

February 1961

READING 2

ALL GROUPS

INFLUENCES AND LAWS

PART 1

It must be admitted that development for man on earth is very difficult. All the forces of Nature are opposed to it and particularly the force of Illusion (the Indian Maya) which persuades man that he already has all that is needed, or the upward evolution is inevitable for all. You have only to try to be conscious of one thing for half-an-hour to realise how many influences oppose it.

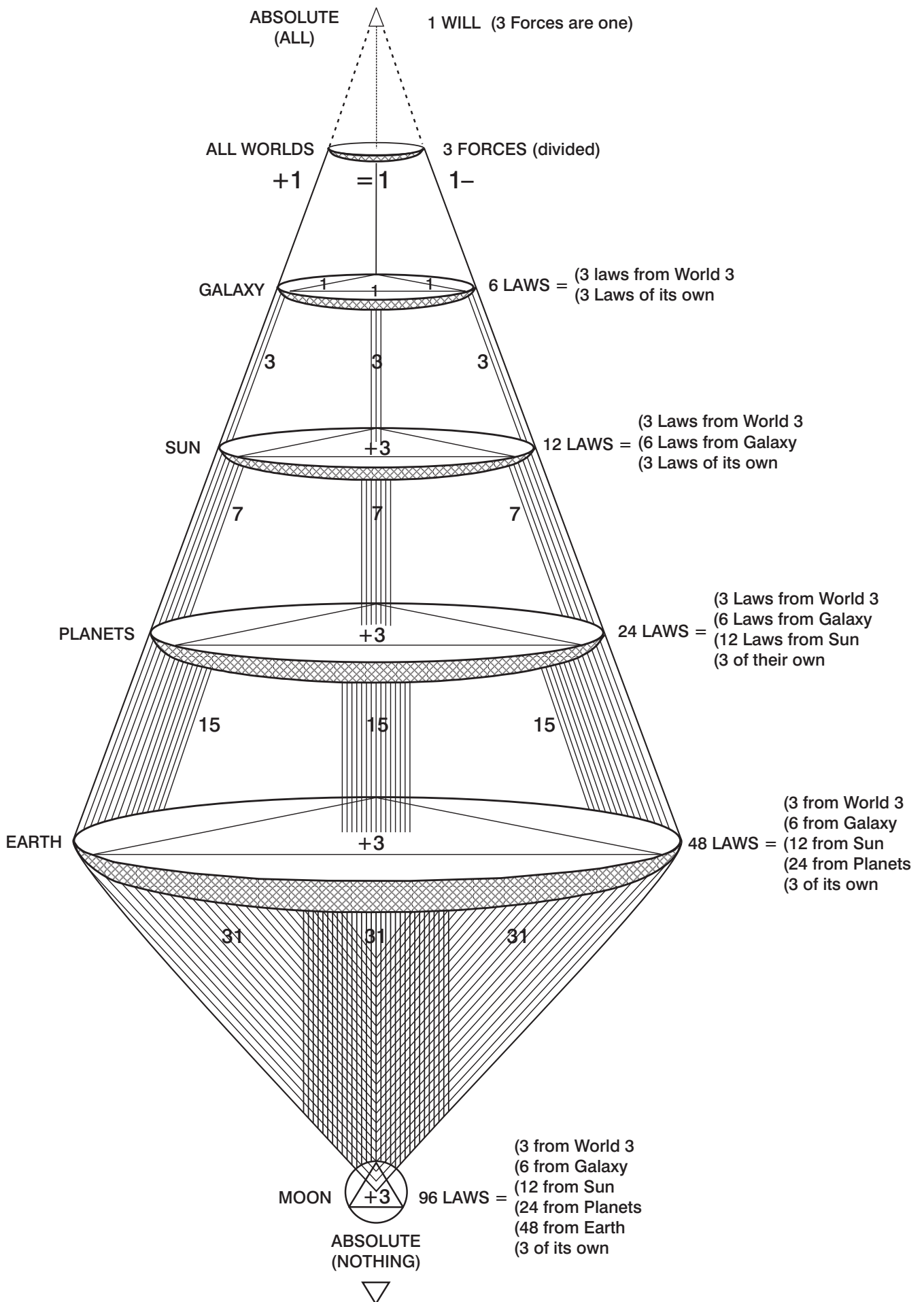
But gradually an individual member of a School can free himself from a great many of these influences and (by so doing) put himself under influences more beneficial to development. This is inevitably an individual affair, because people in the mass, held together by 'public opinion' and subject to the laws of chance, are irrevocably under many mechanical influences from which a few individuals can get free. A large shoal of fish cannot escape the net, but a few inconspicuous fish can slip through – they won't be noticed.

