

THE BOOK OF AHANIA

William Blake

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CHAPTER I

1. Fuzon, on a chariot iron-wing'd,
On spiked flames rose; his hot visage
Flam'd furious; sparkles his hair and beard
Shot down his wide bosom and shoulders.
On clouds of smoke rages his chariot,
And his right hand burns red in its cloud,
Moulding into a vast Globe his wrath,
As the thunder-stone is moulded,
Son of Urizen's silent burnings.

2. `Shall we worship this Demon of smoke,'
Said Fuzon, `this abstract Nonentity,
This cloudy God seated on waters,
Now seen, now obscur'd, King of Sorrow?'

3. So he spoke in a fiery flame,
On Urizen frowning indignant,
The Globe of wrath shaking on high.
Roaring with fury, he threw
The howling Globe; burning it flew,
Length'ning into a hungry beam. Swiftly

4. Oppos'd to the exulting flam'd beam,
The broad Disk of Urizen upheav'd
Across the Void many a mile.

5. It was forg'd in mills where the winter
Beats incessant: ten winters the disk,

Unremitting, endur'd the cold hammer.

6. But the strong arm that sent it remember'd
The sounding beam: laughing, it tore through
That beaten mass, keeping its direction,
The cold loins of Urizen dividing.

7. Dire shriek'd his invisible Lust!
Deep groan'd Urizen; stretching his awful hand,
Ahania (so name his parted Soul)
He seiz'd on his mountains of Jealousy.
He groan'd, anguish'd, and called her Sin,
Kissing her and weeping over her;
Then hid her in darkness, in silence,
Jealous, tho' she was invisible.

8. She fell down, a faint Shadow, wand'ring
In Chaos, and circling dark Urizen,
As the moon, anguish'd, circles the earth,
Hopeless! abhorr'd! a death-shadow,
Unseen, unbodied, unknown,
The mother of Pestilence!

9. But the fiery beam of Fuzon
Was a pillar of fire to Egypt,
Five hundred years wand'ring on earth,
Till Los seiz'd it, and beat in a mass
With the body of the sun.

CHAPTER II

1. But the forehead of Urizen gathering,
And his eyes pale with anguish, his lips
Blue and changing, in tears and bitter
Contrition he prepar'd his Bow,

2. Form'd of Ribs, that in his dark solitude,
When obscur'd in his forests, fell monsters
Arose. For his dire Contemplations
Rush'd down like floods from his mountains,
In torrents of mud settling thick,
With eggs of unnatural production:
Forthwith hatching, some howl'd on his hills,
Some in vales, some aloft flew in air.

3. Of these, an enormous dread Serpent,
Scaled and poisonous, horned,

Approach'd Urizen, even to his knees,
As he sat on his dark-rooted Oak.

4. With his horns he push'd furious:
Great the conflict and great the jealousy
In cold poisons; but Urizen smote him!

5. First he poison'd the rocks with his blood,
Then polish'd his ribs, and his sinews
Dried, laid them apart till winter;
Then a Bow black prepar'd: on this Bow
A poisoned Rock plac'd in silence.
He utter'd these words to the Bow:

6. `O Bow of the clouds of Secrecy!
O nerve of that lust-form'd monster!
Send this Rock swift, invisible, thro'
The black clouds on the bosom of Fuzon.'

7. So saying, in torment of his wounds
He bent the enormous ribs slowly
A circle of darkness! then fixed
The sinew in its rest; then the Rock,
Poisonous source, plac'd with art, lifting difficult
Its weighty bulk. Silent the Rock lay,

8. While Fuzon, his tigers unloosing,
Thought Urizen slain by his wrath.
'I am God!' said he, `eldest of things.'

9. Sudden sings the Rock; swift and invisible
On Fuzon flew, enter'd his bosom;
His beautiful visage, his tresses,
That gave light to the mornings of heaven,
Were smitten with darkness, deform'd,
And outstretch'd on the edge of the forest.

10. But the Rock fell upon the Earth,
Mount Sinai, in Arabia.

CHAPTER III

1. The Globe shook, and Urizen, seated
On black clouds, his sore wound anointed;
The ointment flow'd down on the Void
Mix'd with blood here the snake gets her poison!

2. With difficulty and great pain Urizen
Lifted on high the dead corse:
On his shoulders he bore it to where
A Tree hung over the Immensity.

