

JACOB BOEHME:

A LEXICON OF HIS TERMINOLOGY

By Wayne Kraus

**It is written, The natural man receives not the things of the spirit, nor the Mystery of the kingdom of God, they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them: therefore I admonish and exhort the Christian lover of Mysteries, if he will study these high writings, and read, search, and understand them, that he does not read them outwardly only, with sharp speculation and meditation; for in so doing, he shall remain in the outward imaginary ground only, and obtain no more than a counterfeit color of them. *Clavis* 1:1**

PART 1 - THE THREE PRINCIPLES

1<sup>st</sup> Principle - Dark World - desire, or will

2<sup>nd</sup> Principle - Light World - pleasure, or delight

3<sup>rd</sup> Principle - Fire World - proceeding, or outgoing

1<sup>st</sup> Principle, emanating from God the Father: darkness, wrath, jealousy, anguish, masculine/active, knowledge.

2<sup>nd</sup> Principle, emanating from the Son: light, love, meekness, friendliness, joy, feminine/receptive, wisdom.

3<sup>rd</sup> Principle, emanating from the Holy Spirit: the external world of stars and elements, in which good and evil, light and darkness are mixed and the Three Principles overlap and interpenetrate all Creation.

The First Principle is Hell, the Second Principle is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Heaven and Hell are not places, but *states*, and exist everywhere.

Before the fall of Lucifer the dark Principle was hidden, and should have remained so, but Lucifer brought it into Manifestation when he generated the Spirit of Error out of his own Center.

Lucifer ("Light-Bearer") was the Throne Angel of the Second Principle, but coveted the Power of the Father and tried to possess the Secret Fire. He was overcome by Michael, Warrior Angel of the First Principle. (Isaiah 14: 12-17; Ezekiel 28:21-19; Luke 10:18; Rev. 12:7-8)

It is according to the First Principle that God calls Himself an angry, zealous, jealous God.

The Father apart from the Son would be a "dark valley," but He is illuminated by the Light of the Son and thus in the Second Principle He is a God of love, compassion and forgiveness, our Heavenly Father; and only according to this Principle is He called God. Therefore the Apostle can say, "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." In the First Principle He is not called God, but a "dark consuming fire."

There is no Father apart from the Son, therefore anyone attempting to approach "God" apart from the Son approaches him in the *false imagination*, and will not find Deity, but only the wrathful consuming fire of the First Principle. This is illustrated with painful clarity in the Islamic religion, wherein the dark, fiery, wrathful Principle is worshipped as God.

The Second Principle is the narrow gate of Reconciliation. **I am the Way, the Truth and the Life, no man cometh to the Father but by Me. If ye had known Me, you would have known my Father also, and henceforth you know Him, and have seen Him**  
John 14:6

Though dogmatists use this verse to support their doctrine that only creedal Christians can be saved, Paul makes clear in his Mars Hill address that everyone has a chance to be redeemed. (Acts 17:24-28) Anyone who turns from their own path to find truth and pursue holiness has entered, or is entering, the Second Principle. Jesus is the propitiation for the sins of the world (1 John 2:2), even the

nations, tribes, peoples and tongues who have never heard His Name. (Luke 13:28-29)

All three Principles reside in humanity, since we, created in the image of God, are triune beings. Our correspondence with the Trinity is not, as conventional theology teaches, "spirit, soul and body." Our bodies are not part of our essential selves, but vehicles of manifestation in the material world, which we will one day discard, just as the material world is the "body" of Deity. This is neither pantheism nor panentheism. Nature is the body of God, the vehicle of his self-manifestation, and is no more a part of His Essence than the human body is the real "I." At the time of the end, God will set nature aside like a garment. (Ps. 102:25-26; Heb. 1:10-11)

In *The Three Principles* 7:21-23 - JB describes how all three Principles are manifest in human nature:

21. The Source of the Darkness is the first Principle, and the Virtue of the Light is the second Principle, and the Out-Birth out of the Darkness by the Virtue of the Light, is the third Principle; and that is not called God: God is only the Light, and the Virtue of the Light, and that which goes forth out of the Light is the Holy Ghost.

