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Book 3 – 54 – The Three Evil Things

[3_54:1] In my dream, in my last morning-dream, I stood to-day on a promontory— beyond the world; I held a pair of scales, and WEIGHED the world.

[3_54:2] Alas, that the rosy dawn came too early to me: she glowed me awake, the jealous one! Jealous is she always of the glows of my morning-dream.

[3_54:3] Measurable by him who hath time, weighable by a good weigher, attainable by strong pinions, divinable by divine nut-crackers: thus did my dream find the world:—

[3_54:4] My dream, a bold sailor, half-ship, half-hurricane, silent as the butterfly, impatient as the falcon: how had it the patience and leisure to-day for world-weighing!

[3_54:5] Did my wisdom perhaps speak secretly to it, my laughing, wide-awake day-wisdom, which mocketh at all “infinite worlds”? For it saith: “**Where force is, there becometh NUMBER the master: it hath more force.**”

[3_54:6] How confidently did my dream contemplate this finite world, not new-fangledly, not old-fangledly, not timidly, not entreatingly:—

[3_54:7] —As if a big round apple presented itself to my hand, a ripe golden apple, with a coolly-soft, velvety skin:—thus did the world present itself unto me:—

[3_54:8] —As if a tree nodded unto me, a broad-branched, strong-willed tree, curved as a recline and a foot-stool for weary travellers: thus did the world stand on my promontory:—

[3_54:9] —As if delicate hands carried a casket towards me—a casket open for the delectation of modest adoring eyes: thus did the world present itself before me to-day:—

[3_54:10] —Not riddle enough to scare human love from it, not solution enough to put to sleep human wisdom:—a humanly good thing was the world to me to-day, of which such bad things are said!

[3_54:11] How I thank my morning-dream that I thus at to-day’s dawn, weighed the world! As a humanly good thing did it come unto me, this dream and heart-comforter!

[3_54:12] And that I may do the like by day, and imitate and copy its best, now will I put the three worst things on the scales, and weigh them humanly well.—

[3_54:13] He who taught to bless taught also to curse: what are the three best cursed things in the world? These will I put on the scales.

[3_54:14] VOLUPTUOUSNESS, PASSION FOR POWER, and SELFISHNESS: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute—these three things will I weigh humanly well.

[3_54:15] Well! Here is my promontory, and there is the sea—IT rolleth hither unto me, shaggily and fawningly, the old, faithful, hundred-headed dog-monster that I love!—

[3_54:16] Well! Here will I hold the scales over the weltering sea: and also a witness do I choose to look on—thee, the anchorite-tree, thee, the strong-odoured, broad-arched tree that I love!—

[3_54:17] On what bridge goeth the now to the hereafter? By what constraint doth the high stoop to the low? And what enjoineth even the highest still—to grow upwards?—

[3_54:18] Now stand the scales poised and at rest: three heavy questions have I thrown in; three heavy answers carrieth the other scale.

[3_54:19] Voluptuousness: unto all hair-shirted despisers of the body, a sting and stake; and, cursed as “the world,” by all backworldsmen: for it mocketh and befooleth all erring, misinferring teachers.

[3_54:20] Voluptuousness: to the rabble, the slow fire at which it is burnt; to all wormy wood, to all stinking rags, the prepared heat and stew furnace.

[3_54:21] Voluptuousness: to free hearts, a thing innocent and free, the garden-happiness of the earth, all the future’s thanks-overflow to the present.

[3_54:22] Voluptuousness: only to the withered a sweet poison; to the lion-willed, however, the great cordial, and the reverently saved wine of wines.

[3_54:23] Voluptuousness: the great symbolic happiness of a higher happiness and highest hope. For to many is marriage promised, and more than marriage,—

[3_54:24] —To many that are more unknown to each other than man and woman:—and who hath fully understood HOW UNKNOWN to each other are man and woman!

[3_54:25] Voluptuousness:—but I will have hedges around my thoughts, and even around my words, lest swine and libertine should break into my gardens!—

[3_54:26] Passion for power: the glowing scourge of the hardest of the heart-hard; the cruel torture reserved for the cruellest themselves; the gloomy flame of living pyres.

[3_54:27] Passion for power: the wicked gadfly which is mounted on the vainest peoples; the scorner of all uncertain virtue; which rideth on every horse and on every pride.

[3_54:28] Passion for power: the earthquake which breaketh and upbreaketh all that is rotten and hollow; the rolling, rumbling, punitive demolisher of whitened sepulchres; the flashing interrogative-sign beside premature answers.