You have heard that to people in the Outer Circle everything *happens*; they are marionettes pulled by invisible strings. But *let the strings become visible* and it is possible to avoid them. So for a long time development is not a question of *doing* but of *avoiding*. And it takes time to realise that we cannot do as we like because our thoughts and actions are controlled by Laws. (Influences differ from Laws in being more transient, more flexible and more variable.) A medieval mystic has said: 'The Laws of Nature are like millstones, and they will grind you to powder if you do not learn to be the miller.' We are now to show you the origins of these Influences and Laws.

To do this we have to approach the Ray of Creation from the aspect of that other Cosmic Law – the Law of the Three Forces – which (as you heard last week) accounts for the genesis of single events. For any event to take place (on any scale in the Universe) three forces are necessary. Two forces (action and reaction) cancel each other; a third force is necessary, but man cannot see this until his eyes are opened. In the Absolute (diagram) the Three Forces are one. The Absolute by his single Consciousness and single Will creates All Worlds and here the single force separates into three, and these Three Forces influence all subsequent worlds, but in less and less degree.

In the next world (our Galaxy, the Milky Way) these 3 Forces have already assumed the rigidity of Laws and there are also '3 Laws of its own' – making 6 great 'orders of Laws' in all. For one of the Stars of the Milky Way, such as our Sun, there are 12 'orders of Laws' – 3 Laws of the first order, 6 Laws of the second order, and 3 of its own. Our Planetary world is under 24 'orders of Laws', our Earth under 48, and its Moon under 96. Each 'order of Laws' has many different manifestations, and so everything becomes more and more complicated as we go down the scale.

This is the real meaning of the *Principle of Relativity*, which must be remembered in discussing any general dualistic problems like 'Free-Will or Determinism', 'Consciousness or Mechanicalness', and so on. You will see from the diagram that the Absolute alone has Free-Will and Consciousness in full measure; in other worlds Free-Will and Consciousness are *relative*; and you can see how little



freedom there is for the Moon; for only 3, out of all the 96 Laws to which the Moon is subject, come from 'All Worlds', the great mass of the Moon's Laws comes from its parent Earth – like the Earth's gravity, its reflected light, the longer electromagnetic waves, etc.

The idea of escape from Laws is illustrated in our System by the simile of *Escape from prison*. In ordinary life a man serving a term in prison comes under many more laws even than the poor people outside. His one desire must be to escape; only one or two can escape and they can only escape with the help of people outside who escaped before. A file and a rope can be smuggled in, perhaps, and clothes and transport laid on for the get-away. This is a literal illustration of the idea of Schools and of the relation of how individuals in the Outer Circle can be helped by the Inner Circle.

But there is another meaning too. It is possible for a man's body to be imprisoned and subject to all the prison laws, while his spirit can roam far afield. The recent paper (called the 'Scallop Shell') read to Members of the Society gives many examples of this and proves that for some strong characters it has been only possible to *find themselves* and come under Higher Influences when their bodies are confined and maltreated, and their Personality is reduced to utter impotence in prison.

Perhaps some lines of Shelley's 'Adonais' will come to your mind as you look at this diagram:

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. – *Die,*
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!

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PART 2

We have to ask ourselves what 'to die' means in this context. It means to be dead to the many influences of Time and change in order to come under the few influences derived from Eternity. Now there is in each one of us a part – the *Individual Essence* – which is under only half of those 48 Laws of the Earth – namely under the 24 Laws of the Planetary World. It would have therefore much more Freedom; but it is undeveloped; it is a child dominated by the *body* which is under the 48 Laws of the Earth, and by the *Personality* which is under many man-made laws as well. For certain quite short periods each day, one has to 'die' to the influences governing the body and the Personality so that Essence can slowly grow up and take its rightful place. We should then live according to our individual Fate – the collective name for those Laws determined by that particular combination of Planetary influences under which we were each of us born, and before the shell of Personality grew round the Essence screening it from those Higher Influences, which are our birthright. And further, if within the Essence a *Soul* or Immortal principle can be formed in a man, this Soul would be only under the 12 Laws of the Sun.