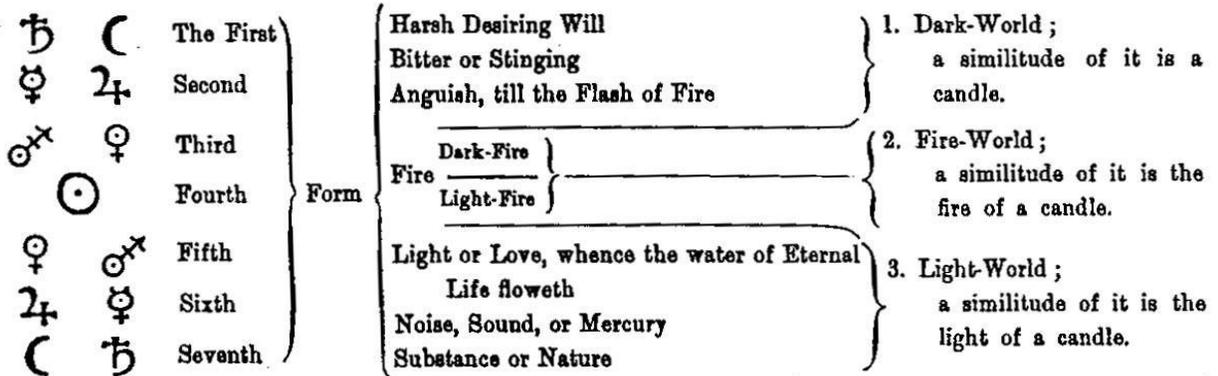
22. You have a Similitude of this in yourself. Your Soul which is in you, gives Reason to you, whereby you think, consider and perceive; that represents God the Father: The Light which shines in your Soul, whereby you know the Virtue or Power in you, and lead and direct and order yourself with; that represents God the Son, or the Heart, the eternal Power and Virtue: And the Mind, in which the Virtue of the Light is, and that which proceeds from the Light wherewith you govern your Body; that represents the Holy Ghost.

23. The Darkness that is in you, which longs after the Light, that is the first Principle; the Virtue or Power of the Light which is in you, whereby you can see in your Mind without bodily Eyes, that is the second Principle; and the longing Virtue, that proceeds from the Mind, and attracts and fills, itself, from whence the material Body grows, that is the third Principle. And you may understand...how God is the Beginning and the first Virtue in all Things; and you understand, that in this gross, earthly body, you are not in Paradise. For that is but a misty, excrementitious, dusky, opaque Procreation, or Out-Birth in the third Principle.

## PART TWO: THE SEVEN PROPERTIES



*The Seven Forms of Spirits, mentioned Revel. Chap. 1.*



*The First Principle.*

The Dark-World: hence God the Father is called an Angry, Zealous, Jealous God, and a Consuming Fire.

Dark or Fire of Wrath

*The Second Principle.*

The Light-World; hence God the Son, the Word, the Heart of God, is called a Loving and Merciful God.

Light or Fire of Love

*The Third Principle.*

This World of four Elements, which is produced out of the two Inward Worlds, and is a Glass of them; wherein Light and Darkness, Good and Evil are mixed, it is not Eternal, but hath a Beginning and an End.

The Seven Properties (or Forms, or Qualities) proceed from the Seven Spirits of God. (Rev. 4:5) The Three Principles are the logic or structure of the Divine Being and Creation; the Seven Properties are the Process or Motion.

Boehme goes to great lengths across many volumes to explicate this Process, which endlessly diversifies.

The above diagram, devised by JB himself, is an amazingly concise summary of an infinitely complex process, a framework for fathoming an unfathomable Universe. It is complicated at first, but easy when we have apprehended the Ground.

## PART 3 - GLOSSARY

**Abyss**, An infinity in which exists only the Three Principles. The undifferentiated All, the Everynothing. The Ungrund (Unground).

**Anguish**, is the third Form of the seven Properties of Eternal Nature, made of the first two Forms, and making a Sulphurous Spirit.

**Centrum** or **Center**, is the inward Ground. Laws of nature before energy or "matter."

**Christ**, the inward new Man in the Spirit of Christ.

**Divine Unity**, is Deity before manifestation; like a candle that produces Fire (Father), Light (Son) and Air (Spirit).

**Element**, called the one or holy Element, is of or according to the second Principle generated eternally out of the eternal Nature or great Mystery, which are according to the First, but wherever they generated the holy Element there is paradise.

**Ens**, the proper or peculiar Being or Essence of a thing, particularly in terms of moral character, benevolence or malignancy.

**Eternal Nature**, is of the first Principle and that in which standeth two Kingdoms; one the pure Virgin Wisdom of God, the one holy Element, the cause of the four Elements and the Stars: The other, the severe fierce wrath: According to which God calleth himself a consuming Fire. It is therefore the great Mystery.

**Expressed word**, all Creatures visible and invisible.

**Fiat**, the Eternal speaking Word or Creating Power proceeding from the Freewill of the Abyss. Also the desire of the Soul taking the Power of the holy Love Tincture, and makes it essential. "Let there be..."

**Flagrat**, or sudden fright, shriek, terror, flash, the severing of the two Principles of Light and Darkness; resembling that in Thunder and Lightning, Gunpowder, etc. The pregnant Echo of the sound of Eternity, speaking (by the Magical Fire-breath) Love, or Anger; Life, in the Light; Death, in the Darkness. The Third Principle. The Fourth Property.

**Limbus**, the male counterpart of the female Matrix. Seed or concretion of Nature. Substantiality.

**Lubet**, a Longing Delight or *Beneplacitum*; In God, it is the free pregnant Will to Manifestation in Nature and Creature; without which all had been an Eternal stillness. The Lubet in Man, is the moving Will to Good or Evil.