[3_54:29] Passion for power: before whose glance man creepeth and croucheth and drudgeth, and becometh lower than the serpent and the swine:—until at last great contempt crieth out of him—,

[3_54:30] Passion for power: the terrible teacher of great contempt, which preacheth to their face to cities and empires: “**Away with thee!**”—until a voice crieth out of themselves: “**Away with ME!**”

[3_54:31] Passion for power: which, however, mounteth alluringly even to the pure and lonesome, and up to self-satisfied elevations, glowing like a love that painteth purple felicities alluringly on earthly heavens.

[3_54:32] Passion for power: but who would call it PASSION, when the height longeth to stoop for power! Verily, nothing sick or diseased is there in such longing and descending!

[3_54:33] That the lonesome height may not for ever remain lonesome and self-sufficing; that the mountains may come to the valleys and the winds of the heights to the plains:—

[3_54:34] Oh, who could find the right prenomen and honouring name for such longing! “Bestowing virtue”—thus did Zarathustra once name the unnamable.

[3_54:35] And then it happened also,—and verily, it happened for the first time!—that his word blessed SELFISHNESS, the wholesome, healthy selfishness, that springeth from the powerful soul:—

[3_54:36] —From the powerful soul, to which the high body appertaineth, the handsome, triumphing, refreshing body, around which everything becometh a mirror:

[3_54:37] —The pliant, persuasive body, the dancer, whose symbol and epitome is the self-enjoying soul. Of such bodies and souls the self-enjoyment calleth itself “virtue.”

[3_54:38] With its words of good and bad doth such self-enjoyment shelter itself as with sacred groves; with the names of its happiness doth it banish from itself everything contemptible.

[3_54:39] Away from itself doth it banish everything cowardly; it saith: “**Bad—THAT IS cowardly!**” Contemptible seem to it the ever-solicitous, the sighing, the complaining, and whoever pick up the most trifling advantage.

[3_54:40] It despiseth also all bitter-sweet wisdom: for verily, there is also wisdom that bloometh in the dark, a night-shade wisdom, which ever sigheth: “**All is vain!**”

[3_54:41] Shy distrust is regarded by it as base, and every one who wanteth oaths instead of looks and hands: also all over-distrustful wisdom,—for such is the mode of cowardly souls.

[3_54:42] Baser still it regardeth the obsequious, doggish one, who immediately lieth on his back, the submissive one; and there is also wisdom that is submissive, and doggish, and pious, and obsequious.

[3_54:43] Hateful to it altogether, and a loathing, is he who will never defend himself, he who swalloweth down poisonous spittle and bad looks, the all-too-patient one, the all-endurer, the all-satisfied one: for that is the mode of slaves.

[3_54:44] Whether they be servile before Gods and divine spurnings, or before men and stupid human opinions: at ALL kinds of slaves doth it spit, this blessed selfishness!

[3_54:45] Bad: thus doth it call all that is spirit-broken, and sordidly-servile—constrained, blinking eyes, depressed hearts, and the false submissive style, which kisseth with broad cowardly lips.

[3_54:46] And spurious wisdom: so doth it call all the wit that slaves, and hoary-headed and weary ones affect; and especially all the cunning, spurious-witted, curious-witted foolishness of priests!

[3_54:47] The spurious wise, however, all the priests, the world-weary, and those whose souls are of feminine and servile nature—oh, how hath their game all along abused selfishness!

[3_54:48] And precisely THAT was to be virtue and was to be called virtue—to abuse selfishness! And “selfless”—so did they wish themselves with good reason, all those world-weary cowards and cross-spiders!

[3_54:49] But to all those cometh now the day, the change, the sword of judgment, THE GREAT NOONTIDE: then shall many things be revealed!

[3_54:50] And he who proclaimeth the EGO wholesome and holy, and selfishness blessed, verily, he, the prognosticator, speaketh also what he knoweth: “**BEHOLD, IT COMETH, IT IS NIGH, THE GREAT NOONTIDE!**”

[3_54:51] Thus spake Zarathustra.

Begin Commentary

It isn't a 100% clear how near this event is to the events of the previous section. Since we are told later on in the book that it is not very long after his return we can assume that this is either the next morning or very near the next morning after the depressing fall of section 53.

[3_54:1] In my dream, in my last morning-dream, I stood to-day on a promontory— beyond the world; I held a pair of scales, and WEIGHED the world.

