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I

"Ἴπποι ταί με φέρουσι, ὅσον τ' ἐπὶ θυμῷ ἰκάνοι, πέμπον, ἐπεὶ μ' ἐς ὁδὸν βῆσαν πολύφημον ἄγουσα δαίμωνος, ἢ κατὰ πάντ' ἄστι φέροι εἰδότα φῶτα· τῆ φερόμην· τῆ γάρ με πολύφραστοι φέρον Ἴπποι

[5] ἄρμα τιταίνουσα, κοῦρα δ' ὀδὸν ἠγεμόνευον. Ἄξων δ' ἐν χροίῃσι ἴει σύριγγος ἀντήν· αἰθόμενος - διοίσι γάρ ἐπεύγετο δινωτοῖσιν κύκλους ἀμφοτέρωθεν -, ὄτε σπερχοῖατο πέμπειν Ἥλιάδες κοῦρα, προλιποῦσα δώματα Νυκτός,

[10] εἰς φάος, ὀσάμενα κράτον ἅπο χερσὶ καλύπτρας. Ἐνθα πῶλα Νυκτός τε καὶ Ἥματός εἰσι κελεύθων, καὶ σφας ὑπέρθυρον ἀμφίς ἔχει καὶ λάνος οὐδός· αὐτὰ δ' αἰθέρια πλῆγται μεγάλοισι θυρέτροις· τῶν δὲ Δίκη πολίποινος ἔχει κληῖδας ἀμοιβοῖς.

[15] Τὴν δὴ παρφάμεναι κοῦρα μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν. πείσαν ἐπιφραδέως, ὥς σφιν βαλανυτὸν ὄχηα ἀπτερέως ὥσειε πύλεων ἅπο· ταὶ δὲ θυρέτρων χάσμι' ἀγανές ποίησαν ἀναπατάμεναι πολυχάλκους ἄξονας ἐν σύριγγιν ἀμοιβαδὸν εἰλιξασαί

[20] γόμφοις καὶ περόνησιν ἀρηρότε· τῆ ἅα δι' αὐτέων ἰθὺς ἔχον κοῦρα κατ' ἀμαξίτων ἄρμα καὶ ἵππους. Καί με θεὰ πρόφρων ὑπεδέξατο, χεῖρα δὲ χειρὶ δεξιτερῆν ἔλεν, ὥδε δ' ἔπος φάτο καὶ με προσηῦδα· ὦ κοῦρ' ἀθανάτοισι συνάρορος ἠνιόχοισιν,

[25] Ἴπποισι ταί σε φέρουσι ἰκάνων ἡμέτερον δῶ, χαῖρ', ἐπεὶ οὔτι σε μοῖρα κακῆ προὔπεμπε νέεσθαι τήνδ' ὁδὸν - ἢ γάρ ἀπ' ἀνθρώπων ἐκτός πάτου ἐστίν -, ἀλλὰ θέμις τε δίκη τε.Χρεὼ δὲ σε πάντα πυθέσθαι ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης ευκυκλέος ἀτρεμεῖς ἦτρο

[30] ἠδὲ βροτῶν δόξας, ταῖς οὐκ ἐνὶ πίστις ἀληθής. Ἀλλ' ἐμης καὶ ταῦτα μαθήσεται, ὥς τὰ δοκοῦντα χροῆν δοξίμως εἶναι διὰ παντός πάντα περόντα.

II

Εἰ δ' ἄρ' ἐγὼν ἐρέω, κόμισαι δὲ σὺ μῦθον ἀκούσας, αἴπερ ὁδοὶ μοῦναι διζήσιός εἰσι νοήσασ· ἢ μὲν ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, Πειθός ἐστι κέλευθος - Ἀληθείῃ γάρ ὁμηδεῖ - ,

[5] ἢ δ' ὅς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὥς χρεὼν ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, τὴν δὴ τοι φράζω παναπευθεῖα ἔμμεν ἀταρόπων· οὔτε γάρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἔον - οὐ γάρ ἄνυστον - οὔτε φράσασ.

