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and the Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea.

FOUNDED BY EDWARD C. HEGELER

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APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

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Frontispiece to The Open Court

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APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

IF BY SOME prodigious course of events, the people of the present were placed in such a position that they would be obliged to select a new religious teacher from all recorded history, completely disregarding their immediate traditions: what would they do? If suitability to the spirit of the present age when ideals of universal peace and brotherhood of man are uppermost, were the deciding factor, the choice would likely fall on Apollonius of Tyana. He was a reformer of Greek religion from within who preached tolerance of local cults and ethical reform wherever such reform was needed without breaking with the past.



APOLLONIUS OF TYANA

A contorniate, unquestionably authentic, reproduced from Visconti, *Iconog.* pl. 17, 4, fig. 115.

The world has known many teachers, prophets and saviors, some inspired sages, some ignorant fanatics, some charlatans. Several have left behind them great organizations of followers, others are known only to students of history, and many are now wholly forgotten. Success in attracting great numbers of adherents, either during the life of the founder, or as is sometimes the case, after several generations, depends not so much on the sublimity and nobility of the teachings as upon their meeting the needs of the time in which they are propounded—as might be said, if the seeds fall upon soil favorable to them.

It is to be regretted that our information concerning Apollonius of Tyana is so slight. A number of biographies and books on his life and teachings were written shortly after his death, but all save that of Philostratus have been lost. Both in ancient and modern times parallels have been drawn between his life and teachings and those of Christ, some even claiming his marvels to have been better authenticated. Various ancient writers, historians, and Church Fathers refer to him in passing, giving us hints about his personality, character and teachings and the reaction of his contemporaries to him. Some modern writers have doubted his historicity, others have classed him as a mere itinerant charlatan, some have doubted his reputed travels to India, but probability seems to favor the view that he actually lived and made the journeys attributed to him. From the available material, although difficult, we can reconstruct an approximate image of the man.

Apollonius was born in Tyana, descended from the oldest families which claimed to have taken part in the founding of the city. There is some doubt as to the exact date of his birth; it is variously given between 6 B. C. and 3 A. D., but most authorities prefer the year one. His education was the best that the Hellenic civilization could give. At the age of fourteen his father took him to Tarsus, which in those days was one of the three great centers of learning. There, under the care of Euthydemus, the Stoic, he learned the teachings of the disciples of Pythagoras, Chrysippus, Plato, and Aristotle. He later removed to Aegae, and studied under the guidance of Euxemes of Heraclea, who had Epicurean leanings. While Apollonius always held this last teacher in high regard, he never accepted the Epicurean philosophy. In this city he is said to have learned the lore of the Asculapians.

His father died while he was at Aegae, and Apollonius returned at once to Tyana to bury him. The inheritance he received was considerable, but, reserving for himself a small pittance, enough for his simple manner of life, he divided his share between his elder brother and other relatives.

His biographer speaks of his asking loans during his travels from the priests of the temples where he visited, which were probably later paid from his inheritance. We know that the temples of antiquity, being protected from violence and robbery by their sacred character, were used as depositories of money and valu-

ables, and to some extent they fulfilled the function of banks. Thus the small fund at Tyana which he used to pay loans, made at distant parts of the world, may have functioned something like a modern letter of credit.

Apollonius adopted the mode of life of the Pythagoreans. He walked barefoot, wore his hair and beard long, ate no meat, took no wine or fermented drink, avoided the pleasures of the senses, wore linen garments, avoiding anything made of leather, wool, or animal product; he used nothing which came from conscious life for either food or clothing, depending wholly on vegetables and plants.

He would not take life, nor in any way approve of the taking of life, even in religious rites. Throughout his life and during all his travels, while he visited temples everywhere, and assisted at innumerable services and ceremonies, he always scrupulously avoided taking part, or even being present at any where blood was shed or life was destroyed. When he was in Babylon, the guest of the king, he was invited by his host to take part in a hunt. He refused saying: "Sire, have you forgotten that even when you sacrifice I will not be present?"

After completing his studies at Aegae, he took the vow required by the Pythagorean discipline, to maintain silence for a period of five years, during which he refrained from uttering a word or a murmur. To a man of his temperament, whose life was chiefly made up of teaching and disputation, this must have been a most severe ordeal. During this period he made his wants known by making signs with his hands, his head, or his eyes, and sometimes by writing, but this only under unusual circumstances. At this time he traveled through provinces filled with degeneracy and corruption, where the urge for him to speak and protest against evil was strong; yet he kept silence.