We can suppose that the few great men in the history of humanity who have permanently achieved Cosmic Consciousness continue to exist on that plane, and maybe influence the affairs of men. This is another meaning of the expression 'the Inner Circle of Humanity'. It explains

also the belief that the influence of the Guru, or Leader, of a School who has attained Cosmic Consciousness does not cease at his death, but continues to guide the School he created, provided the people in the School maintain a level of Being high enough to recognise and obey that influence.

Now the writer of this material can bear witness that he saw with his own eyes our Leader (the man to whom we owe everything) attain Cosmic Consciousness in the week before he died, and he has no doubt that this was permanently fixed by the seal of Death. He has no doubt either that our continued success (for indeed we are successful beyond anything we deserve) depends upon the continuation of this influence. It was with this in view that those of us who were with him during the last three years of his life were trained to understand and carry out his wishes *without words*. These things are never spoken about for they can be ruined by imagination and idle talk; but they are of extreme importance at the present time. To forsake one Leader for another would be to break one of the Laws of Esoteric Schools. The debt we owe him must be repaid. But we were expressly instructed to seek any help we can get from any other Teacher in order to be *able to repay*. This is what we are doing today, but it must be precisely understood.

Those of use who were brought up in the Christian Tradition can look also to the Founder of that Tradition for support. To do this one must ask, 'What is the Highest scale to which individual man could look for personal help from an Omniscient and ever-present deity?' The answer is: 'On the scale of the Secondary Octave, which is the Absolute for men on earth starting at the level of the Unmanifested Sun.' It is in the Sun that we can see the Three Primary Forces and on this scale that we should understand the Gospels, as illustrated by this quotation from St. John:

If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him... These things have I spoken unto you being yet present with you. But the Comforter... whom the Father will send in my name; he shall tell you all things and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

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FOR THOSE DOING THE MEDITATION ONLY

[I have had many talks with our friend the Maharishi on this subject, about which he shares the point of view on which we were brought up; and he does not conform any more than we do to the naive view that the bodily form, or the Personality of the Teacher, continues to survive. Moreover, he maintains that in time his Master's method of 'Meditation' brings a man naturally through Self-Consciousness to Cosmic Consciousness, when a wordless relationship between Guru, or Master, and pupil becomes possible. But though all this cannot be thought about without distortion or illusion until it comes to be experienced, yet anyone enjoying the Meditation will agree that during this half-hour he is free from all that ordinarily influences him. And if a glow of happiness accompanies this freedom or comes at other unexpected times, he becomes convinced that this heralds a new influence from which he is ordinarily cut off by the chaos and noise of his personal psychology.

The Maharishi has also explained to me the words of the invocation to the Hindu Trinity in the Initiation Ceremony:

‘The first,’ he said, ‘is Cosmic Consciousness in its Creative aspect, Brahma. Many aspects of creation on earth – many ‘incarnations’ of Brahma, as old men would say. Second, Vishnu – preserving and maintaining aspect, of Consciousness – many ‘incarnations’ of Vishnu. Third, Maheshwara or Shiva – destructive aspect of Consciousness; Shiva the destroyer of ignorance and all that is unwanted. Many ‘incarnations’ of Shiva in the world. What is wanted cannot be created or preserved without destruction of what is unwanted. Fire gives energy of creation, but fire burns up the waste. These three are the Manifestations of Consciousness on the earth. But behind them is the Unmanifested (‘Param-Brahma’), that which is Formless and needs forms before it can be manifested.’]

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PART 3

We said that if his Essence grows to its full stature, the individual can be free of many Laws affecting large numbers on the level of Organic Life, and under the 24 Planetary Laws can fulfil his own destiny. That destiny may be benign or adverse, but at any rate he is true to himself. Anyone who has read the Greek classics – particularly Homer and Aeschylus – must notice the importance attached to Destiny and the Gods on Olympus (planetary influences) in the life of Supermen, Demigods, Kings and heroes. Admittedly, their stories are often naive renderings in the Outer Circle of Truths derived from Schools such as that at Eleusis. Nevertheless I’d like you to hear again a very familiar story:

Story: Odyssey, Book X, trans. W. H. D. Rouse, Nelson, 1941. pp.110-116.