III

... τὸ γάρ αὐτὸ νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι.

IV

Λεῦσσε δ' ὅμως ἀπεόντα νόφ παρεόντα βεβαίως· οὐ γάρ ἀποτμήξει τὸ ἐόν τοῦ ἐόντος ἔχεσθαι οὔτε σσιδνάμενον πάντη πάντως κατὰ κόσμον οὔτε συνιστάμενον.

V

Ξυνὸν δὲ μοί ἐστιν, ὁπόθεν ἄρξομαι· τόθι γάρ πάλιν ἴξομαι αὔθις.

VI

Χροῆ τὸ λέγειν τε νοεῖν τ' ἐὸν ἔμμεναι· ἔστι γάρ εἶναι, μῆδὲν δ' οὐκ ἔστιν· τὰ σ' ἐγὼ φράζεσθαι ἄνωγα. Πρώτης γάρ σ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ ταύτης διζήσως <εἰργω>, αὐτὰρ ἔπειτ' ἀπὸ τῆς, ἦν δὴ βροτοὶ εἰδότες οὐδὲν

[5] πλάττονται, δίκαρνοι· ἀμηχανίῃ γάρ ἐν αὐτῶν στήθεσιν ἰθύνει πλακτὸν νόον· οἱ δὲ φοροῦνται κωφοὶ ὁμῶς τυφλοὶ τε, τεθηπότες, ἄκριτα φύλα, οἷς τὸ πέλειν τε καὶ οὐκ εἶναι ταῦτὸν νενόμισται· κοῦ ταῦτόν, πάντων δὲ παλιντροπός ἐστι κέλευθος.

VII

Οὐ γάρ μήποτε τοῦτο δαμῆ εἶναι μὴ ἐόντα· ἀλλὰ σὺ τῆσδ' ἀφ' ὁδοῦ διζήσιος εἰργε νόημα· μῆδὲ σ' ἔθος πολῦπειρον ὁδὸν κατὰ τήνδε βιάσθαι, νομᾶν ἄσκοπον ὅμμα καὶ ἠρήεσσαν ἀζουήν

[5] καὶ γλώσσαν, κρῖναι δὲ λόγφ πολυδῆριν ἔλεγχον ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα.

VIII

Μόνος δ' ἔτι μῦθος ὁδοῖο λείπεται ὥς ἔστιν· ταῦτη δ' ἐπὶ σήματ' ἔσαι πολλά μάλ', ὥς ἀγνήτων ἐὸν καὶ ἀνόλεθρον ἔστιν, ἔστι γάρ οὐλομελές τε καὶ ἀτρεμεῖς ἠδ' ἀτέλεστον·

[5] οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πάν, ἐν, συνεχές· τίνα γάρ γένναν διζήσασα αὐτοῦ; πῆ πόθεν αὐξηθέν; οὐτ' ἔκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐάσω φάσθαι σ' οὐδέ νοεῖν· οὐ γάρ φατὸν οὐδέ νοητὸν ἔστιν ὅπως οὐκ ἔστι. Τί δ' ἂν μιν καὶ χροός ὦρσεν

[10] ὕστερον ἢ πρόσθεν, τοῦ μηδενὸς ἀρξάμενον, φῶν; οὔτως ἢ πάμπαν πελέναι χρεὼν ἔστιν ἢ οὐχί. Οὐδέ ποτ' ἐκ μὴ ἐόντος ἐφήσει πίστιος ἰσχύς γίγνεσθαί τι παρ' αὐτοῦ· τοῦ εἶνεκεν οὔτε γενέσθαι οὔτ' ὀλλυσθαι ἀνήκε Δίκη χαλάσασα πείθετον,