**Magia**, there are two *Magia's*, one of the Unity, the other of the Multiplicity, or Astral Powers. And two *Magi* in Man, the Spirit of God, and Reason, into the latter the Devil easily insinuates.

**Majesty**, the Light of the Glorious Son of God, the second Principle, according to which only God is called God, for according to the First, viz., the Father's Property, he is not called God, but a consuming Fire.

**Matrix**, the fruitful bearing womb of Eternity.

**Mysterium Magnum**, the Chaos out of which the Unity of God flows outward into Manifestation thru the Divine Wisdom. It is of the first Principle.

**Nature**, arises in the outflown word of the divine perception and knowledge; and it is a continual framing and forming of sciences and perception: whatsoever the word works by the wisdom, that nature frames and forms into properties: Nature is like a carpenter, who builds a house, which the mind figured and contrived before in itself; so it is here also to be understood.

**Out-birth**, the visible, palpable, mortal part of this World called the Anger-fire.

**Property**, is a Divine Idea manifest in Nature. Nature, in its first Ground, consists in Seven Properties, and these Seven interact and divide into Infinity. Each entity in Creation is a unique balance or Temperature of the original seven Properties.

**Propriety**, egoity, I-ness, I-hood, ownness, a something,

**Salitter**, (called) Divine *Salitter*; represented by the Earth, but like the pure Heaven; in it are moving, springing Powers, producing all manner of Divine Trees, Plants, etc., with heavenly Colours, Smells, Tastes; whereof this World's Trees, Gold, Silver, Precious Stones, etc., are hard, dark, dead Shadows. But this *Salitter* and *Mercurius*, (i.e.) Divine *Mercurius*, is the food of Angels and Holy Souls.

**Salniter**, is that which in the Sulphur is awakened, by the heat arising into a Flagrat out of the Brimstony, Watery, and Earthy Properties, whereby the Properties are explicated.

**Sathan**, is the Spirit of Error, and not always a Creaturely Devil, but the Property of such an Erroneous Spirit.

**Signature**, is the container of spirit, a vessel, spiritual body, inner self, true nature. It is like a lute that is silent until the Spirit plays a tune upon it. Human nature is a vessel of spirit and has no inherent moral nature; its benevolence or malignancy is determined by what spirit indwells and plays it: the Spirit of Christ or the Spirit of Error.

**Sophia**, the true noble precious Image of Christ, viz., the Wisdom of God, the Tincture of the Light.

**Source**, the original quality or essential property to Love and Anger, Light and Darkness, both according to time and Eternity.

**Sulphur, Mercury and Sal**, do not refer to brimstone, quicksilver and salt, but the Essences of these Properties, in which the created world consists and which correspond to the three first Properties. Sal is gravity, magnetism, inertia, the will to unity, wholeness. Mercury is the motion and separation of Nature, wherein each thing is figured according to its own Signature. Sulphur is sensate, perceiving, willing and growing life. Sulphur signifies the Third Principle.

**Ternarius**, or number three in the language of Nature, the Divine birth in the six Forms of Nature, which are the six Seals of God.

**Ternary**, (called) *Ternarium Sanctum*, holy Flesh or holy Substance, or Corporizing of Angels and holy Souls.

**Tincture**, is in Angels and Glorified Saints the Virgin Love-fire. In Man that which Adam's fall caused almost wholly to disappear. In Vegetables, Animals and Minerals, their Virtue, Vitality, or Life, Spirit and Power.

**Turba**, is taken for a fierce wrath-fire which destroyeth the corruptible body, Sometimes for Horrid Tempests or Hellish Blasts, general Contagions, awakened by common Sins, called Turba Magna.

*N.B.* - JB was a highly visual person, rather than a wordsmith, and used words as *symbols*. Like Ezekiel and John, he strains verbiage to describe what he has seen, and resorts constantly to word-symbols. Symbols speak to us on a deep visceral level and cannot be fully explained or defined. JB's aim is to introduce us to truths that may take root in our innermost being and yet remain beyond the grasp of reason. "The heart hath reasons that reason knows not." Jacob, as a believer in the universal *Language of Nature*, makes no distinction between word-symbols and the realities they signify. In Boehme, words are not mere signifiers but *Glyphs, Sigils* and *Runes of Power*.

Symbols are subject to manifold interpretations and limitless applications. Do not be bothered if your understanding of JB's words and ideas are at variance with the definitions and interpretations of Law, Freher, Hartmann or Grubb. Take the old Quakers' advice and follow your Inner Light. (John 1:9)

Each of us is a singular facet of the Divine Image, and has a unique perspective on Total Truth. Only the Truth that resonates with your innermost being is Truth for you.

**"Therefore man, who is so noble an image, having his ground in time and eternity, should well consider himself, and not run headlong in such blindness, seeking his native country afar off from himself, when it is within himself."** CLAVIS 178