

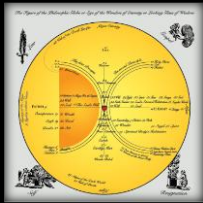


Jakob Böhme

Forty Questions of the Soul

Question 1

Part 3



Eternal Liberty

Desires Itself

Looking Glass
(mirror)

Model Itself

Seeking

Darkness

Qu. 1]

OF THE SOUL

7

* therefore we rightly say, that the eternal will is God's will; and that the liberty which hath the will, is God himself; for it is the eternity, and nothing else.)

The First Form.

22. First, there is the eternal liberty, which hath the will, and is itself the will: now † every will hath a seeking to do, or to desire something; and here-¹ in it beholdeth itself, and † seeth in the eternity what itself is; it maketh to itself a glass of its own likeness, for it seeth what itself is; and so finding nothing but itself, it desireth itself.

The Second Form.

23. The second form is the desiring, and yet it hath nothing but itself, thereupon § its desire seeketh a model of its own will in itself, and maketh itself pregnant, so that a darkness or overshadowing cometh to be in the will, which the will would not have; but the desire, || the seeking,

* "therefore we rightly say that the eternal will is God's will" (*darum sagen wir recht es sey Gottes*), lit., "therefore we rightly say that it [the fire] is God's." St Martin has also given this literal rendering which points out the shade of meaning between "the will" and "the fire."

† "every will hath a seeking (*Sucht*) to do," or "every will is irresistibly impelled to do." See *, p. 3.

‡ "seeth (*besiehet*) in the eternity what itself is," lit., "beholdeth [observes, examines] in itself, in eternity what itself is."

§ "its desire seeketh a model," lit., "its desire begetteth a model."

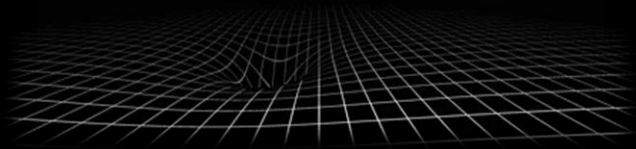
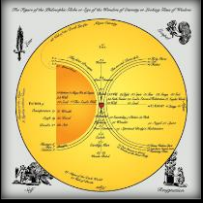
|| "the seeking (*Sucht*) causeth it," or "the attraction causeth it." See *, p. 3.

KEY 0

KEY 2

KEY 1

KEY 3



- Nothing to consume the Desire.
- Prior to the Desire = Eternal Liberty.



self-conscious



subconscious



8 FORTY QUESTIONS [Qu. 1

causeth it; and yet there is nothing that is able to consume or expel the desire.

24. For that which is before the desire, *beyond the seeking, is free and a nothing, and yet it is: yet if it were a thing that could be perceived, it were an essence, and must subsist in that essence which brought it forth: but seeing it is without essence, it is the eternity, ^{and is} viz. Good: For it is no source, and ^{has} ~~hath~~ also no mutability, but it is a rest and an eternal peace.

25. But seeing the immense space is bottomless, therein being neither number nor end, and also no beginning, therefore it is †like a glass; it is all things, and yet as a nothing: it beholdeth itself, and yet findeth nothing but an A, which is its ¹ eye.

¹ In the text, AVge, which in the German language signifieth an eye.

A Δ V 26. †AV: That is, the eternal original that something is; for it is the eternal beginning, and the eternal end. Thus the abyss seeth in itself, and findeth itself. ^{PERCEIVES}

AYIN

Y

AV X Y O ^{FINDS}

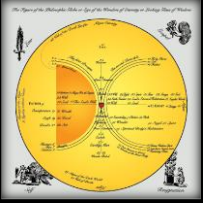
27. The A is below, and the V is above; and the O is AVge, the eye, and yet is in itself no substance; but thus is the original of substance: there is neither below nor

* "beyond the seeking," or "beyond the attraction."

† "like a glass." Here and throughout, the word "glass" (*Spigel*) should be rendered "looking-glass" or "mirror."

‡ Paragraphs 26 and 27 are reprinted from Sparrow's translation of 1665.

SPERS OF GOD IS EN ALL,



Y
O
A







- No Above. No Below.
- “I Am the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”
- The Eye of God’s wonders (seen without essence), The Eye of the Abyss.

above, only its looking-glass in the AV is thus a seeing.

28. But whereas there is no ground, therefore its glass is such an eye as this O; for God himself saith in the *Revelations*, I am A and O, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

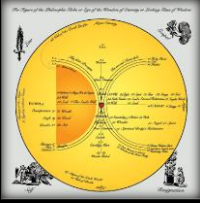
29. Consider us according to its precious depth; for we speak not here according to nature in a ¹form, but according to the spirit above nature in the ²divine character T. ¹ similitude, or parable, or figure. ² GoTtes, character T. GOTT in German is GOD.

