quite the opposite: it is the closest analogy we find in the ‘Ancient Greek’ conception of the soul to the idea of a divine life force. When the thumos left the body of a person it meant their immediate death.

“(...) After Dioreus had been fatally hit ‘he fell backwards in the dust ... while he blew forth his thymos’. (...) Ajax hit Sarpedon’s comrade-in-arms Epikles, who ‘like an acrobat fell down from the high wall, and the thymos left his bones. (...) Diomedes slew the sons of Phaenops and ‘took out the thymos from both’.” (Bremmer, p.75)

A person dominated by their thumos thus was destined to become a soldier or warrior in life. On the other hand, a person dominated by the other horse, the unruly one was much more talented to become a successful merchant. It is noteworthy that the very word ‘eros’ which grew a thick thorn hedge of romantic associations around it over the last two millennia holds such an archaic origin. Here is how Plato describes this lower part of the soul in his Timaeus:

“The part of the soul which desires meats and drinks and the other things of which it has need by reason of the bodily nature, they placed between the midriff and the boundary of the navel, contriving in all this region a sort of manger for the food of the body; and there they bound it down like a wild animal which was chained up with man, and must be nourished if man was to exist.” (Tim,3.38)

In many aspects the eros - or epithumetikon as opposed to the thumetikon - can be imagined as the complete counterpart to the thumos. Where the thumos rules over the positive (social) emotions the eros sets free the (biological) desires and urges. Where the thumos represents the vitalizing force of spiritedness, the eros reveals our basic cravings - or appetites as the Greeks would say - for food, sex and shelter. Even the thumos was imagined to be of masculine sex, whereas the eros was supposed to be feminine (source). Slightly reminiscent of Maslow’s hierarchy of human needs we could summarize that while the thumos represented the higher, social needs, the eros was the source and container of the physiological ‘life energy’ - a term in which sense the word eros has often been used in Greek philosophy.

As we can see, both horses had a place and function in the soul of a human and the healthy mind achieved balance over both of them. For this the logos or charioteer was of utmost importance. This was the place where intellect held its human throne and reasoning and logic emerged from. Where the horses pulled into the directions of social status and biological needs, the logos desired nothing but learning and wisdom. Only by means of this mental function was the soul able to balance the impulses and urges of the two winged horses. According to the early Plato people dominated by the logos or logistikon made great philosophers or politicians.

3. THE NOUS - THE ANCIENT HIGHER SELF

At this point we encounter an interesting problem of Greek philosophy. The faculties of the soul we examined so far are all biased in one or another

direction: Eros veils the sensual impressions of the world into bodily appetites whereas thumos clouds our perceptions by social norms and expectations. Logos on the other hand is a pure capacity for mental reflection and thus does not generate any perceptions on its own; it is the engine that runs on the input delivered by eros and thumos.

What we find here is the following: while our physical senses collect raw information about reality our soul isn't capable of processing these without significantly altering or biasing them. What we truly touch, hear, smell, see is not what we realize in our mind once it has been processed by the inner organs of our soul. Thus we are caught in a world where the faculties of our soul distort perception according to their nature - and we are deprived of the ability to perceive nature as it truly is.

Think of your mind as a foreigner in a far away culture whose language it doesn't comprehend. It has two translators always by its side; yet neither of them is very reliable. One of them has the tendency to unnecessarily focus on physical appetites and desires; the other is rather obsessed with status and displaying the courage to climb the social ladder. As you have no means to communicate with the people around you directly, your interactions will all be distorted by the personal preferences of the two translators. After all you might find yourself on a journey that teaches you more about the preferences of your translators than the country you are traveling in? Such is the situation of the charioteer (logos) when it comes to objectively perceiving and making sense of the world we are thrown into. It is hugely dependent on functions that don't provide accurate data. To make it even worse - indeed later philosophers argued that there is no accurate information out there at all. Rather than distorting it, the two translators are actually making a lot of the stories up they are telling our minds.

So how can we know what is real? Well, luckily there is a fourth function of the soul we haven't discovered yet, called nous.

“(nous) is a philosophical term for the faculty of the human mind which is described in classical philosophy as necessary for understanding what is true or real, similar in meaning

to intuition. It is also often described as a form of perception which works within the mind ("the mind's eye"), rather than only through the physical senses." (source)