[15] ἀλλ' ἔχει· ἢ δὲ κροῖσι περὶ τούτων ἐν τῷδ' ἔστιν· ἔστιν ἢ οὐκ ἔστιν· κέκριται δ' οὖν, ὥσπερ ἀνάγκη, τὴν μὲν ἐάν ἀνόητον ἀνόνημον (οὐ γάρ ἀληθής ἔστιν ὁδός), τὴν δ' ὥστε πέλειν καὶ ἐτήνημον εἶναι. Πῶς δ' ἂν ἔπειτα πέλοιτό ἐόν; πῶς δ' ἂν κε γένοιτο ;

[20] εἰ γάρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἔστι, οὐδ' εἶ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι. Τὼς γένεσις μὲν ἀπέσβησται καὶ ἄπιστος ὄλεθρος. Οὐδὲ διαωρετὸν ἔστιν, ἐπεὶ πάν ἔστιν ὁμοῖον· οὐδέ τι τῆ μάλλον, τὸ κεν εἰργοί μιν συνέχεσθαι, οὐδέ τι χειρότερον, πάν δ' ἐμπλεκὸν ἔστιν ἐόντος.

[25] Τῷ ξυνεχές πάν ἔστιν· ἐὸν γάρ ἐόντι πελάζει. Αὐτὰρ ἀκίνητον μεγάλων ἐν πείρῃσι δεσμῶν ἔστιν ἄναρχον ἄναυστον, ἐπεὶ γένεσις ἐστὶ δλεθρος τῆε μάλ' ἐπλάχθησαν, ἀπῶσε δὲ πίστις ἀληθής· Ταῦτόν τ' ἐν ταῦτῳ τε μένον καθ' ἑαυτὸ τε κείται

[30] χροῦτως ἔμπεδον αὔθι μένει· κρατερῆ γάρ Ἀνάγκη πείρατος ἐν δεμοῖσιν ἔχει, τὸ μιν ἀμφὶς ἔέρχει, οὔνεκεν οὐκ ἀτελεῖταιτον τὸ ἐὸν θέμις εἶναι· ἔστι γάρ οὐκ ἐπιδέες· μὴ ἐὸν δ' ἂν παντός ἐδεῖτο. Ταῦτόν δ' ἐστὶ νοεῖν τε καὶ οὔνεκεν ἔστι νόημα.

[35] Οὐ γάρ ἄνευ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐν ᾧ φ' πεφασμιμέον ἔστιν, εὐρησείς τὸ νοεῖν· οὐδὲν γάρ <ἦ> ἔστιν ἢ ἔσται ἄλλο πάρεξ τοῦ ἐόντος, ἐπεὶ τὸ γὰρ Μοῖρ' ἐπέδησεν οὐλον ἀκίνητόν τ' ἔμμεναι· τῷ πάντ' ὄνομ' ἔσται, ὅσα βροτοὶ κατέθετο πεποιοότες εἶναι ἀληθῆ,

[40] γίγνεσθαί τε καὶ ὀλλυσθαι, εἶναι τε καὶ οὐχί, καὶ τόπον ἀλλάσσειν διὰ τε χροὰ φανὸν ἀμείβειν. Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ πείρας πύματον, τετελεσμένον ἐστὶ πάντοθεν, εὐκυκλίου σφαιρῆς ἐναλίγκιον ὄγκφ, μεσοῦθεν ἰσοπαλές πάντη· τὸ γάρ οὔτε τι μείζον

[45] οὔτε τι βαιότερον πελέναι χρεὼν ἔστι τῆ ἢ τῆ. Οὔτε γάρ οὐκ ἐὸν ἔστι, τὸ κεν παῖοι μιν ἰκνεῖσθαι εἰς ὁμόν, οὔτ' ἐὸν ἔστιν ὅπως εἰῆ κεν ἐόντος τῆ μάλλον τῆ δ' ἦρσον, ἐπεὶ πάν ἔστιν ἄσυλον· οἱ γάρ πάντοθεν ἰσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρῃσι κύρει.