In Aspendus in Pamphylia, the people were in a state of insurrection, the city was in tumult, the prefect's life was in danger. Apollonius, still under his vow of silence, stood in the market place, and by his calm and dignified demeanor and gestures coupled with his impressive and awe-inspiring appearance, held back the fury of the people, while with signs he inquired the cause of the disturbance. He was told that they suffered from hunger, the necessities of life having been hoarded by monopolists. He sought out

the financiers responsible for the situation, and showing them the danger to themselves of the fury of the mob, at first concentrated on the governor, but now turned against them, brought them to reason, and persuaded them to fill the markets at reasonable prices, and restore peace and order to the city. All this occurred without Apollonius uttering a word.

After completing his term of silence, he made a journey to India to learn at first hand from the Brachmanes (Brahmans), Gymnosophists, and Samanoceans (Buddhist monks).

Philostratus, the biographer, gives a detailed account of this journey, and although he is rather hazy concerning Indian names of kings and places, and in geography, placing the Caucasus mountains on the route, yet much of what he narrates suggests, in the light of present knowledge, a foundation in fact, beclouded by an untraveled and inaccurate story-teller. Philostratus' account is based, he tells us on a journal written by Damis, a faithful companion and disciple, whom Apollonius had met in Nineveh. It is sometimes said that Apollonius was the first Greek to visit India who was not bent upon trade or conquest, although it is possible that Pythagoras made a similar journey.

After his return from India, the sage traveled an extended circuit through Syria, Asia Minor, Greece and the Greek Islands, Italy, Spain, North Africa, and Egypt, devoting his life to religious teaching and reform.

Philostratus, otherwise a brilliant writer and rhetorician, was not well equipped in the field of religious thinking, for, although he gives us a good picture of Apollonius' dignified, persuasive, and influential personality, he seems unable to analyze clearly any philosophical opinions. We gather that Apollonius taught of the Highest God, supreme over all other gods, to whom no sacrifices may be offered, who may not be addressed in spoken prayers, nor named in words, but only comprehended by the mind. It appears that he held that it was proper to worship the traditional gods of any particular folk or place, these being all of the essence of the Supreme Deity. This conception, seems to have been derived from India, where the following words are attributed to Brahma: "I am the same to all mankind. They who honestly serve other gods, involuntarily worship me. I am he who partaketh of all worship. I am the reward of all worshipers."

The routine of Apollonius' daily life shows equally strong Indian influence. At sunrise, at noon and at sunset he practiced certain religious exercises or devotions alone, the nature of which we are not told, but we may infer that they were some form of meditation. In the forenoon he discoursed with the priests or leaders of the city he happened to be visiting, and in the afternoon he addressed the people, instructing them and giving advice.

Apollonius' teaching concerning the soul and immortality is best told in his own words in a letter which has been preserved, addressed to P. Valerius Asiaticus, consul in A. D. 70 written on the occasion of the death of the latter's son:

"There is no death of anyone, but only in appearance, even as there is no birth of any, save only in seeming. The change from being to becoming seems birth, and the change from becoming to being seems death, but in reality no one is born nor does one ever die. We are simply visible and then invisible, the former through the density of matter, the latter because of the subtlety of being—being is ever the same, its only change consisting in motion and rest. For being has this peculiarity, that its change is brought about by nothing external to itself; but whole becomes parts and parts become whole in the one-ness of the all."

He taught the living of a pure and virtuous life, that moral excellence was the highest good, that freedom from external circumstances was the greatest satisfaction. We have no exact account of his philosophy, but his teachings seem to be in accord with those of the Pythagoreans and were to a considerable extent later adopted by the Neo-Platonists, and his ethics resembled that of the Stoics.

Throughout his travels, whenever he came to a city, he went first to the chief temples and conferred with the priests, discoursing with them on the nature of their gods, and of the rites and discipline of their cult. If in Greek cities he found that the myths and their practices had become corrupt, he pointed out errors and advised as to the correction and restoration of the cult to its pure form. In barbarian cities where cruel, immoral rites were practiced, he inquired carefully and patiently into their origin, by whom they were said to have been established, and what was their object and their meaning. He then suggested what he thought would be better ways, more becoming and more conducive to the public good. He usually gave this advice to the priests at private conferences, but on occasion spoke publically of his innovations.

When at Paphos, in Cyprus, the island sacred to Aphrodite's birth, he found that the rites and ceremonies conducted in the inner court of her great temple met with his approval, being full of meaning with no blood of bulls or goats being shed at the sacrifice. But in the outer court he found such practices as Herodotus attributes to the services of Mylette in Babylon. Of this Apollonius could only express his strongest condemnation, and gave the priests much wise advice as to the purification of the rites.

Apollonius came to Rome about the time Nero banished the Stoics and persecuted the other philosophers. In spite of warnings of danger, he refused to turn back, but instead, visiting the temples, he studied the ancient traditions and suggested improvements. One of Nero's spies brought charges against him of disrespect to the divine person of the Emperor, and he was therefore led before a magistrate for examination. This consul was sympathetic to Apollonius and the prosecuting officers soon found the case embarrassing and concluded that it was better not to place Nero in the unpleasant position of persecutor of a celebrated religious leader of unimpeachable character, whose personality was such that they themselves fell under his awe-inspiring influence.