Last night he had a dream, towards the end of night. The borderline between the awake and the subliminal when a degree of lucid dreaming is possible. In it Zarathustra stood on a promontory, a rock that sticks out of water, beyond the world but from the world. He held a set of scales. Not a god, a man, a man would judge the world. And from that vantage he judged the earth. Not the “to-day”. The double implication. He dreamed it happened now and he dreamed he was judging the now. No more lamenting the past, no more pointing to the future. Zarathustra will judge the teaming masses of earth as they are at this moment. Well rested he can see clearly. This is a hinge sentence of the entire piece. As we will see the argument he presents is about 3 drives in humans that are often seen as vices, he argues that they are not. You might think that he is arguing for the Aristotelian mean, virtues being the midpoint between dissimilar vices. He is not arguing for that. The image of the virtues for Aristotle is the scales, balance the image for Zarathustra is the rope. The tension between the drives for say celibacy vs promiscuity. Zarathustra is claiming that he is further along in history than Aristotle so he sees more. The scales and a good weigher, two sentences from now, are a salute to that man. Then he will introduce the hurricane. Almost as if he is raising a glass to the philosopher saying “good job on Apollo my friend, you got him sorted out. I am further ahead so I know about Dionysus”

Next line,

[3_54:2] Alas, that the rosy dawn came too early to me: she glowed me awake, the jealous one! Jealous is she always of the glows of my morning-dream.

Reason demands she be acknowledged, and tolerates dreaming inspiration only when she can not see it. Most of us feel the pull of realism when we daydream, here it is given a more literal form. Next line,

[3_54:3] Measurable by him who hath time, weighable by a good weigher, attainable by strong pinions, divinable by divine nut-crackers: thus did my dream find the world:—

It is tricky here but the author is winking at his epistemology. You can measure the world but only if you had infinite time which you do not have, you could determine its value but only if you already had a value system in place, you could understand it but only if you have strong wings to take you above it, and as a whole you need godlike ability and tools to crack the strongest nut of mystery. You need science with plenty of time, value that can avoid valuing, the ability to fly from the earth but with strength not escape, and a tenacity of the gods. This is what his dream vision showed Zarathustra of our world. There is no contradiction between the claim

that the scales symbolized Aristotle and also symbolized scientific measurement as both meanings work and arguably one came from the other. Next line,

[3_54:4] My dream, a bold sailor, half-ship, half-hurricane, silent as the butterfly, impatient as the falcon: how had it the patience and leisure to-day for world-weighing!

Zarathustra is describing what his dream was like here not what happened in it. He presents a unity of opposites a Heraclitus fusion of ship which is goal directed action driven, and a hurricane which is goalless action driving. The dream was the unity of the two. It was also silent and beautiful to look at like the butterfly unlike the noise and chatter of earth. Falcons are not known for their impatient nature they are known for tension before striking and taking their time to strike. Suggesting his dream might have seen like it was just only now appearing but really it was soaring above ready to come down. The dream description is likely a metaphor for inspiration. Next line,

[3_54:5] Did my wisdom perhaps speak secretly to it, my laughing, wide-awake day-wisdom, which mocketh at all “infinite worlds”? For it saith: “Where force is, there becometh NUMBER the master: it hath more force.”

The top of the mountain is associated with the platonic realm. He slept there and dreamed. While he did the rosy dawn, the light of the new world, and his wisdom of it intruded even on to his dream. It saw the infinite multiplicity of the forms and it laughed. Look at the earth, the only place with real power, do not numbers rule here? No one buys that gods move objects anymore, force does and force takes its orders from numbers. This world over any possible other, next line,

[3_54:6] How confidently did my dream contemplate this finite world, not new-fangledly, not old-fangledly, not timidly, not entreatingly:—

His dream was of the old way, of the infinities of Plato and religion. The new wisdom came in of positivism and said sterilize measure and confine yourself to this one world. The old and new annihilated or fused and created a third path. A way to see existence with no cowardly delusions and no demand it gives you meaning. A disinterested world that we can face and rejoice in. Next line,

[3_54:7] —As if a big round apple presented itself to my hand, a ripe golden apple, with a coolly-soft, velvety skin:—thus did the world present itself unto me:—

Note the stacked adjectives. The vision of the world as an apple is not just desirable it is so wonderful Zarathustra almost is at a loss of words. A repeating motif in the book of Eve and the apple. Zarathustra indicating that the fall was our greatest moment of the species. When we looked upon the wisdom and declared it desirable in our eyes. The world doesn't just seem this way to Zarathustra it presented itself to him. Unlike Eve he did not have to reach out his hand, it presented to him.