3. For when Urizen shrunk away
From Eternals, he sat on a Rock,
Barren a Rock which himself,
From redounding fancies, had petrified.
Many tears fell on the Rock,
Many sparks of vegetation.
Soon shot the pained root
Of Mystery under his heel:
It grew a thick tree: he wrote
In silence his Book of Iron;
Till the horrid plant bending its boughs,
Grew to roots when it felt the earth,
And again sprung to many a tree,

4. Amaz'd started Urizen when
He beheld himself compassed round
And high-roofed over with trees.
He arose, but the stems stood so thick,
He with difficulty and great pain
Brought his Books all but the Book
Of Iron from the dismal shade.

5. The Tree still grows over the Void,
Enrooting itself all around,
An endless labyrinth of woe!

6. The corse of his first begotten
On the accursed Tree of Mystery,
On the topmost stem of this Tree
Urizen nail'd Fuzon's corse.

CHAPTER IV

1. Forth flew the arrows of Pestilence
Round the pale living Corse on the Tree.

2. For in Urizen's slumbers of abstraction,
In the infinite ages of Eternity,
When his Nerves of Joy melted and flow'd,
A white Lake on the dark blue air,
In perturb'd pain and dismal torment,
Now stretching out, now swift conglobing,

3. Effluvia vapour'd above
In noxious clouds; these hover'd thick
Over the disorganiz'd Immortal,
Till petrific pain scurf'd o'er the Lakes,
As the bones of Man, solid and dark.
4. The clouds of Disease hover'd wide
Around the Immortal in torment,
Perching around the hurtling bones
Disease on disease, shape on shape,
Winged, screaming in blood and torment!
5. The Eternal Prophet beat on his Anvils,
Enrag'd in the desolate darkness;
He forg'd Nets of iron around,
And Los threw them around the bones.
6. The Shapes, screaming, flutter'd vain:
Some combin'd into muscles and glands,
Some organs for craving and lust;
Most remain'd on the tormented Void
Urizen's army of horrors!
7. Round the pale living Corse on the Tree.
Forty years, flew the arrows of Pestilence.
8. Wailing and terror and woe
Ran thro' all his dismal world;

Forty years all his sons and daughters
Felt their skulls harden; then Asia
Arose in the pendulous deep.
9. They reptilize upon the Earth.
10. Fuzon groan'd on the Tree.

CHAPTER V

1. The lamenting voice of Ahania,
Weeping upon the Void!
And round the Tree of Fuzon,
Distant in solitary night,
Her voice was heard, but no form
Had she; but her tears from clouds
Eternal fell round the Tree.

2. And the voice cried: `Ah, Urizen! Love!
Flower of morning! I weep on the verge
Of Nonentity how wide the Abyss
Between Ahania and thee!

3. `I lie on the verge of the deep;
I see thy dark clouds ascend;
I see thy black forests and floods,
A horrible waste to my eyes!

4. `Weeping I walk over rocks,
Over dens, and thro' valleys of death.
Why didst thou despise Ahania,
To cast me from thy bright presence
Into the World of Loneness?

5. `I cannot touch his hand,
Nor weep on his knees, nor hear
His voice and bow, nor see his eyes
And joy; nor hear his footsteps, and
My heart leap at the lovely sound!

I cannot kiss the place
Whereon his bright feet have trod;
But I wander on the rocks
With hard necessity.

6. `Where is my golden palace?
Where my ivory bed?
Where the joy of my morning hour?
Where the Sons of Eternity singing,

7. `To awake bright Urizen, my King,
To arise to the mountain sport,
To the bliss of eternal valleys;

8. `To awake my King in the morn,
To embrace Ahania's joy
On the breath of his open bosom,
From my soft cloud of dew to fall
In showers of life on his harvests?

9. `When he gave my happy soul
To the Sons of Eternal Joy;
When he took the Daughters of Life
Into my chambers of love;

10. `When I found Babes of bliss on my beds,
And bosoms of milk in my chambers,
Fill'd with eternal seed

O! eternal births sung round Ahania,
In interchange sweet of their joys!

11. `Swell'd with ripeness and fat with fatness,
Bursting on winds, my odours,
My ripe figs and rich pomegranates,
In infant joy at thy feet,
O Urizen! sported and sang.

12. `Then thou with thy lap full of seed,
With thy hand full of generous fire,
Walked forth from the clouds of morning;

On the virgins of springing joy,
On the Human soul to cast
The seed of eternal Science.

13. `The sweat poured down thy temples,
To Ahania return'd in evening;
The moisture awoke to birth
My mother's joys, sleeping in bliss.

14. `But now alone! over rocks, mountains,
Cast out from thy lovely bosom!
Cruel Jealousy, selfish Fear,
Self-destroying! how can delight
Renew in these chains of darkness,
Where bones of beasts are strown
On the bleak and snowy mountains,
Where bones from the birth are buried
Before they see the light?'