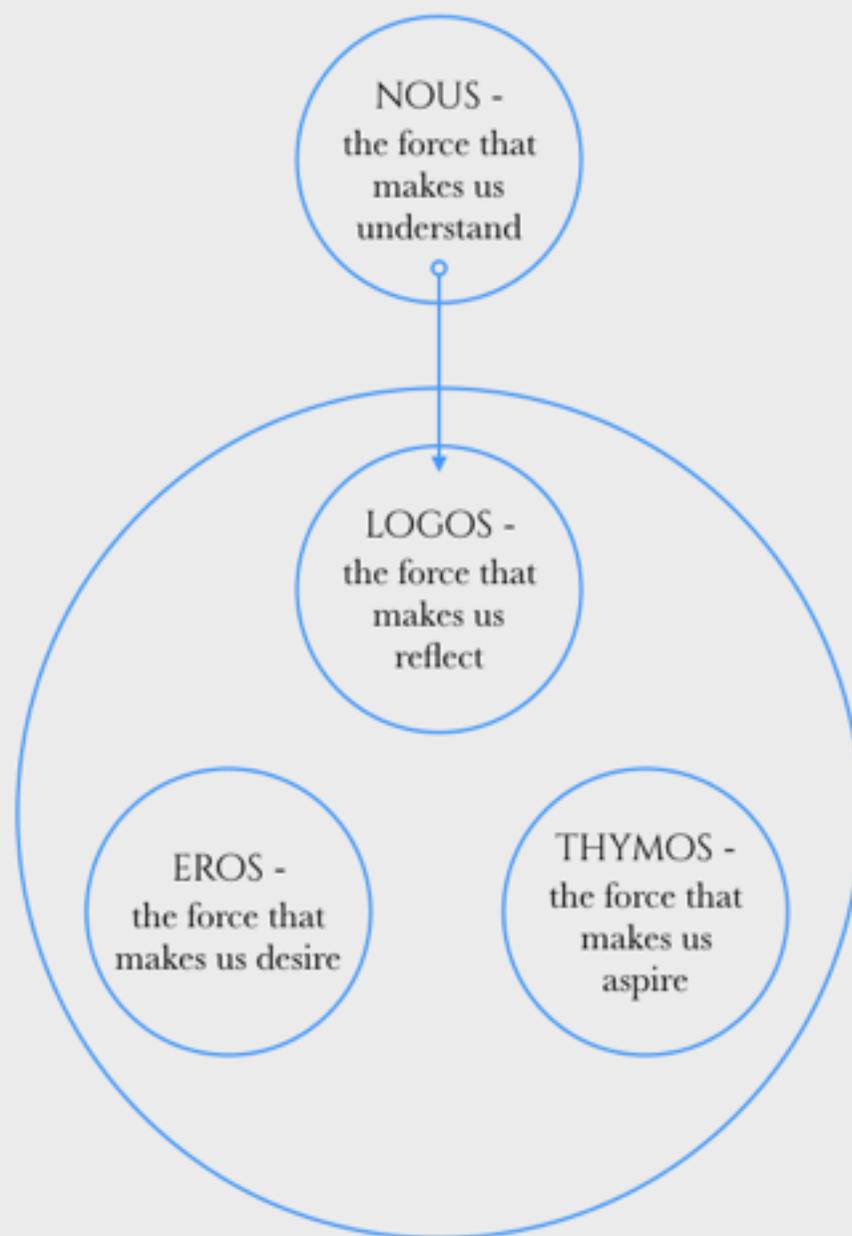
It is the function of nous that allows us to understand nature in an undistorted way and to achieve true insights about reality as it is. While the corporeal reality is constantly changing and our perceptions biased through eros and thumos can be misleading, it is nous that always remains pure and untouched by the tides of matter. Thus nous not only allows us to piece together the information received through our senses in an undistorted way, but it does so in adding a higher form of insight and knowledge. Nous can be translated both as understanding and intuition.

Plato uses two famous metaphors to describe the way the nous functions. In his metaphor of the sun he compares it to the sunlight that helps man's eyes to see. In his Socratic dialogue Meno, however, he explains it as ideas embroidered into man's soul which he might recall from previous lives. Either way, Plato makes it clear that this light which helps us seeing or these ideas which help us remembering is the only immortal part of our soul; all other parts vanish upon our death (source).

What both metaphors illustrate is the idea that the function of nous exceeds the realm of the material or even human level. It allows its human carriers to ascend beyond the limitations of illusionary reality and to glance behind the veils of matter. Nous often was understood as the divine or spiritual assistance (source) humans receive to comprehend reality. It is the living spiritual force that allows to draw true reasoning from flawed perceptions. Because of this it was also said that nous as a divine principle would never mix with any other substance but effortlessly penetrate all things created. Anaxagoras of Clazomenae, born about 500 BC wrote about the nous:

"All other things partake in a portion of everything, while nous is infinite and self-ruled, and is mixed with nothing, but is alone, itself by itself. For if it were not by itself, but were

mixed with anything else, it would partake in all things if it were mixed with any; for in everything there is a portion of everything, as has been said by me in what goes before, and the things mixed with it would hinder it, so that it would have power over nothing in the same way that it has now being alone by itself. For it is the thinnest of all things and the purest, and it has all knowledge about everything and the greatest strength; and nous has power over all things, both greater and smaller, that have soul [psyche].” (source)



According to Anaxagoras it was the nous itself that gave order and intelligence to creation. And as it wasn't bound to any material shell it existed on many levels. Humans were understood to partake in the benefits of nous; yet at the same time the celestial spheres had their own nous or understanding. This concept becomes even more accessible when we examine the etymological connection of the Greek word nous (mind) to noesis

(understanding, from noein to perceive) and ultimately gnosis, the divine knowledge.

Let's pause for a moment and consider what we found: an ancient idea of an all permeating force that is too subtle to be contained or confined by any type of substance. Still, it is in the nature of this force to attach itself to individual objects as well as entire celestial realms and to grant them power of true insight and the creation of meaning. The name of the force is sometimes translated as 'intellect', sometimes as 'understanding' and in its most common form simply as 'mind'. However, it exists discretely from the mental and spiritual functions of the being it attaches to as we found it to be different from logos, eros and thumos.