[50] Ἐν τῷ σοι παῖω σποτὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης· δόξας δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας μάναθεν κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούσων. Μορφάς γάρ κατέθεντο δύο γνόμας ὀνομάζειν· τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεὼν ἔστιν - ἐν ᾧ πεπλανημένοι εἰσιὸν -

[55] τάντια δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τῆ μὲν φλογός αἰθέριον πῦρ, ἦπον δ'ν, μέγ' ἔαφρόν, ἐωυτῷ πάντως τωϊτόν, τῷ δ' ἔτερφ μὴ τωϊτόν· ἀτὰρ κάκεινο κατ' αὐτὸ τάντια νύκτ' ἀσάη, πυκνὸν δέμας ἐμβροιβέει.

[60] Τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον εὐοικότα πάντα φατιζῶ, ὥς οὐ μὴ ποτέ τίς σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσση.

IX

Αὐτὰρ ἐπειδὴ πάντα φάος καὶ νῦξ ὀνόμασται καὶ τὰ κατὰ σφετέρας δυνάμεις ἐπὶ τοῖσί τε καὶ τοῖς, πάν πἄεον ἔστιν ὁμοῦ φάος καὶ νυκτός ἀφάντου ἴσον ἀμφοτέρων, ἐπεὶ οὐδετέρφ μετὰ μῆδέν.

X

Εἶση δ' αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν τὰ τ' ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα σήματα καὶ καθαράς εὐαγέος ἠελίουσ· λαμπάδος ἔργ' αἰδηλα καὶ ὀππόθεν ἔξεργήνοντο, ἔργα τε κύκλωπος πέσιη περίφοιτα οσελήνης

[5] καὶ φύσιν, εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ οὐράνων ἀμφίς ἔχοντα ἐνθεν ἔφυ τε καὶ ὡς μὲν ἄγουσ' ἐπέδησεν Ἀνάγκη πείρατ' ἔχειν ἄστρον.

XI

πὼς γαῖα καὶ ἥλιος ἠδὲ σελήνη αἰθήρο τε ξυνὸς γαῖα τ' οὐράνιον καὶ ὄλυμπος ἐσχάτος ἠδ' ἄστρον θερμὸν μένος ὠρμήθησαν γίγνεσθαι.

XII

Αἰ γάρ στενιότερα πλῆντο πυρός ἀρχητοῖο, αἰ δ' ἐπὶ ταῖς νυκτός, μετὰ δὲ φλογός ἴετα αἴσα· ἐν δὲ μέσφ τούτων δαίμων ἢ πάντα κυβερνᾷ· πάντα γάρ <ἦ> στυγεροῖο τόκου καὶ μίξιός ἄρχει

V πέμπουσ' ἄρσιν θήλυ μῆγῃ τό τ' ἐναντίον αὐτῖς ἄρσεν θηλυτέρφ.

XIII

Πρώτιστον μὲν Ἔρωτα θεῶν ἠτήσατο πάντων ...

XIV

Νυκτιφαές περὶ γαῖαν ἀλόμενον ἀλότρειον φῶς

XV

αἰεὶ παπταίνουσα πρὸς αὐγάς ἠελίοιο.

XVa

ὑδατορίζον εἴπειν τὴν γῆν

XVI

ᾧς γάρ ἕκαστος ἔχει κράσιν μελέων πολυπλάγκτων, τὼς νόος ἀνθρώποισι παρίσταται· τὸ γάρ αὐτὸ ἔστιν ὄπερ φρονεῖ μελέων φύσας ἀνθρώποισιν καὶ πάσιν καὶ παντὶ· τὸ γάρ πἄεον ἐστὶ νόημα.

XVII

δεξιτεροῖσιν μὲν κούρους, λαοῖσι δὲ κούρας ...

