

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

Purity and Preparation

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHY · BOOK III · NOTEBOOK 10

Cleanness, fasting, solitude and penitence

BOOK III · CHAPTERS 53-57

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Purity and Preparation

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA · THREE BOOKS OF OCCULT
PHILOSOPHY · BOOK III, CHAPTERS 53–57

Every chapter — four parts

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

*the complete chapter, from the Latin
edition of 1533*

IN PLAIN WORDS

what Agrippa actually claims

TERMS

the chapter concepts explained

HISTORICAL NOTE

*where the idea comes from and what
modern science says*

A historical text, not a manual.

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FOREWORD

Before receiving a divine revelation, a person must become pure. **This notebook is Agrippa's "book of preparation" — on the cleansing of body and soul.**

This is the **tenth notebook** in the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy · Book III". It contains **chapters 53–57 of Book III**: how one who wishes to receive oracles must prepare himself; purity and how it is kept; abstinence, fasting, chastity, solitude and peace and elevation of mind; penitence and the gifts of grace; and the outward means that help towards purification.

How to read it. Every chapter has four parts. *In Agrippa's words* — the complete chapter, translated from the Latin edition of 1533. *In plain words* — what Agrippa actually claims. *Terms* — the concepts of the chapter; all of them are collected in the glossary at the end. *Historical note* — where the idea comes from and what modern science says about it.

In the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy · Book III":

1. The Path of the Magus — dedication and chapters 1–7
2. God and the Holy Names — chapters 8–13
3. Gods, Spirits and Demons — chapters 14–19
4. The Guardian Angel and the Language of Angels — chapters 20–23
5. The Names of Spirits — chapters 24–28
6. Seals of the Spirits — chapters 29–33
7. Man, the Image of God — chapters 34–40
8. The Soul after Death — chapters 41–44
9. Ecstasy, Prophecy and Dreams — chapters 45–52

10. Purity and Preparation — chapters 53–57

11. Sacrifices, Consecrations and Holy Days — chapters 58–65

CHAPTER I

HOW ONE MUST PREPARE ONESELF TO RECEIVE ORACLES

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

Whosoever desireth to approach unto the highest state of the soul, and goeth to seek oracles, must come **chaste, holy, well disposed, pure and clean** — so that no stain of filthiness defile his soul, and that it bear not the scars of sins imprinted upon its breast.

The mind also must be separated and wholly cleansed, so far as the necessity of nature doth permit, from every disease, dulness, malice and suchlike passions, and from every irrational state which cleaveth unto it as rust unto iron; and those things which belong unto the mind must be rightly composed and tempered in peace. For thus shall it receive things more pure and more efficacious.

But by what means the mind is purged and restored unto its divine purity — this must be learned from **religion and wisdom**: for neither is there wisdom without religion, nor is religion to be approved without wisdom.

For wisdom, saith Solomon, is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her. And Lucretius saith that it is the invention of God, or the breath of God, where he singeth:

This was that god, O famous Memmius, who first found out that reason of our life which now is called wisdom; and who by art from waves so great and from so great a darkness did set our life in light so calm and clear.

He understandeth also that it may be from divine illumination — whence **Democritus accounteth none wise but those whom some divine ecstasy hath seized.**

As Minos of Crete, of whom it is said that he learned all things from Jupiter, when in the cave of Ida he was oft in converse with the god; so, as they say, the nymphs taught Melesagoras the Athenian; so also Hesiod, when he was a herdsman in Boeotia and drove his flock unto a certain mount Helicon, received, as we read, certain reeds from the Muses — and, having received them, suddenly obtained the art of poetry.

For to attain such things and the like in one moment is surely not of a human mind, but of one **divinely inspired** — namely, of such an one wherein God dwelleth, who worketh all things. For God himself, passing into holy souls, maketh prophets and workers of wonders, mighty in deed and in word, as Plato and Mercurius affirm; and also Xystus the Pythagorean, affirming that such a man is the temple of God, and that God is his guest.

Whereunto our Paul agreeth, calling man the temple of God; and elsewhere he saith of himself: "I can do all things through him which strengtheneth me."

For he himself is our strength, without whom — as he himself declareth — we can do nothing. This also Aristotle acknowledgeth in his *Meteorology* and his *Ethics*: that there is no virtue, neither natural nor moral, but through God.

But this influx we receive only when we are set free from the hindrances which weigh us down — from carnal and earthly occupations and from every outward disturbance.

For an inflamed and unclean eye cannot look upon that which shineth too brightly; **neither shall he be able to lay hold on things divine who knoweth not the purifying of the soul.**

But unto this purity of the soul we must come **by degrees, as it were by certain steps**: for not every one that is newly initiated into these mysteries doth straightway comprehend all things clearly; but by use the mind is little by little

purged, until the understanding riseth up within us and, being joined unto the divine light, is mingled therewith.

The soul of man therefore, when it shall be duly purged and expiated, then, loosed from all multiplicity, with a free motion flasheth forth outwardly, ascendeth upward, receiveth things divine and teacheth itself. For it seemeth not to be taught from elsewhere, seeing it needeth neither remembrance nor demonstration — by reason of its natural nimbleness; but through its own mind, which is the head and guide of the soul, imitating the angels according to its nature, **not by degrees nor in time, but in a sudden moment** it attaineth that which it desireth.

For David learned not letters, and yet from a shepherd he became the most efficacious of prophets and the most learned in divine knowledge. Solomon in the dream of one night was filled with the wisdom of all things above and below. So were taught Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the rest of the prophets and apostles.

The mind is purged by cleanness, by abstinence, by penitence, by the gifts of grace; and unto the same end serve also certain holy institutions, as shall appear hereafter.