The same conception can still be found as an integral part of Western ritual magic two-thousand years later. It is still called 'intelligence' and we find many occult writers and practitioners, among them Agrippa of Nettesheim, explain its function in great detail:

“It is affirmed by Magicians, that there are certain tables of numbers distributed to the seven planets, which they call the sacred tables of the planets, endowed with many, and very great vertues of the Heavens, in as much as they represent that divine order of Celestiall numbers, impressed upon Celestials by the Idea's of the divine mind, by means of the soul of the world, and the sweet harmony of those Celestiall rayes, signifying according to the proportion of effigies, supercelestiall Intelligencies, which can no other way be expressed, then by the marks of numbers, and Characters. For materiall numbers, and figures can do nothing in the mysteries of hid things, but representatively by formall numbers, and figures, as they are governed, and informed by intelligencies, and divine numerations, which unite the extreame of the matter, and spirit to the will of the elevated soul, receiving through great affection, by the Celestiall power of the operator, a power from God, applyed through the soul of the universe, and observations of Celestiall constellations, to a matter fit for a form, the mediums being disposed by the skill, and industry of Magicians (...)” (Agrippa, Three Books of Occult Philosophy, book II, chapter XXII)

By replacing the word ‘Intelligencies’ above with the Greek nous we rediscover a strand of occult philosophy that spans at least two millennia. The ‘celestial intellect’ of the planetary squares is the living, divine mind (nous) of the planet itself. This explains why its nous cannot be expressed other than through numbers and figures - the most abstract ways of conceptions for humans and as distinct from physical substance as possible. Just as we explained the function of nous in the human soul before - allowing man to unite the ephemeral nature of matter with the eternal spirit behind - Agrippa states that it is the celestial intelligence of each planet which is made to unite the extremes of matter and spirit.

Considering the above it is of no surprise to find a strong tendency in Plato’s writing of deifying the spiritual nature of nous (Burkert, p.331). According to him nous was planted into man as something divine, “a daimon in man” (Burkert, p.328). Following Plato’s principle of giving each thing the food that is natural to it (Tim, 90a), man could increasingly align the state of his own soul to the nature of this daimon. All that was needed was a life led according to the principles of divine understanding:

“But he who has been earnest in the love of knowledge and of true wisdom, and has exercised his intellect (i.e. nous - ed.Acher) more than any other part of him, must have thoughts immortal and divine, if he attain truth, and in so far as human nature is capable of sharing in immortality, he must altogether be immortal; and since he is ever cherishing the divine power, and has the divinity within him in perfect order, he will be perfectly happy.” (Tim, 90a)

What we discover here is a process of co-creation between the external forces of the nous and the internal forces of the human logos. Harmonisation and approximation between these two is only achieved through mutual approach: Just as the daimon of nous is directing us “upward from earth to kinship with heaven” (Tim, 90a) so must our own logos tame the horses of thumos and eros and actively ascend this ladder by pursuing knowledge and true wisdom. The spiritual relationship between the daimon of nous and

human logos is an interdependent one: Even though separated by nature true fulfillment of their nature can only be achieved through each other.

Someone once said to me: ‘It’s the nature of our Holy Guardian Angel that since the day of our birth it is constantly praying down to us. We can meet it in the middle though if we start praying upwards to it.’ We can still hear the echo of Plato’s thoughts in this analogy who described humans as ‘plants of heaven on earth’ (Burkert, p.328).

The intricate connection of the human soul with the celestial sphere is further strengthened by Plato explaining that each soul has its own native star from which it has come and will return to after death (Tim, 42b; Burkert, p.328). A thought whose echo we still find in Crowley’s famous expression ‘Every man and woman is a star’:

“And having made [the soul mixture, the Demiurge] divided the whole mixture into souls equal in number to the stars, and assigned each soul to a star; and having there placed them as in a chariot, he showed them the nature of the universe, and declared to them the laws of destiny ... He who lived well during his appointed time was to return and dwell in his native star, and there he would have a blessed and congenial existence.” (Plato, Timaeus, 41 d-e)

Thus the role of the daimon of nous can be understood as a mediator between the celestial sphere we stem from and ultimately will return to. According to this idea we could go so far as explaining the daimon of nous as a living, spiritual chain that connects man to his eternal higher self. It is this mediating function that represents the essential nature of daimons among the ‘Ancient Greeks’ (Plato, Symposium 202e).

4. THE EARLY GREEK IDEA OF THE DAIMON

Just as its precise meaning the etymological origin of the word daimon has been lost in the dark of ancient history. Our current common understanding of the term - “a lowly spiritual being of a preponderantly dangerous and evil

character” (Burkert, p.179) - has strongly been influenced by Plato’s and Xenocrates’ writings (396/5 – 314/3 BC). The meaning of the word before this time is much more ambiguous, however.

To get a better understanding of the ancient meaning before the times of Plato we need to peel away three distinct layers of connotations that have become closely connected to the word daimon over the last two and a half millennia. According to Walter Burkert (Burkert, p.180) and many other scholars the early use of the word daimon

- does not signify a specific category of spiritual beings,
- nor does it specify the relation of any types of beings to the gods,
- nor does it carry any moral meaning.

