

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

Sacrifices, Consecrations and Holy Days

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHY · BOOK III · NOTEBOOK 11

Prayer, sacrifice, consecration and holy times



BOOK III · CHAPTERS 58-65

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Sacrifices, Consecrations and Holy Days

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA · THREE BOOKS OF OCCULT
PHILOSOPHY · BOOK III, CHAPTERS 58–65

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

With this notebook ends not only Book III but the whole of Agrippa's *Three Books of Occult Philosophy*. Its subject is **religious practice: worship, sacrifice, consecration and holy times**.

This is the **eleventh and last notebook** in the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy · Book III". It contains **chapters 58–65 of Book III**: adoration and vows; sacrifices and oblations, their kinds and manners; the prayers and rites the ancients used at sacrifices; how all this is to be shown to God and to the lesser deities; consecrations and their ground; what is called holy and consecrated, and holy times; religious observances and ceremonies — fumigations and anointings; and the conclusion of the whole work.

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

OF ADORATION AND VOWS

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

Adorations and vows, sacrifices and oblations are certain degrees in sacred things for the searching out of God; and they are that which chiefly calleth forth the divine will, and maketh a holy and indissoluble communion of souls with the gods.

For by those prayers which we utter in true words and with a holy affection and mind, we prepare a great power: when we turn them toward any deity, we so move it that it directeth its speech and answer unto us. By this divine ray — as Dionysius saith — **God speaketh with men, but so secretly that scarce a few perceive it.**

But that king and prophet David perceived it very often: "I will hear," saith he, "what the Lord God will speak in me."

Adoration therefore, very long continued and very often repeated, perfecteth the understanding and maketh the soul more fit to receive the divine lights; it kindleth the divine love, bringeth in hope and faith and holy habits, purgeth the soul of all that is contrary and hostile, and even driveth away much evil which otherwise would naturally befall.

Whereof Ovid singeth:

An angry god is bent by the voice of him that prayeth. Often have I seen Jupiter, when he would send forth his fierce lightnings, withhold his hand when incense was given him.

But man returneth unto God by **prayers**: by these — saith Plato in the *Phaedrus* — the winged one stayeth his horses and entereth the banquetting chamber, where he is fed with ambrosia and drinketh nectar.

Wherefore they that desire to obtain any virtue must often pray unto Him who containeth every virtue in Himself.

But better, yea the best of all, is that prayer which **the mouth bringeth not forth**, but which with a holy silence and with the whole thought is offered unto God — and which, calling with the voice of the mind, honoureth the gods that preside over the intelligible world.

But a **vow** is the burning desire of a chaste soul dedicated unto God, which willeth that which it vowed, that it may behold it as good. This desire — as Iamblichus and Proclus bear witness — so uniteth souls with God that at last the working of God and of the soul becometh one: namely, of God as the master, but of the soul as the divine instrument.

Hence by vows wonders are sometimes wrought, diseases healed, tempests turned away, and the like — whereof all antiquity beareth witness.

Hence we read that the most excellent men, and among all nations the wisest — the Brahmins of the Indians, the Magi of the Persians, the Gymnosophists of the Egyptians, the theologians of the Greeks and Chaldeans — chiefly cherished the festivals of the gods and the hidden mysteries with holy vows and prayers, and wrought many and wonderful things.

TWO CONDITIONS

But for the perfection of vow and adoration — for neither is a vow without adoration, nor is adoration ever perfect without a vow — **two things** are chiefly required.

The first is the knowledge of that which is to be adored, and by what reason, in what order and through what mediators it is to be worshipped.

For God hath manifold fellow-workers and instruments: namely the heavens, the stars, the governing celestial spirits and the souls of heroes; and these, as doorkeepers, interpreters, stewards and mediators, must first be entreated, that we may go unto God Himself, the first exemplar, who alone is the utmost bound of adoration. The other deities are as it were approaches unto God Himself.

Know therefore that **adorations and vows are to be made unto the one only God** — the supreme Father and King of all — purely and with a devout mind above all: for unto none other than the supreme Father doth the purpose of governing belong.

Wherefore, when adorations and vows are directed unto the inferior deities, Zoroaster and Orpheus held suffumigations and characters and the like to be lawful. But when we are lifted up unto the majesty of the supreme Jupiter, this is in no wise to be done — which Hermes also and Plato forbid.

Hence Hermes unto Tatius: "It is," saith he, "like unto sacrilege to approach unto God with incense or perfumes and the like." For these things are foreign (as Porphyry saith) to all piety: for nothing material can be found which is not unclean unto the immaterial God. Wherefore there becometh Him neither prayer uttered with the voice, nor even inward prayer, if the mind be stained with vice.

The second is a certain **conforming of our life unto the divine life** — growing in purity, chastity, holiness, and desiring that which is lawful. For by this alone do we obtain the divine favour and are made subject unto the divine bounty.

For if we be not, by a purified soul, worthy that our prayers be heard, and worthy that that which we ask be done, then it is manifest that **the gods are not at all present unto our prayers**. Hence the divine Plato saith: God is not bent by any prayers or gifts unto unjust things.

Let us therefore ask nothing of God which it becometh us not to will.

For by this alone we see very many remain empty in their prayers and vows: because neither are they themselves devoutly disposed, nor are their desires and petitions for that which is pleasing unto God, nor know they how to discern in what order adoration is to be performed and through what mediators God Himself is to be reached.

The ignorance of these things very often turneth our speeches and prayers into nothing and denieth unto our petitions that which they promise.