XVIII

femina inirque simul Veneris cum germina miscent, venis informans diverso ex sanguine virtus temperiem servans bene condita corpora fingit. nam si virtutes permictio semine purgant nec faciunt unam permixto in corpore, dirae nascentem gemino vexabunt semine sexum.

XIX

Οὔτω τοι κατὰ δόξαν ἔφυ τάδε καὶ νυν ἔσαι κατ' ἐτέπειτ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε καταθένησσι τραφέντα· τοῖς δ' ὄνομ' ἀνθρώποιο κατέθεντ' ἐπισημόν ἕκάστφ.

POEM OF PARMENIDES

English translation :

John Burnet (1892)

I

the steeds that bear me carried me as far as ever my heart Desired, since they brought me and set me on the renowned Way of the goddess, who with her own hands conducts the man who knows through all things. On what way was I borne

5 along; for on it did the wise steeds carry me, drawing my car, and maidens showed the way. And the axle, glowing in the socket - for it was urged round by the whirling wheels at eax end - gave forth a sound as of a pipe, when the daughters of the Sun, hasting to convey me into the light, threw back their veils

10 from off their faces and left the abode of Night. There are the gates of the gates of Night and Day, fitted above with a lintel and below with a threshold of stone. They themselves, high in the air, are closed by mighty doors, and Avenging Justice keeps the keys that open them. Her did

15 the maidens entreat with gentle words and skilfully persuade to unfasten without demur the bolted bars from the gates. Then, when the doors were thrown back, they disclosed a widening, when their brazen hinges swung backwards in the

20 sockets fastened with rivets and nails. Straight through them, on the broad way, did the maidens guide the horses and the car, and the goddess greeted me kindly, and took my right hand in hers, and spake to me these words: - Welcome, noble youth, that comest to my abode on the car

25 that bears thee tended by immortal charioteers ! It is no ill chance, but justice and right that has sent thee forth to travel on this way. Far, indeed, does it lie from the beaten track of men ! Meet it is that thou shouldst learn all things, as well the unshaken heart of persuasive truth, **as the opinions of**

30 **mortals in which is no true belief** at all. Yet none the less shalt thou learn of these things also, since thou must judge approvedly of the things that seem to men as thou goest through all things in thy journey."

II

Come now, I will tell thee - and do thou hearken to my saying and carry it away - the only two ways of search that can be thought of. The first, namely, **that It is**, and that it is impossible for anything not to be, is the way of conviction,

5 for truth is its companion.. The other, namely, **that It is not**, and that something must needs not be, - that, I tell thee, is a wholly untrustworthy path. **For you cannot know what is not** - that is impossible - nor utter it;

III

For it is the same thing that can be thought and that can be.

IV

V

V

VI

It needs must be that what can be thought and spoken of is; for it is possible for it to be, and it is not possible for, what is nothing to be. This is what I bid thee ponder. I hold thee back from this first way of inquiry, and from this other also,

5 upon which mortals knowing naught wander in two minds; for hesitation guides the wandering thought in their breasts, so that they are borne along stupefied like men deaf and blind. Undiscerning crowds, in whose eyes the same thing and not the same is and is not, and all things travel in opposite directions !

VII

For this shall never be proved, that the things that are not are; and do thou restrain thy thought from this way of inquiry.

Nor let habit force thee to cast a wandering eye upon this devious track, or to turn thither thy resounding ear or thy

5 tongue; but do thou judge the subtle refutation of their discourse uttered by me.

