

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA

The Soul after Death

THE OCCULT PHILOSOPHY · BOOK III · NOTEBOOK 8

Shades, the degrees of the soul and immortality

BOOK III · CHAPTERS 41-44

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The Soul after Death

HEINRICH CORNELIUS AGRIPPA · THREE BOOKS OF OCCULT
PHILOSOPHY · BOOK III, CHAPTERS 41–44

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

At the centre of this notebook stands the question that has occupied every culture: **what becomes of a person after death?**

This is the **eighth notebook** in the series "Agrippa · The Occult Philosophy · Book III". It contains **chapters 41–44 of Book III**: the various opinions about man after death — from Jewish and Christian to Pythagorean and Platonic teachings, on the transmigration of souls, ghosts and the places where souls await judgement; on what grounds the necromancers thought they could call up the souls of the dead; the power of the human soul in the mind, the reason and the imagination; and the degrees of souls, their destruction or immortality.

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

THE VARIOUS OPINIONS CONCERNING MAN AFTER DEATH

IN AGRIPPA'S WORDS

It is appointed unto all men alike once to die; death is unto all a matter of fate. But one death is natural, another violent, a third willingly undertaken; another is laid upon a man for his crime by human laws, or else is laid upon him by God because of his crime — so that it seemeth not a debt paid unto nature, but a punishment paid for transgressions. And this, as the Hebrew doctors say, God remitteth unto no man.

Hence the assembly of Hezekiah delivered that, after the destruction of the house of the sanctuary, although no order of judicial execution remained any longer, yet by those four kinds of punishment wherewith they were wont to condemn, no man guilty of death escaped without requital.

For he that had deserved death by stones was, by the ordinance of God, either cast down from a roof, or trodden under foot, or buried beneath ruins, or perished by falling. He that had deserved fire was either devoured by a conflagration, or perished by a venomous bite or the sting of a serpent, or ended his life by poison. He that was to be destroyed by the sword perished either by the violence of princes, or in the tumults of the people, or in a time of sedition, or in the ambush of robbers. He that was to be hanged was drowned in a whirlpool of waters, or was put out by some other strangling calamity.

And upon this ground of doctrine the great Origen also held that this word of the Gospel of Christ was to be expounded: **he that striketh with the sword**

shall perish by the sword.

OF REQUITAL AND THE TRANSMIGRATION OF SOULS

The heathen philosophers also call such an order of requital **Adrastia** — that is, the inevitable power of the divine laws, whereby in the revolutions to come every one is repaid according to the reason and the merits of his former life: so that he who in a former life hath ruled unjustly falleth back in another life into the condition of a slave; he that hath defiled his hand with blood is compelled to suffer the same; he that hath lived his life as a beast is thrust down into the body of a beast.

Of this Plotinus writeth in his book *Of His Own Demon*, saying:

They that have preserved their proper nature are born again as men. They that have used the senses only return as beasts — and so that they in whose senses anger chiefly prevailed become beasts of prey. They that have used the senses through lust and pleasure return as lustful and gluttonous creatures. But if they have lived with these, yet with a corrupted sense, they are changed into plants. Lovers of music, if otherwise not overmuch corrupted, become musical creatures. They that have ruled without reason become eagles, if only they be not stained with some corruption. But he that hath given thought to civil virtue returneth as a man.

And Solomon himself in the Proverbs calleth man now a lion, a tiger, a bear or a boar; now a hare, a dog or a coney; now an ant, a hedgehog, a serpent or a spider; now an eagle, a lizard, a cock or some other bird — and many things of the like sort.

But the Hebrew Cabalists do not admit that souls are thrust down into beasts. Yet those that have wholly cast off reason they deny not to be left in another life in a beastly condition. And they do not admit that souls return hither more than **three times**, for this number of purgations of sins seemeth here altogether sufficient — according to that place of Job: "He hath delivered his soul, that it go not into destruction, but living it may see the light. Lo, all these things

worketh God three times with every one, that he may call back their souls from corruption, and enlighten them with the living light."

WHAT DEPARTETH WHEN A MAN DIETH

But let us see at length what the ancients thought concerning the dead.

When a man dieth, **the body returneth to the earth** from which it was taken; **the mind returneth to heaven**, whence it came down — as Ecclesiastes saith: "The dust returneth to its earth whence it was, and the spirit returneth unto God who gave it." The same Lucretius expressed, but Ovid better:

Twice two there are in man: the manes, the flesh, the spirit and the shade; these four twice two places receive. The earth covereth the flesh, the burial mound encloseth the shade, Orcus holdeth the manes, the spirit seeketh the stars.

The flesh therefore, forsaken and bereft of life, is called a **carcass**. This, as the Hebrew divines say, is left in the power of the demon **Zazel**, of whom it is said in the Scriptures: "Dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life." And elsewhere: "The dust of the earth is his bread." Man was made of the dust of the earth — whence that demon is called the lord of flesh and blood, so long as the body hath not been expiated and hallowed with due funeral rites.

Hence not without cause did the ancient fathers ordain the purifying of the corpse: that what is very unclean should be sprinkled with holy water, perfumed with incense, set free with holy prayers, lighted with lights — so long as it is above the earth; and at last buried in a holy place.

Hence in Homer Elpenor saith: *I beseech thee, Odysseus, remember me, and when thou goest thence leave me not unburied, lest being unburied I become a cause of the wrath of the gods.*

WHAT BECOMETH OF THE MIND AND OF THE SOUL

But **the mind of man** — whose nature is holy and of a divine race — being ever free from guilt, escapeth all punishment.