If we free the word from these more recent connotations we discover a highly diverse field of meaning. Its application is best illustrated by a few examples taken from ancient Greek literature:

“In the Iliad, the gods assembled on Mount Olympus can be called daimones, and Aphrodite leads the way ahead of Helen as daimon. A hero may rush headlong ‘like daimon’ and still be called god-like, isotheos. Conversely, the demons that fly from Pandora’s jar are personified ‘illnesses’, nousoi, but are not called daimones; the death-bringing spirits of destruction, keres, are called theoi, as are the Erinyes in Aeschylus. Possession, too, is the work of a god.”
(Burkert, p.180)

What we discover is that the semantic field of the word daimon originally didn’t describe any types of spiritual beings but a peculiar mode of activity instead (Burkert, p.180). Being under the influence of a daimon originally meant to have entered a certain state of being. Just like we distinguish in our current Western magical lore different states of trance and gnosis from the state of the normal waking mind, so did the ‘Ancient Greeks’ use the word daimon to indicate a specific state of being that was differentiated from normal everyday consciousness. This state of being was not confined to

human experience, yet almost anything could be affected by it - humans, heroes and even the gods.

“Even if all statements about it (the daimon, ed. Acher) may be very difficult, it is the definition that helps to approach the topic that understands it as an immense driving force, neither good nor evil, which increases the level of experience through a dangerous tension.” (Müller-Sternberg p.82)

Unfortunately we know very little about the specific experience of this state of being. What we do know, however, is that the daimon always represented an occult force in itself: A nameless power that overcame people like a dark wave and withdrew them from the bright lights of social encounters. Instead under the influence of the daimon the causes of their actions became arcane and veiled to the realm of humans. Something took hold of them and started to work through them. It was the power of the daimon that could turn anyone from a self-determined being into a willing agent of its occult cause (Müller-Sternberg, p.37).

“For daimon (...) is more reproach than praise, and therefore certainly does not mean divine; it is used when the speaker does not understand what the addressee is doing and why he is doing it. Daimon is occult power, a force that drives man forward where no agent can be named. The individual feels as it were that the tide is with him, he acts with the daimon, syn daimoni, or else when everything turns against him, he stands against the daimon, pros daimona (...).” (Burkert, p.180)

We can now understand how important it was to be on good terms with the daimon. This occult, invisible force could only be grasped by its acts and effects. It was the driving power behind the tides of fate and ultimately behind a happy or unhappy life. It is from this notion only we come to understand why the average man experienced the daimon not only as deeply uncanny but mostly as something to be feared. Not because it was attached to any specific type of spiritual being nor moral category, but simply because it was

completely unknown and beyond human control. The daimon appeared out of darkness, took hold of the beings it used as its agents for a period of time and disappeared again.

It was for man to hope, not to control whether he was subject to a good or an evil daimon, a happy or unruly fate. This is how the terms of the ‘good and evil daimon’, the agathos daimon and kakodaimon need to be understood: Originally they did not classify different categories of spiritual beings, yet the feared or hoped for effect the occult tides of the daimon would have on one’s personal life. The daimon defined the quality of one’s fate (Müller-Sternberg, p.57). It was only at a later point in the evolution of Greek philosophy that this understanding led to the assumption of different categories of spiritual beings that could take control of our lives.

“Whether he is happy or unhappy is not something which lies in man’s control; the happy man is the one who has a good daimon, eudaimon, in contrast to the unhappy man, the kakodaimon, dysdaimon. (...) A general belief in spirits is not expressed by the term daimon until the fifth century (BC. - ed. Acher).” (Burkert, p.181)

5. THE SOCRATIC DAIMONION

“Serve the gods and you will experience how they are looking after you and that they are sending you mentors.” (Socrates Mem.I, 4,18, after Volquardsen, p.18)

It was only with Socrates and subsequently Plato that the idea of a personal daimon became more public, yet most likely taken from much earlier tradition (Burkert, p.181).

While Socrates’ confident claim of a personal daimonion that advised him throughout his life ultimately led to his death sentence, he refused to give details about this being or inner voice during an apologia at court. Instead his daimonion had advised him not to defend himself and thus he appeared

unprepared during his trial and even rejected an apologia prepared by the speaker Lysias. (du Prel. p.125). The most interesting aspect of Socrates' daimonion which has been researched widely is that it would never encourage him to any actions, but only warn and withhold him. Or as Plato put it: "To confine the daimonion coerces me, to create it refuses me." (Platon: Theaetet 7; acc. to du Prel, p. 125, translation by Fra.Acher)

But what exactly do we know about Socrates' understanding of his personal daimonion - a concept that despite the dreadful sentence it brought upon Socrates should prove to become so widespread and well known in later centuries.

First of we have to notice that Socrates always used a particular Greek word to denote this supporting inner agency; he called it daimonion and never daimon. The difference lies in the grammatical form of the same noun. Socrates chose a neutral form indicating a daimonic something or even divine sign rather than necessarily a conscious entity in itself (du Prel, p.122). That this specific verbal expression was grounded in his inner experience we can only assume. The accusation he faced in trial was based on the charge of introducing new gods rather than devoting himself to the old ones. In light of this his choice of a neutral form to denote this enigmatic inner voice becomes more obvious.