VIII

One path only is left for us to speak of, namely, that It is. In it are very many tokens that what is, is uncreated and indestructible, alone, complete, immovable and without end. Nor was it ever, nor will it be; for

5 now it is, all at once, a continuous one. For what kind of origin for it. will you look for ? In what way and from what source could it have drawn its increase ? I shall not let thee say nor think that it came from what is not; for it can neither be thought nor uttered that what is not is. And, if it came from

10 nothing, what need could have made it arise later rather than sooner ? Therefore must it either be altogether or be not at all. Nor will the force of truth suffer aught to arise besides itself from that which in any way is. Wherefore, Justice does not loose her fetters and let anything come into being or pass

15 away, but holds it fast. " Is it or is it not ? " Surely it is adjudged, as it needs must be, that we are to set aside the one way as unthinkable and nameless (for it is no true way), and that the other path is real and true. How, then, can what is be going to be in the

20 future ? Or how could it come into being ? If it came into being, it is not; nor is it if it is going to be in the future. Thus is becoming extinguished and passing away not to be heard of. Nor is it divisible, since it is all alike, and there is no more of it in one place than in another, to hinder it from holding together, nor less of it, but everything is full of what is.

25 Wherefore all holds together; for what is; is in contact with what is. Moreover, it is immovable in the bonds of mighty chains, without beginning and without end; since coming into being and passing away have been driven afar, and true belief has cast them away. It is the same, and it rests in the self-same place, abiding in itself.

30 And thus it remaineth constant in its place; for hard necessity keeps it in the bonds of the limit that holds it fast on every side. Wherefore it is not permitted to what is to be infinite; for it is in need of nothing ; while, if it were infinite, it would stand in need of everything. It is the same thing that can be thought and for the sake of which the thought exists ;

35 for you cannot find thought without something that is, to which it is betrothed. And there is not, and never shall be, any time other, than that which is present, since fate has chained it so as to be whole and immovable. Wherefore all these things are but the names which mortals have given, believing them, to be true –

40 coming into being and passing away, being and not being, change of place and alteration of bright colour. Where, then, it has its farthest boundary, it is complete on every side, equally poised from the centre in every direction, like the mass of a rounded sphere; for it cannot be greater or

45 smaller in one place than in another. For there is nothing which is not that could keep it from reaching out equally, nor is it possible that there should be more of what is in this place and less in that, since it is all inviolable. For, since it is equal in all directions, it is equally confined within limits.

50 Here shall I close my trustworthy speech and thought about the truth. Henceforward learn the opinions of mortals, giving ear to the deceptive ordering of my words. Mortals have settled in their minds to speak of two forms, one of which they should have left out, and that is where they go astray from the truth.

55 They have assigned an opposite substance to each, and marks distinct from one another. To the one they allot the fire of heaven, light, thin, in every direction the same as itself, but not the same as the other. The other is opposite to it, dark night, a compact and heavy body. Of these

60 I tell thee the whole arrangement as it seems to men, in order that no mortal may surpass thee in knowledge.

IX

Now that all things have been named light and night; and the things which belong to the power of each have been assigned to these things and to those, everything is full at once of light and dark night, both equal, since neither has aught to do with the other.

X

And thou shalt know the origin of all the things on high, and all the signs in the sky, and the resplendent works of the glowing sun's clear torch, and whence they arose. And thou shalt learn likewise of the wandering deeds of the round-faced

5 moon, and of her origin. Thou shalt know, too, the heavens that surround us, whence they arose, and how Necessity took them and bound them to keep the limits of the stars . . .

XI

How the earth, and the sun, and the moon, and the sky that is common to all, and the Milky Way, and the outermost Olympos, and the burning might of the stars arose.

XII

The narrower circles are filled with unmixed fire, and those surrounding them with night, and in the midst of these rushes their portion of fire. In the midst of these circles is the rhythm that directs the course of all things; for she rules over all painful birth and all begetting,

5 driving the female to the embrace of the male, and the male to that of the female.

XIII

First of all the gods she contrived Eros.

XIV

Shining by night with borrowed light, wandering round the earth.

XV

Always straining her eyes to the beams of the sun.

XVa

XVI

XVII

On the right boys; on the left girls.

XVIII

XIX

Thus, according to men's opinions, did things think into being, and thus they are now. In time (they think) they will grow up and pass away. To each of these things men have assigned a fixed name.