The recovery is immense here. After the fall of the previous section, The Return Home, he can now see the world as desirable. Next line,

[3_54:8] —As if a tree nodded unto me, a broad-branched, strong-willed tree, curved as a recline and a foot-stool for weary travellers: thus did the world stand on my promontory:—

The previous sentence described the world as delight, this one presents the world as companion. Breaking it down. “As if the tree nodded unto me” implies a greeting the world greeting him. A broad-branched implies that it is all embracing all inclusive. Strong-willed tree implies the strength of this world not just nurturing but capable of it. This isn’t a soft Eden one must tread carefully this is the strong-will world. And yet it is curved a foot-stool. For weary travellers, the actively engaged may stop a moment to catch their breath. The vast difference between this image of the world and the Great City, where even the ground offends with mud. Slight biblical inversion, God’s throne is in heaven and the earth is his footstool, Zarathustra sees the earth as the footstool, not for gods but for man. Only above the world in the mountains could he have rediscovered that it was earth that was the sanctuary. Next line,

[3_54:9] —As if delicate hands carried a casket towards me—a casket open for the delectation of modest adoring eyes: thus did the world present itself before me to-day:—

Common argument that the more modern translation here is not casket but rather shrine. The poetic symbolism is rich in this trinity. Apple is naturally produced, the tree grows from the earth, a shrine is made from the tree by human hands. Apple implies appetite, the tree the earth and the shrine our sense of awe. The three fold symbolism of the new religion, this worldly a fellowship with nature, to reverence. Next line,

[3_54:10] —Not riddle enough to scare human love from it, not solution enough to put to sleep human wisdom:—a humanly good thing was the world to me to-day, of which such bad things are said!

Not so chaotic that the human mind can not process it and thus can not love it, not so boring that we can write it off. A world fit and worthy of love by humans. Here he rejects the

dual between the materialistic world that sees earth as dull mechanism and the Plato-Religious world that sees it as a shadow, as dirty, as unfit for beings with immortal souls such as we. While Zarathustra argues the opposite that this world can be loved because it is predictable but full of mystery. Next line,

[3_54:11] How I thank my morning-dream that I thus at to-day's dawn, weighed the world! As a humanly good thing did it come unto me, this dream and heart-comforter!

Zarathustra is showing character development. In the beginning of the book he depended on signs in the sky such as a snake coiled around an eagle, now his mind is the source of myths and signs. He thanks his dream, he knows it is a dream, it is revelation from within. And he announces it as humanly good. A thing good for humans not a good in reference to some ultimate form. He weighted the world and by his values declared it fit for human life. Next line,

[3_54:12] And that I may do the like by day, and imitate and copy its best, now will I put the three worst things on the scales, and weigh them humanly well.—

He is on a roll, the perfect alignment of reason and inspiration high above the fray of humanity and is going to apply this to what we deem the worst the 3 worst aspects of humans but with a human centered view instead of a god centered view. Now, the translation we are using renders ablerne as copy. Perhaps better is the literal, which is to unlearn. Meaning that his new state of thinking is not just a perspective he is taking, he is going to imitate it and also use it to actively unlearn what he supposed to be true in the past. Zarathustra recognizes the crisis he just faced and knows he is sick, his new outlook is going to help him root out the source of the diseased thoughts. Next line,

[3_54:13] He who taught to bless taught also to curse: what are the three best cursed things in the world? These will I put on the scales.

First understanding, he is referencing the original Zarathustra. The one that the author claimed was the first person to preach that good and evil had a metaphysical component. That is who the he is. Once the original Zarathustra could talk about good he must be able to talk about evil. The original Zarathustra learned how to take morals to the sky, this version of him will learn how to return them to the earth.

Second understanding, he is referring to himself. He just blessed a world that is often held in disdain by the our intellectuals and spiritual leaders so he has to continue the inversion. If the world itself is usually seen as evil is really good then the morals of the world are also suspect.

Both understandings can be true at once. And in either case he will now use his system to decide about what is deemed the worst in us. Next line,

[3_54:14] VOLUPTUOUSNESS, PASSION FOR POWER, and SELFISHNESS: these three things have hitherto been best cursed, and have been in worst and falsest repute—these three things will I weigh humanly well.