Odysseus is recounting in the palace of King Alcinoos his adventures:

From that place we sailed to the island of Aiaia. There Circe lived, a terrible witch. We brought our ships to the shore in silence.

On the third day I took spear and sword and climbed to a high place. I saw smoke rising into the air from the house where Circe lived in the middle of bushes and trees.

The best plan seemed to be that I should return first to our ship on the shore and give the men something to eat, and then send out to inquire. Just as I came near to the ship, some god must have pitied me there so lonely, and sent me a stag with towering antlers right on my path. I struck him on the spine: down he fell in the dust with a moan, and died. Then I pulled a quantity of twigs and withies, and I tied together the legs of the great creature, and strung him over my neck, and so carried him down to the ship.

I threw him down in front of the ship, and cheered up my friends. ‘We are not going to die yet, my friends, for all our troubles. While there’s food and drink in the ship, don’t let us forget to eat!’

At my words they got up quickly to stare at the stag; for he was a huge beast. When they had feasted their eyes on the welcome sight, they got him ready. All day long until sunset we sat enjoying ourselves; and when the sun went down, we lay down to sleep on the seashore.

As soon as morning dawned, I called my companions together and addressed them: ‘My friends, we do not know east from west. Well, then, what are we to do? I have just been up on the cliffs to look round. We are on some island, with no land in sight, and I saw smoke rising in the air above a coppice of bushes and trees.’

When I said this, their hearts were crushed with foreboding: for they remembered the doings in the harbour, and the violence of that audacious cannibal, the goggle-eye Cyclops.

I divided them into two parts of equal number: one I took myself, the other I gave to an excellent man, Eurylochos. Quickly then we shook lots in a helmet, and out leapt the lot of Eurylochos. Off he went with his men.

They found in a dell the house of Circe, set in a clearing. All round it were wolves and lions of the mountains, really men whom she had bewitched by giving them poisonous drugs. They did not attack the men, but romped up fawning on them and wagging their long tails, just like a lot of dogs playing about their master when he comes out after dinner, because they know he has always something nice for them in his pocket.

They stopt at the outer doors of the courtyard, and heard the goddess within singing in a lovely voice, as she worked at the web on her loom. The silence was broken by Polites, who was dearest to me of all my companions. He said:

‘Friends, I hear a voice in the house, some woman singing prettily at the loom. Let’s go in and speak to her.’

Then they called her. She came out at once, and asked them to come in; they all followed her, in their innocence, only Eurylochos remained behind, for he suspected a trap. She gave them all comfortable seats, and made them a posset; but she put dangerous drugs in the mess. When they had swallowed it, she gave them a tap of her wand at once, and herded them into pens; for they now had pigs’ heads and grunts and bristles, pigs all over except that their minds were the same as before. Circe threw them a lot of beechnuts and acorns and cornel-beans to eat.

But Eurylochos came back to the ship. At first he could not utter a word, he was so dumbfounded with this misfortune. At last he found his tongue, and told us how all his companions had come to grief.

‘We went out into the wood, found a house in a dell, and there someone was singing at the loom: they called to her. She came out at once and asked them in: they all followed in the simplicity of their hearts, but I stayed behind. They all disappeared at once, not a soul was to be seen, and I stayed there a long time to spy.’

When he said this, at once I told him to go back with me and show me the way. But he begged and prayed – ‘Don’t take me there, my prince; I don’t want to go. Let me stay here. I am sure you will never come back again. Let us get away while we can!’

I answered, ‘Very well, you may stay here in this place. But as for me, go I must, and go I will.’

So I made my way up from the sea-side. But just as I was on the point of entering the sacred dell, who should meet me but Hermes with his golden rod. He grasped my hand, and said:

‘Whither away again, you poor fellow, alone on the hills, in a country you do not know? Your companions are shut up yonder in Circe’s, like so many pigs cosy in the pigsties. Are you going to set them free?’

‘Circe will make you a posset, and put drugs in the mess. But she will not be able to bewitch you for all that; for the charm which I will give you will foil her.’