Furthermore Socrates clarifies that the inner voice wasn't something he gained access to through conscious practice, spiritual devotion or any types of religious rituals. Instead it had been with him since childhood and (Apol. Plato 31; Volquardsen, p.8) often withheld him from doing certain things, yet never actively encouraged him to pursue a specific direction or action.

In this sense in particular Socrates daimonion exemplifies the function of an inner guardian. His inner voice actively watched over the choices he made in life - irrespective of their seeming significance or insignificance. Its only mode of operation was to ensure Socrates stayed on a certain path assigned to him by the gods. The daimonion was the inner guardian that led Socrates to

fulfill his fate - a significant one as we know today looking back on two-thousand-five-hundred years of philosophic tradition in his shadow.

Reflecting back on the ancient notion of the term daimon - an occult force that divided the happy man's from the unhappy man's lives - Socrates' explanation of his inner voice reads very consistent. Whether expressed as a subjective entity (daimon) or as a neutral inner voice (daimonion) the daimonic remained an occult force intrinsically connected to the qualities we experienced in our lives. Where in the former case it took hold of people in mysterious ways and made them act under its influence without seeming reason, in the latter form it proactively and consciously advised its host to stay on an assigned path. The difference lies in the conscious bond Socrates had been granted with his inner guardian: where for average man the daimon revealed itself outside of one's personal control as the blow of fate or a string of good luck, Socrates experienced it as an intimate inner relationship that he valued so much he didn't hesitate to call it divine (Volquardsen, p.8/9).

“Even you, Euthydem, will realize that my faith in the daimonion and divine mentorship is true, if you'll honor and serve the gods and realize them in their deeds instead of waiting to perceive them incarnated face to face.” (Socrates Mem. IV, 3, 13, after Volquardsen, p.18)

This quote allows us to tell that Socrates believed a similar bond as he had achieved with his daimonion was accessible to any other man as well. Even though he had been granted this gift from childhood on, he shares clear guidance on how to create this inner contact: by understanding the world and experiences within as direct expressions of the gods, by realizing the divine spirits according to their deeds and creations and not to wait to be granted direct vision of them. Thus next to dreams and oracles (Volquardsen, p.18) any experience in life can become an encounter with the divine. Hidden in the book of nature is the voice of our daimonion.

Interestingly, there is a modern parallel to this explanation of attaining communion with one's daimonion that we should highlight here. In the magical tradition of the Golden Dawn the initiate needs to take several oaths

when progressing through liminal grades. Next to oaths such as the ones of Adeptus Minor and Adeptus Major we find a final one which becomes only relevant when the adept is aspiring to walk on from Chesed (7=4) to Binah (8=2) and cross the Abyss. This Oath of the Master of the Temple concludes with the following statement:

“I swear to interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with my soul.” (Crowley, Chap. 7)

What we find here is a striking similarity to Socrates’ guidance on how to achieve communion with one’s daimonion or divine mentor: to realize the gods in their actual deeds as expressed in the world that surrounds us - and not to wait until they reveal themselves in physical forms. For over two-thousand-five-hundred years we hear the same echo calling back to the spiritual seeker. An echo that the ancient Kabbalists came to express as simple as: ‘Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth is in Kether, but after another manner.’

6. THE DEIFICATION OF MAN

After having explored the ancient origin of the Greek word daimon and Socrates’ particular take on the daimonion, we return to Plato with whose analogy of the soul we started out. It is in Plato’s writings and his unparalleled influence on both Western and Arabic thought that we’ll discover the foundation of the concept of the Holy Guardian Angel as it evolved in later centuries.

“Since Plato and through him, religion has been essentially different from what it had been before. For the Greeks as we know them since Homer, religion had always meant acceptance of reality, in a naive and yet adult way, acceptance of a reality that included corporeality, transitoriness, and destruction, in heroic defiance or in tragic insight. Through Plato reality is made unreal in favor of an incorporeal, unchangeable other world which is to be regarded as primary. The ego is concentrated in an immortal soul which is alien to the body and

captive in it. 'Flight from the world' is a watchword which actually occurs in Plato." (Burkert, p.322)

For the first time in Greek philosophy truth and ontological reality shifted outside of corporeal reality. Where gods had seamlessly mingled with humans, shifted shapes and taken animal, plant, stone and sea forms the abstract idea started to displace the direct experience of the divine through the material world. Instead true being and ontological reality were only to be found behind the veils and analogies of nature.

Plato derived many of his original thoughts from mathematics, a science that was strongly on the rise during his days (Burkert, p.322). Fascinated by the fact that humans couldn't experience mathematical truth directly through physical senses but that they had to leverage their rational minds to pierce through the effects caused by hidden laws, Plato applied the same principle to philosophy. The result was a revolutionary take on where truth actually was to be found: Just as in mathematics the seekers of wisdom had to use the force of their logos to pierce through the phenomena of the material world to discover the eternal ideas and living substance hidden behind these.

The assumption of an abstract reality that was assumed to be more real and ideal than corporeal creation is one of the most influencing thoughts Plato introduced to oriental and occidental philosophy. We already explored the inner function of the soul by which humans could approach and access this occult reality, it is the nous as an external counterweight to the subjective influences of eros and thumos.