Worth noting that he knows the result he wants before conducting the experiment and while he is in full preacher mode he is alone on the mountain. This isn't good science since it presumes the conclusion, which he says when he notes the false repute, and it is not good religion since he is not even preaching to the converted and that could be a key to understand this mindset. The engineer meeting the pious whom works on self rather than outsourcing redemption. One could argue that the three sins he lists and the fact that he lists it in this quasi-platonic realm is him addressing the tripartite soul model of Plato. Body desires, reason, and passion. He shifts it slightly to align it closer to Christian thought. Arguing that the three most lied about a vilified things in you. What your body wants, what your values are, and what you hope to achieve. Once you are told that you shall have no will outside X, no ambition but to serve X, and your own body is but a distraction from X nothing remains in you.

Another possible leaning is from Buddhism which the author had studied extensively. The devil in Buddhist thought is named Mara and has three daughters who tempt the Buddha. Bodily desire, discontentment, and greed/passion. This reading makes a later sentence a better fit as he calls the earth as witness.

Next line,

[3_54:15] Well! Here is my promontory, and there is the sea—IT rolleth hither unto me, shaggily and fawningly, the old, faithful, hundred-headed dog-monster that I love!—

Multiple meanings are stacked here, but the word “fawningly” needs to be addressed first. The German is schmeichlerisch and in the 19th century the word had a more neutral unemotional feel to it. Do not think “he flatters me” think “the wind caresses me”. With that said the first meaning here is what one would see at a normal beach. Dionysus is embodied as the ocean. She rolls, she has a primitive nature, the water parts where he stands but yet his body is mostly of her, she is old, she is faithful in the sense that she will forever lap the shower. The hundred-header dog-monster is a combination of two separate Greek legends Cerberus and the Hydra. One might imagine Zarathustra the thinking feeling being on the Fjord of Apollo surrounded by the ocean of Dionysus with his scales weighing the three most hated sins of the human race, the author is clearly in a poetic mood.

Another meaning here is that the sea represents humanity. One of the acts he accuses people of were getting to close or fawning him. If we follow the information given so far the mountain where his cave is is not literally surrounded by water. This reading would mean that he is standing in the quasi-platonic realm with humanity down below. And as he has said before he loves humanity. Next line,

[3_54:16] Well! Here will I hold the scales over the weltering sea: and also a witness do I choose to look on—thee, the anchorite-tree, thee, the strong-odoured, broad-arched tree that I love!—

If we assume the sea is Dionysus then he is standing at the edge of her and Apollo. With the scales of science and Aristotle, calling the earth as witness to judge the three sins of mankind. There is a subtle Buddhist reference here. According to the fable the Buddha was tempted from enlightenment by Mara and his three daughters who represent bodily delight, discontentment, and passions. As the Buddha sat under the tree Mara tried one final temptation arguing that the Buddha was not worthy of insight. The Buddha made no reply but touched the ground, calling the earth as witness. The goddess of the earth appeared and rang out her hair symbolizing the worthy deeds of the man. Next line,

[3_54:17] On what bridge goeth the now to the hereafter? By what constraint doth the high stoop to the low? And what enjoineth even the highest still—to grow upwards?—

Zarathustra brings up three questions about the nature of existence before he addresses the three supposed sins of existence. What connects being and becoming? Why makes greatness give from itself? What makes the great continue to strive? A new trinity Time, Creation, and Will to Power. Or maybe Causality, becoming, and value creation. Next line,

[3_54:18] Now stand the scales poised and at rest: three heavy questions have I thrown in; three heavy answers carrieth the other scale.

Confusing sentence. We are not actually told what the answers are, we are told the three questions. Lambert suggests the three sins might be the key. Suggest that it instead it is perspectivism. The author held the view that capital T truth was not the goal, what the goal was is utility. This would mean the sentence is saying that the three questions do have an answer in our reality just we do not have them nor do we need them directly. Somehow be becomes be, somehow abstract interacts with the concrete, somehow the highest has incompleteness ad infinite. Again we see a subtle Buddhist reference here, the parable of the arrow. Next line,

[3_54:19] Voluptuousness: unto all hair-shirted despisers of the body, a sting and stake; and, cursed as “the world,” by all backworldsmen: for it mocketh and befooleth all erring, misinferring teachers.

Hair-shirted refers to the practice of wearing uncomfortable clothing by certain religious leaders. A mortification of the flesh. A sting as in a constant pain, and a stake an object that runs through them, that they are willing to die on. They curse voluptuousness as worldly. Who is they? The backworldsmen. The believers in a world behind this one. And voluptuousness mocks them, for all their words and strength their body knows what it wants and is the real teacher they have shown disdain for. Next line,

[3_54:20] Voluptuousness: to the rabble, the slow fire at which it is burnt; to all wormy wood, to all stinking rags, the prepared heat and stew furnace.