‘As soon as Circe gives you a tap with her long rod, draw your sword and rush upon her as if you meant to kill her. She will be terrified, and will invite you to lie with her. Do not refuse, but tell her to swear a solemn oath that she will never attempt any other evil against you.’

With these words he handed me the charm which he had pulled out of the soil. The root was black, but the flower was milk-white. The gods call it moly: it is hard for mortals to find.

Then Hermes departed; but I went on to Circe's house. I stood at the doors and called loudly. Quickly she opened the doors and led me to a chair. Then she mixt me a posset, and dropt in her drugs. I swallowed it, then she gave me a tap with her wand, and said: 'Now then, to the sty with you!'

I drew my sword and leapt at Circe as though to kill her. She let out a loud shriek, and ran up and embraced my knees, and blurted out in dismay:

'Who are you, where do you come from? There never was another man who could stand these drugs once he had let them pass his teeth! But you must be one that cannot be bewitched. Surely you are Odysseus! Argeiphontes Goldenrod used to say that you would come on your way from Troy. Come now, put up your sword in the sheath, let us lie down on my bed!'

I answered her, 'Ah, Circe, how could you bid me to be gentle to you, when you have turned my companions into pigs? I will not enter your bed unless you can swear that you will never attempt any evil thing against me.'

She swore the oath at once. She led me to the bath, and when she had bathed me and rubbed me with olive oil, she gave me a tunic and a wrap to wear. Then she led me to the seat, and invited me to fall to; but I sat still.

When Circe noticed that I sat still and did not touch the vittles, she said: 'Why do you sit there like a dumb man, Odysseus? You need not be afraid; I have sworn you a solemn oath.'

I answered, 'Ah, Circe! What man could have the heart to taste food and drink, until he should see his friends free? Set them free, that I may see my friends before my eyes!'

Then Circe took her wand in hand, and opened the sty, and drove them out, looking like a lot of nine-year hogs. She rubbed a new drug upon each; then the bristles all dropt off: they became men once more. They sobbed aloud for joy till the hall echoed with the noise. Circe came close to me, and said:

'Go down to the seashore, draw up the ship on the beach, and stow all your goods in a cave; then come back and bring the rest with you.'

So I went; and when I reached the shore, I found my companions sitting beside the ship in deep distress. But as soon as they saw me, they were like so many calves in a barnyard skipping about a drove of cows, as they come back after a good feed of grass; they frolic round their dams lowing in a deafening chorus. So the men crowded round me, with tears running down over their cheeks, and they cried out from their hearts:

'You are back again, my prince! How glad we are, as glad as if we had come safe home to Ithaca! And what has become of our companions!'

I answered gently, 'We will draw up the ship on shore, and store the tackle and all our belongings in some cave. Then come with me, and you shall see your companions eating and drinking.'

And now what should I see but Eurylochus alone trying to stop them!

'Oh, you poor fools!' he cried out, 'where are you going? Do you want to go and let Circe turn you all into lions or wolves? Just Cyclops over again, when our fellows went into his yard, and this same rash Odysseus with them!'

But the others said: 'Let him stay by the ship and look after the ship! We are going with you to Circe's house!' Then away they went. Indeed, Eurylochus came too, for he had a terror of my rough tongue.

Then Circe gave a bath to my companions, and had them rubbed with olive oil, and gave them tunics and woollen wraps. We found all the others feasting merrily in the hall.

When they saw one another face to face, they made such a noise that the roof rang again. And Circe said to me:

‘No more lamentations now, Odysseus! Eat your food and drink your wine until you become as gay as when you first left your rugged home in Ithaca. Just now you are withered and down-hearted, you can’t forget your dismal wanderings.’

We took her advice; and there we remained for a whole year, with plenty to eat and good wine to drink.

But when the year was past, my companions called me aside, and said:

‘Have you forgotten home altogether?’

And so I entreated Circe: ‘Keep the promise you made me, that you would help me on my homeward way.’

[**COMMENT.** Circe is the Greek equivalent of the Indian Maya – the force of Imagination in Nature (Organic Life). Note that there are three levels of man in this story – the Common man subject to pleasant and unpleasant sensations; the Special man – Eurylochos who has learnt to watch and who knows his own limitations; and Odysseus, the hero, who is under Higher Influences but fewer laws.]

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