Other philosophers such as Parmenides had assumed a deeper, timeless ontological reality behind the veils of nature before Plato. However, it was Plato who broadened and diversified this idea and postulated that there was not one absolute source of being beyond matter, but that there were as many as beings created (Rohde, p.278). Just as each human being had unique facial features, so was there an eternal idea assigned to them in which only they participated (Burkert, p.323). Thus it was Plato who introduced the

philosophical idea of deifying all beings through a direct personal bond with divine reality.

At the same time singlehandedly he also turned the human soul immortal - or at least the very part that participated in the eternal idea from which it had emerged from. Plato himself assured that during his days it was common belief that the soul upon leaving the body in the moment of death was grasped by the wind and diffused in all direction of the sky (Rohde, p.264). Even today we can still find traces of this ancient belief in the European myth that upon the death of the hanged man a storm will rise and take his soul away - most likely in the form of the storm-ghosts of the Wild Hunt (Rohde, p.264).

In Plato's own approach, however, he took essential elements of the mystery schools and earlier tradition such as the Orphic and combined these with his own metaphysical concept of a realm of pure and eternal ideas beyond physical matters (Rohde, p.279). In his cosmology the fixed stars were the closest physical representation of the realm of the eternal ideas and considered to be unchangeable, divine living beings. Below these we find the planets which already partake stronger in the principles of creation, of change and development. Below these again we find a vast sphere filled with daimones or cult gods, which are represented by the classical Greek gods as we know them among many others.

The status of these divine beings - sometimes called gods and sometimes referred to as daimones - has sunken considerably in Plato's approach compared to earlier Greek cosmologies. However, it is them together with the influence of the stars and planets that shape all things created to take their respective forms and states of being (Burkert, p.328/332). The daimones in this approach turn into active mediators between the sphere of the planetary and fixed star gods and the sublunar realm of men.

“For such is the nature of daimones: they stand in the middle between gods and men, they are ‘interpreters and ferrymen’ who communicate the messages and gifts from men to the gods

and from gods to men, prayers and sacrifices from one side, commands and recompenses from the other.” (Burkert, p.331)

Earlier we already discovered a similar principle in the human soul that allows man to free himself from the bonds of matter and reach out into the transcendental realm of truth and eternal being, the nous. Just like the classical Greek gods can effect the physical realm but don't belong there, so does the nous penetrate through all physical matter and speak to man in his mind and heart, yet doesn't belong there. The highest function of the human soul thus turns into a daimon itself: an intermediary being building a living bridge between man caught in matter and the eternal star assigned to him by birth. By deifying the nous Plato laid the foundation for millennia of philosophical and occult tradition that know a personal and immortal divine being assigned to and watching over each man and woman (Burkert, p.328/331).

This tutelary genius (Lat. for Greek daimon or daemon) remains invisible and veiled as the personal nous-daimon while humans are alive. During this time interaction takes place through inner dialogue and divine intuition. It's only after death that the guardian daimon of man becomes perceivable as an entity, a living being in its own right - equally bound to as well as separated from the incarnated being it watched over. Plato describes this very clearly in two sections of his *Phaedo* and the *Laws* which we shall quote in full length:

*“And so it is said that after death, the tutelary genius of each person, to whom he had been allotted in life, leads him to a place where the dead are gathered together; then they are judged and depart to the other world with the guide whose task it is to conduct thither those who come from this world; and when they have there received their due and remained through the time appointed, another guide brings them back after many long periods of time.” (Plato, *Phaedo* 107d/e)*

“Cronos was aware of the fact that no human being (...) is capable of having irresponsible control of all human affairs without becoming filled with pride and injustice; so, pondering this fact, he then appointed as kings and rulers for our cities, not men, but beings of a race that was nobler and more divine, namely, daemons. He acted just as we now do in the case of sheep and herds of tame animals: we do not set oxen as rulers over oxen, or goats over goats, but we, who are of a nobler race, ourselves rule over them. In like manner the God, in his love for humanity, set over us at that time the nobler race of daemons who, with much comfort to themselves and much to us, took charge of us and furnished peace and modesty and orderliness and justice without stint, and thus made the tribes of men free from feud and happy.” (Plato, the Laws, 713 c-e)

By reflecting on the nature of the nous-daimon and the tutelary daimon described in these quotes we come across another point in Plato’s influence on our current concept of the HGA. What we can take from his writings is a twofold perspective on the nature of our daimones - an outer and an inner perspective, one related to the realm of physical matter and one free from it: While we are bound to physical bodies our daimones appear to us as parts of our own souls. Only while we are set free from our bodies by death or in vision they become visible for what they equally are in another realm - divine living beings assigned to us.

7. THE EVIL DAIMON

In our history of Western occult lore we come across several accounts of a complementary being to the daimon of nous, a so-called evil daimon. Where the good genius helps us to break through the biased veils of sensual perception and reconnect to an eternal realm of truth and being, the latter or evil daimon tries to hinder us in these efforts and pull us back behind the veils of matter.