Since he has addressed the saints he now moves on to the masses of humanity. Since the herd has agreed with the morality of the saints but refuses to live by the standard they live a life of guilt over what they are. Not the cleansing fire or fire of passion, a slow burn that consumes. The wormy wood a symbol of rot and decay, the stinking rag and allusion to Isaiah 64:6 where being righteous is compared to stinking rags, implying the morality of disdaining lust is what is really the bad thing here not their failure to live up to the code. The prepared heat and stew imagery is powerful, the act of love being an unholy mix of what is base with the guilt, stewed together inseparable. Next line,

[3_54:21] Voluptuousness: to free hearts, a thing innocent and free, the garden-happiness of the earth, all the future’s thanks-overflow to the present.

To those who have integrated themselves with the rhythm of their bodies they can appreciate the act so much it almost pulls from the future gratitude. By moralists we are told to abstain until marriage or until death promises future happiness, while this group knows that their future-selves will thank them for what they do now. Note the garden-happiness part seems to invoke the prefall state in the bible. Where Adam and Eve had children and were naked without shame. Next line,

[3_54:22] Voluptuousness: only to the withered a sweet poison; to the lion-willed, however, the great cordial, and the reverently saved wine of wines.

To those without a zest for life intimacy is enjoyable but leaves them worst off, to the those with vitality and courage it is just makes them stronger and they save it as a reserve stock. The wine of wines. One can imagine him thinking of poets here putting their feelings of love into

verse. The German is geschonte to put away for a safekeeping. The order of the four sentences is the order of hierarchy of salvation. True hell, purgatory, this earth, and here heaven. If Lambert holds the key to the scales verse then love for the author is a verb. A process where people go from individuals to an act that celebrates this earth. Next line,

[3_54:23] Voluptuousness: the great symbolic happiness of a higher happiness and highest hope.
For to many is marriage promised, and more than marriage,—

Here we see the shadow of Plato's *Symposium*: The Ladder of Love. While Plato used love as proof of the above Zarathustra is using it as proof of earthly happiness. Our relationship with it in its highest form is a unification of forces, Apollo and Dionysus, being and becoming. The last sentence is tricky in English and perhaps better rendered “for many marriage is destiny, for some far greater than marriage”. Next line,

[3_54:24] —To many that are more unknown to each other than man and woman:—and who hath fully understood HOW UNKNOWN to each other are man and woman!

The wording is strange here, and in German it is also strange. Perhaps the author was trying to achieve in grammar a strangeness to equal the strangeness of the genders for one another. Scene setting with word order. The author believed creation came from the interactions of opposites. To Plato Eros was reunifying what was divided. To Zarathustra it is the strange interactions that produce creation. Next line,

[3_54:25] Voluptuousness:—but I will have hedges around my thoughts, and even around my words, lest swine and libertine should break into my gardens!—

Note the order. Zarathustra says he will guard his thoughts before guarding his words. Most of us guard our words more than our thoughts, however Zarathustra is alone on the mountain. He needs to get the teaching correct prior to sharing. The double condemnation. Attacking swines, those who treat the act without meaning, and the libertine those who treat the act as an ascetic ideal. The tightrope walker walks, on one side animal lust, on the other sophistication of form. Next line,

[3_54:26] Passion for power: the glowing scourge of the hardest of the heart-hard; the cruel torture reserved for the cruellest themselves; the gloomy flame of living pyres.

Breaking it down. For those who claim or are regarded without feeling, passion for power will be this unstoppable foe. Burning them without release. Zarathustra will not downplay

the situation. Even if you try not to care, if you try to withdrawal, your desire to shape your world and create will not stop. Yet passion of power also will judge. Those who are cruel, who focus on hurting others instead of advancement will be tortured by it. Forever needing more and more without getting what it should be producing. One might imagine eating only food with no nutritional value in greater and greater quantities while starving. Finally the living pyres. Pyres are for the dead not the living. Passion for power for those who are walking dead will be a flame that only illuminates the sadness of the situation. Next line,

[3_54:27] Passion for power: the wicked gadfly which is mounted on the vainest peoples; the scorner of all uncertain virtue; which rideth on every horse and on every pride.