30. The  is the eye of God, the Eye of Eternity: This maketh, and is, a glass, and it is a round circle like a globe , not like a ring ; for we cannot describe it otherwise. Hereby we mean the globe of eternity, wherein lieth the foundation of heaven and earth, of the elements, and also of the starry ³sphere. ³ Or wheel or orb.

31. For it is a globe  like an eye, and it is the eye of God's wonders, wherein everything was seen from eternity, yet without essence, as in a glass or eye, for it is the eye of the abyss; concerning which we have no pen, tongue, nor utterance, either to write or speak, only the spirit of eternity leadeth the eye of the soul thereinto; and so we see it, else it must remain in silence; and this hand could not describe anything of it. ⁴ God's wonder Eye.

32. Now seeing that in the eternity there is such an eye, which is God himself (and yet is not called God, but eternity; and according to the eye,





A

Nothing

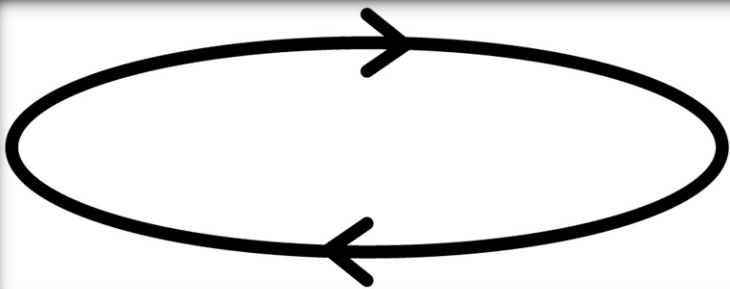
○

Something

○
A

The beginning of Seeking

manifest



he is called A and ○, before the A there is nothing, and in the ○ there is all, and in the A and ○ beginning and end) hence * we find, that there is a will in the ○, and the will is the ○ itself, which ^{creates} maketh the A (^{meaning} viz. the eternal beginning of the ¹seeking), so that the abyss beholdeth itself, and maketh a form in itself like a globe.

¹ drawing, or longing, or attracting.

33. For the eye finding no bottom, it † closeth itself, and becometh like a round globe of glass; and so it is the similitude of eternity, in that it can find itself: for there is no finding in the abyss, because there is no place or limit, but the mere abyss: and when it doth find itself in the eye, yet it findeth nothing but the eye, which is the globe.

34. Now the eye maketh the globe, and it is the globe, and all put together is ² a will to seek itself, and so to see what the eternity is, which is made manifest in the eye.

² Or an eternal will.

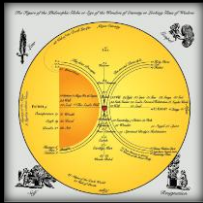
35. For the eye ^{creates} maketh a beginning and an end; and because there is nothing that can give it, it giveth itself, and it is from eternity to eternity, the eternity itself; it toucheth nothing; for it is a nothing in itself.

36. Then if there be a will, which is the eye, and which keepeth the eye, that keeping is the

* "we find" (*mir gründen*), lit., "we discover as a foundation."

† "closeth itself" (*schleust sich*), "foldeth itself" [round], like flood-gates.

KEY - KEY 05



Eternal Liberty



Desires Itself

Electro Magnet(ism)



Looking Glass



Model Itself



Desire in Action

desire of the eye; and so the desire causeth an attraction in the eye, yet nothing is there but the eye: and the desire only attracteth itself in the eye, and impregnateth the eye with that which is attracted, so that it becometh full; and yet also nothing is there but a darkening of the free eye; yet the eye is not dark, but the desire in the eye is impregnated in itself.

37. For the will of the eye is still, and the desire of the will maketh itself full, and the eye continueth free in itself: For it is free in and from eternity; and this we call the eternal liberty in all our writings.

The Third Form.

38. Now a desire is sharp and attractive, and that maketh the third form, viz: a moving in itself, and it is the original of the essences; and hence come the essences in the eye and in the will, and yet the will may not suffer itself to be attracted.

39. For its peculiar right is to be still, and to hold the eye in the circle in the globe, and yet it cannot defend itself from the drawing and filling, for it hath nothing wherewith it can defend itself, but the desire.

40. And here ariseth the eternal enmity and contrary will; the will will not be dark, and its desire maketh it dark; the will would suffer the motion willingly, because it is its manifestation; but the drawing in, and darkening, pleaseth it

STILLNESS