Under Domitian, Apollonius was again subjected to persecution because it was well known that he was a friend of Nerva, the next in line of succession to the throne, and exiled because he was popular with the discontented. Although Apollonius had never expressed himself against the Roman Principate, he was well known to be an opponent of the abuse of power. His defence of liberty and condemnation of tyranny seem to have won Salvidrenus Orfitus and Lucius Minucius Rufus to take an interest in Nerva who later became the first of the five great Stoic Emperors.

When accusations were brought against him by tools of Domitian, Apollonius went to Rome to face his accusers, well knowing the danger. He was charged with wearing peculiar garments and living in a strange manner, thereby attracting crowds to the detriment of peace and good order; with allowing and encouraging men to call him a god; with having by magic caused a plague at Ephesus in order that he might turn it away by incantations; with having sacrificed an Arcadian boy to determine by examining the entrails, after the manner of the Roman augurs, whether Nerva should succeed to the purple.

Making no preparations he presented a magnificent defence but the judges hesitated to clear him, out of fear of the Emperor, and the story recounts a miracle, telling how he mysteriously disappeared from the court and at once joined his disciples several days' journey distant.

In those days it was not uncommon that divine origin, supernatural powers, and even apotheosis were attributed to living persons. The deification of rulers, emperors, and triumphant victors found as much support in popular acclaim as in official edicts and decrees. Plato had been called the son of Apollo, and emperors had repeatedly been looked upon as gods. Therefore, it is not strange that all kinds of supernatural wonders were attributed to Apollonius. He was believed to have performed miracles, worked marvelous cures, raised the dead, known hidden things, and foreseen the future. Although he was in Ephesus at the time, he is reported to have seen the murder of Domitian in Rome, as though it happened before his eyes, and his account of the tyrant's death was fully substantiated in all details when at last the news was brought from Italy.

Popular acclaim, the opinion of his followers, and many oracles called him the son of Zeus, the son of Proteus (the god of philosophy), and he was also known as the "man of brass." After his death, temples were dedicated to him, in spite of the fact that he had made no claims or pretensions, modestly calling himself Apollonius, son of Apollonius, citizen of Tyana.

That he had appreciation for the creative arts can be seen from the account of his dispute with Thespesion, the head of the community of Egyptian Gymnosophists, over the relative merits of the Egyptian and the Greek mode of picturing the gods.

Thespesion asked him: "Are we to think that Phidias and Praxiteles went up to heaven and took impressions of the gods, and so made an art of them, or was it something else that set them a-modelling?"

"Yes, something else," Apollonius answered him, "something pregnant with wisdom."

"What was it then, surely, nothing but imitation?"

Apollonius answered, "Imagination it was, that wrought them, a workman far wiser than imitation, for imitation makes only what it can see, while imagination makes what it has never seen, conceiving it with reference to what really is."

It is interesting to compare this attitude toward the creative impulse with that of other, better known religious and ethical teachers. Few showed such an understanding for the value of the arts.

He was a Greek, proud of his birth, and a lover of all things Hellenic. He showed himself a patriot in protesting to the Roman Emperor against his act removing the self-government of the Greek states, which had lately been reestablished. But he was a true citizen of the world, not limiting himself to one nation, people, or class, offering his message to all mankind.

Although in many of the places he visited, he found much evil in the religious practices, yet nowhere did he condemn a cult or local religion outright and completely. Even in the crudest practices he saw some good and some truth, which he wished to bring into prominence, while he advised the clearing away of the gross and corrupt. He avoided all violent means and only used peaceful advice, persuasion and exhortation.

He did not wish to compel anyone to follow his teachings or his mode of life. It is recounted that while he was in India, his host, the King Pharotes, desired to adopt Apollonius' ascetic ways, admiring the philosopher wholeheartedly. But the beautiful and majestic Greek sage dissuaded the king, telling him it would separate him too much from his subjects.

Even in the question of bloody sacrifices, his especial detestation, he did not force the issue or enter into any bitter controversy with the officiating priests. He merely refused to participate or be present when such offerings were made, and he gradually used his influence to have more fitting rites adopted.

To the present age, which knows and in theory longs for universal understanding and yet in practice is struggling with controversy and threat of war, Apollonius' method and attitude present startling possibilities of solution of the problem of the clash of jealous individual nationalities and the ideal of world-wide internationalism. Under the supremacy of an unnamed and undefined Highest God, he wished to preserve the best of the religions of all peoples, in order that they might in the unbroken tradition of their particular background, achieve the noblest and finest of which they were capable, realizing the havoc wrought by the disruption of traditional continuity and the evils resulting. His preaching was consistently that of universal love and tolerance.