As an example we can find the following explanation of this evil daimon in the Divine Pymander:

“But to the foolish, and evil, and wicked, and envious, and covetous, and murderous, and profane, I am far off, giving place to the revenging Demon, which applying unto him the sharpness of fire, tormenteth such a man sensible, and armeth him the more to all wickedness, that he may obtain the greater punishment. And such an one never ceaseth, having unfulfilled desires, and unsatisfiable concupiscences, and always fighting in darkness; for the Demon always afflicts and tormenteth him continually, and increaseth the fire upon him more and more.” (Divine Pymander, Book II, 56/57)

Agrippa of Nettesheim in his *De Occulta Philosophia* describes nine orders of evil spirits counterbalancing the nine celestial orders of angels. The last rung of this infernal ladder being reserved for the evil daimon assigned to each man and woman:

“Moreover the Tempters and Ensnarers have the last place, one of which is present with every man, which we therefore call the evil Genius, and their Prince is Mammon, which is interpreted as covetousness (...)” (Agrippa, Book III, chap. XVIII)

In chapter XXVI of the same book Agrippa even explains the rules according to the Arabians on how to draw out the name of the good and evil genius from one’s astrological chart. (Note: quite a complex matter which anybody interested in can find an automated template on my webpage <https://theomagica.com/tools/>.)

Given such a widespread belief in a twofold daimonic presence with each human being, let’s explore what we can learn from the ‘Ancient Greeks’ about its potential origins. First of we need to remind ourselves what we found in the chapter on the ancient idea of the daimon: being defined as an occult force that stroke people out of darkness and held the power to turn their fate in all directions. This force had proven to be beyond control for humans as even gods and heroes were affected by it. Thus in the early stages of Greek philosophy we find little if no clues of a concept of an evil daimon. The nature of the daimonic wasn’t defined as a moral category but as a state of

being or activity. The daimon didn't insinuate good or evil thoughts to man, yet it seized him, it enchanted his whole presence in a strange rhythm that held the power to change the tides of his life (Müller-Sternberg, p-244).

From this early understanding of the daimon as we find it in the epics of Homer we have to fast forward several hundred years to find the origin of the demonic as we know it today. Whereas it might have been widespread and common in folk belief for centuries before, it was only a pupil of Plato, Xenocrates who introduced this new perspective on the daimonic into Greek philosophy.

In the shadow of Aristoteles' dominating presence, flawless logic and precision of argument Xenocrates took a very different approach on the material left behind by their teacher. It was an approach of exegesis that seemed anachronistic even in his own days. It was so contrary to the principles of philosophy laid out by Aristoteles that the latter in his own writings didn't even bother to address the mythical elements of Xenocrates' teachings. In a time where mathematics and science had become the unquestioned basis for philosophy, Xenocrates turned back to the old mystery cults, the ancient religion of the Greeks and pursued to integrate these with Plato's teachings on the occult (Heinze, p.VII).

In doing so Xenocrates' thought was much rougher and more concrete than not only Plato's but also many of his successors: Where Plato left it deliberately ambiguous whether the highest god was a philosophical principle or a living being indeed, Xenocrates called him 'Zeus' and saw him sitting on a throne next to the all-mother, which personified the soul of all things created (Heinze, p.VIII). It is this tendency of Xenocrates to simplify complex spiritual matters that we also find in his approach to the daimonic.

Until Xenocrates there hadn't been an articulated doctrine of the daemonic. In its uncanny and elusive manner it had been woven into the early epics, the philosophies of Socrates, Platon and many other philosophers. Yet none of them had given it a defined place, function and profile in their cosmologies. With his bias towards simplifying the abstract it was Xenocrates

who introduced such doctrine of the daimonic to Ancient Greek philosophy (Heinze, p.VIX).

In accordance with Plato's teachings Xenocrates divided the order of the cosmos into three concentrical spheres. The most primal gods were the monad (Greek for 'the One') and dyad (Greek for 'Two' or 'Otherness') who rule the first or outermost sphere. Following we find the sphere of the celestial stars and visible planets thought of as divine, living beings. Below these again and separated by the sphere of the Moon we come across the realm of the earthly world which is filled by a multitude of diverse spiritual forces and beings. It is this last sublunar realm (Latin for 'below the Moon') which is the sphere of the daimones (Heinze, p.VIII).

Now, before we can advance deeper into the sublunar realm we have to understand Plato's basic concept of evil as it has been derived from his writings. As Xenocrates always tried to remain true to his teacher's ideas we will find that the nature of the 'evil daimon' is a strange hybrid between authentic Platonic thought and Xenocrates' own approach on the matter - one which would shape the understanding of and belief in evil for several millennia to follow in the West.

The origin of evil in Plato's teachings can only be found "in various dialogues drop scattered hints" (Chilcott, p.27). Most scholars, however, agree that on the most basic level it's origin can be ascribed to matter itself. We have seen above that it is matter to which the appetites, the forces of eros are bound to and which bias perception, logic and the influence of the all-permeating nous (Heinze, p.27).