The Socrates vibes are here. The mad gadfly of Athens. A city at its height in that time. Passion for power is an inescapable force. Even if you are absolute being of accomplishment, it remains. It scorns all uncertain virtue as did Socrates. Do you do what you call good but can not give an account of it? Your desire to rule will mock that virtue using reason as its tool. It rides on every horse, i.e. no one is immune to its call. Strangely passion of power is portrayed negatively here yet in the beginning it was weighted as better. Zarathustra is indicating that it is a force we grapple with not morally judge. Go through your life trying to do what you deem the morally correct thing, if you are unsure of what that is your ambition will harass and laugh at you. Everyone you see and do not see is wrestling with the same. Next line,

[3_54:28] Passion for power: the earthquake which breaketh and upbreaketh all that is rotten and hollow; the rolling, rumbling, punitive demolisher of whitened sepulchres; the flashing interrogative-sign beside premature answers.

Continuing on the trend, passion for power is force of our biology. It is indifferent to our moral evaluation, yet it feeds into all evaluations we make. He likens it to an earthquake, no matter how strong the institution or value the ambitious can break it if it rotten or if it hollow. Yet it also breaks what breaks other things, such as military. No earthquake made something weak, it is exposes what is weak. Whitened sepulchers is a borrowing from the bible, Matthew 23:27 referring to white washed tombs. They look clean, but they mark where the dead things are. The last sentence is pure Socrates. Any answer not up to snuff, cowardly, quick, inherited was crushed by Socrates with reason. Nietzsche claimed Socrates however operated from a position of decadency while Zarathustra is operating from a position of strength. This whole line contains the book itself. It will expose the weakness of the Western and Eastern edifices, bury the dead, and make you question any bad answer. Next line,

[3_54:29] Passion for power: before whose glance man creepeth and croucheth and drudgeth, and becometh lower than the serpent and the swine:—until at last great contempt crieth out of him—,

A ladder of response to seeing an embodied version of passion of power. First you creep, avoid being seen. Having been seen you bend low to appear small and non-threatening hoping to not be noticed. Having been noticed you serve and as you serve you end up fawning. We do not think highly of the snake or the pig but we admit that they do not fawn. Finally, and hopefully, you will see what you have become. A fawning slave and will scream rebellion. Next line,

[3_54:30] Passion for power: the terrible teacher of great contempt, which preacheth to their face to cities and empires: “**Away with thee!**”—until a voice crieth out of themselves: “**Away with ME!**”

The German word he chooses for teacher here is in feminine tense. Aligning with his ongoing metaphor of wisdom being a woman. The passage argues that ambition is a terrible teacher, terrible as in scary as in has high expectations and what does she teach? To feel contempt. First for others and then inwards on the holder. Only by being disgusted by what the situation is and who we are can we ascend higher. Complicity is fawning groveling slave thinking. Next line,

[3_54:31] Passion for power: which, however, mounteth alluringly even to the pure and lonesome, and up to self-satisfied elevations, glowing like a love that painteth purple felicities alluringly on earthly heavens.

Passion of power has moved from a powerful impersonal force to an alluring seductive one. You think you are immune to her siren call because you are pure? Because you are hermit? No, even onto you she whispers. She whispers and she drawings in the sky your dreams. Ties in with the author and his ideas of charity being part of power struggles. You do not give without the desire to rule. The line here is autobiographical for Zarathustra. For all his strength and big talk, for all his purity and enjoying being a hermit on his mountain top he was seduced by passion of power to descend. How appropriate he comes to this understanding after the previous section when he felt contempt and after the previous passage where he claims passion for power makes one feel contempt. One may imagine Zarathustra trying to nice guy the universe into liking him. Next line,

[3_54:32] Passion for power: but who would call it PASSION, when the height longeth to stoop for power! Verily, nothing sick or diseased is there in such longing and descending!

Trickle down metaphysics. This is not the powerful lowering themselves to rise others upwards, this is charity used as an excuse to deal with overflow and achieve yet more power. Power as need, power as a mask for inadequacy, power as a tool against insecurity. The crash of opposites that bring about creation. Notice the active denial towards the end. Zarathustra has caught himself trying to bend the knee to those he thinks he can fix. It is cringe, and everyone knows it. So he throws the denial on it. There is nothing nice guy about overflow. Next line,

[3_54:33] That the lonesome height may not for ever remain lonesome and self-sufficing; that the mountains may come to the valleys and the winds of the heights to the plains:—

Echoing the first scene when Zarathustra notes that the sun could not be fully content in its perfection. It must overflow, and transform. Contrast with the more Plato view of self-sufficient perfection. Zarathustra is in the verb camp not the noun and adjectives camp. Passion for power is what interrupts that state, bringing the higher to the lower. Got to love the Heraclitus vibes here. A valley is only possible with a mountain, a mountain with a valley. The physics links to the poetry. A mountain sends water and avalanches and sediment to a valley, not for the sake of the valley does it alter it, it sends because it can not do otherwise. So to the creating one. While a flat plain allows wind to ascend upwards. So to does the world to the creating one. Neither can do differently.