But why exactly is it that matter distorts the purity of the nous, the sublime and good? In line with his philosophy of divine ideas Plato found an intriguing answer: According to Plato the first beings shaped were the divine ideas, the most pure and sublime, yet perfectly defined shapes of all other things to emerge from them at later stages in creation. Thus limitation of the unlimited into specific ideas is the basic principle of emergence of god into creation. The nature of evil can therefore be explained the following way:

“(...) as being the failure of the particular to represent the idea, or (...) the failure of the unlimited to participate rightly in the limited. That is to say, evil has a purely negative existence. (...) a thing is good in so far as it represents the idea, evil in so far as it fails to do so, and the varying kinds and degrees of good and evil represent the degrees and kinds of approximation to or divergence from the ideal standard. The problem of the origin of evil, therefore, may now be stated thus: 'What is it which causes the particular to diverge from the idea?' The answer generally given to this question (...) is that there is an inherent incompatibility between the idea and matter; the former must always struggle to subdue the latter, and in many cases partially fail.” (Chilcott, p.28)

Following this approach we come to the conclusion that the unlimited is the antagonist of the limited good ideas and thus the source of all evil. Traces of this line of thought can be rediscovered several centuries later in the Safed school of Kabbala from which Lurianic Kabbala emerged. It is the concept of the breaking of the vessels that set divine forces free in an unlimited, uncontrolled manner and thus gave birth to the origin of evil, the qliphothic forces (for further reference see my article *On the Nature of the Qliphoth*).

Returning to Plato, we can find the opposition of the limited versus the unlimited expressed in its boldest manner in a short section of his *Laws*, section 896e. Here Plato admits the possibility of the existence of two world souls - one beneficent and an opposite evil one. While the section is very brief - only two lines in a dialogue of hundreds of pages - it granted permission to later philosophers such as Xenocrates to discover a fundamental divide between good and evil forces not only on the level of the world soul, but equally among the daimones in the sublunar realm.

“(...) among these daimones there are downright evil beings, filled with greed for blood and sexuality. It is they who bring about diseases, barrenness of earth, discord among citizens, and similar calamities to make men succumb to their will, even to the point where men are prepared to sacrifice a pure virgin. They are the driving force behind all the dark and uneasy rituals of the religious tradition, fasting, lamentation, obscenities, the eating of raw flesh. All

this can have nothing to do with the gods as philosophy has portrayed them, and yet it belongs to reality. The hypothesis of daimones explains it all in one stroke.” (Burkert, p. 332)

According to Xenocrates - and similar to what we found in our explorations On the HGA among the Zoroastrians - such a divide between good and evil forces can also be found within men themselves. Earlier we discovered the nous as a living presence connected to man which allowed him to transcend beyond the veils of sensual matter. In Xenocrates writings now the good daimon of the nous is opposed by the evil daimon.

Yet, what is the true nature of this shadow being not found explicitly called out in Plato’s own work before?

“Just like in the cosmos we find two forces presiding over man, the nous and the psyche (Greek: soul - ed. Acher). The nous is impenetrable to any flaws or passions, the soul is placed between it and the body and is subdued to the baleful influence of the senses. Man’s duty is to support the sovereign dominion of the mind, to free one’s psyche from the bonds of matter and subdue it under the rule of the mind. Upon death nous and psyche are released from the body and for a short period still united they lead an existence as a single daimon in the sphere of the Moon as well as on Earth. The daimon in which the sensual dominates will do evil deeds and be punished with reincarnation in a human body. The daimon suffers a second death once the nous separates from the psyche; it remains on the Moon and once fully refined it dissolves in it; the nous, however, driven by its longing to return to its home in the Sun, continues onwards from the Moon and ultimately returns into the Sun. This is when all human striving is fulfilled in the unification with the divine.” (Heinze, p.IX)

In the earliest Greek doctrine of the daimonic as documented in Xenocrates’ writings we stumble across a fascinating finding: While the nous has to be understood as a beneficial being in its own ontological state, the nature of man’s evil daimon is very different. The evil daimon is not a being separated from man, but it is his own soul bound to matter through bodily

senses. The evil daimon is what distorts the reflection of the primal ideas in man. The evil daimon in man is the unruliness of matter, the fractiousness of the appetites that withholds the good from unfolding its perfect shapes in the sublunar realm.

To use an analogy the purpose of man can be illustrated by the work of a stone mason: to set free an invisible shape caught below the surface of rough matter, to bring to light a perfect idea in a world of unruly senses. The logos is his chisel, the thumos his hammer, the eros the stone he works on and the nous the light that shines on his mind. A good sculptor is guided by vision and supported by the skill of his craft. A bad sculptor, however, is not necessarily led astray by an evil daimon, but more likely simply not skilled enough to tame the unruliness of the stone.

“To each human being is assigned at the moment of his birth a good spirit, his guide through the mysteries of life. We must not believe that the spirit is evil and can harm our lives; he is good, and there is no evil in him. Every good must be good. But those who are bad themselves, who have bad characters and make a muddle out of their lives, managing everything badly through their own foolishness (...) they make a divine being responsible and call it ‘bad’, while they are actually bad themselves.” (Menandes, 342–291 BC; Luck, p. 172)

At the end of our journey into the ‘Ancient Greek’ philosophy we discover a very simple, yet powerful idea. It is but one voice, one possible interpretation of the various echoes we hear from the ancient past: From the moment of birth until we leave our mortal bodies a good being is assigned to us, watching over and supporting all our efforts of drawing down the divine into matter and transcending matter back into the divine.

Should we fail in doing so it could have been the work of evil daimones, sharing the sublunar realm with us and all earthly beings. Yet none of these daimones is personally attached to us like the good daimon of our nous, bound into the nature of our soul.

Therefore our failing more often than being the effect of evil daimones is our own work. Because it is exceptionally hard to become what only humans can become: a bridge that allows undistorted passage between nous and matter. One flowing into the other. Man in between, standing in service of the passing. Free from appetites or desires.

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