Possible callback to [3_50:31-32] which read: Thus do I show them only the ice and winter of my peaks—and NOT that my mountain windeth all the solar girdles around it! They hear only the whistling of my winter-storms: and know NOT that I also travel over warm seas, like longing, heavy, hot south-winds.

Next line,

[3_54:34] Oh, who could find the right prenomen and honouring name for such longing!
“Bestowing virtue”—thus did Zarathustra once name the unnamable.

Prenomen is perhaps better translated as baptism name. Honouring name as honorific. Such as The Great or the Saint. Zarathustra is saying/questioning here if anyone could ever name this unnameable thing. He once did and he is ashamed of even trying. He tried to introduce her into his system with a name to come in and a name to recognizing what she has done, bestowing virtue was all he could come up with. You can see the contrast here between this and the last section “Here fly open unto me all being’s words and word-cabinets: here all being wanteth to become words, here all becoming wanteth to learn of me how to talk.”. Up in the Platonic pure world of his mountaintop everything wants nice ordered names following nice ordered words. An Apollo domain. Just however to talk about descent alone and Dionysus says no, I am lord of the

physical and I mock any attempt to be pinned down by mere words. This process is older than Zarathustra, then humanity, then morality, then even our world. Next line,

[3_54:35] And then it happened also,—and verily, it happened for the first time!—that his word blessed SELFISHNESS, the wholesome, healthy selfishness, that springeth from the powerful soul:—

He is almost certainly referring to himself. He is becoming his own myth. On the moment he dared to give the Bestowing Virtue that term the first time in human history someone blessed wholesome healthy selfishness. There is something very Mark Gospel about this. A mood and effect. What is the wholesome healthy selfishness and why did it occur the moment he named that the force bestowing virtue? Because prior to that moment charity caused lack and this type comes from abundance. One could not help to give because they have too much to ever contain. Not pity, not altruism, not guilt, but from lack of storage. Of note he uses Giest as the last word which before was translated as spirit, the part of the brain that deals with the day to day. Next line,

[3_54:36] —From the powerful soul, to which the high body appertaineth, the handsome, triumphing, refreshing body, around which everything becometh a mirror:

This is highly poetic so best discussed in pieces. “From the powerful soul”. He uses Seele. Which refers to the parts of the mind that putting into words becomes a challenge. The deep primal sense of life parts. Recall section 51 where the Fool was insulted that the Great City tried to make newspapers out of it. “to which the high body appertaineth” To modern readers perhaps “owned” works better. To which the high body is owned. Aligning with his ideas that wisdom comes from our body. An inversion of the Plato/Christian view that disdains the body and worships the mind. The mind we are told is the prisoner of the body, Zarathustra suggests it is the highest expression of it. Leib is the word he uses for body here, the lived in experience of body not the biological fact of the body. See how he heaps on praises of the experience of being embodied? Handsome, triumphing and refreshing. “around which everything becometh a mirror”. The handsome, triumphing, refreshing combination of soul and body forms the better world that reflects what it is. It is not reaction it is agency. A will to power of creation. Next line,

[3_54:37] —The pliant, persuasive body, the dancer, whose symbol and epitome is the self-enjoying soul. Of such bodies and souls the self-enjoyment calleth itself “virtue.”

He moves like a dancer, smooth and subtle. His very presence convinces others to imitation. All benefit from being in his midst but he does not do it for them. Moralists convince via words, the powerful soul convinces with action. His outside and inside are locked as one,

exactly how he seems is what he contains. Ones like this even what they merely do for themselves are virtues and they feel no shame in that. Next line,

[3_54:38] With its words of good and bad doth such self-enjoyment shelter itself as with sacred groves; with the names of its happiness doth it banish from itself everything contemptible.

With its words, not other words, its words. His/her evaluation of good and evil. Does this powerful soul use to shelter itself from the elements of the world. The powerful soul defines its own good and evil. The use of scared groves is interesting. in the bible pretty much every time a grove is mentioned it is in context of rogue religion. Of the 36x it is found in the KJV only 5 are remotely positive and for food. The rest well it is almost like the various authors of the bible viewed groves the way we would a toddler near a set of power tools. OK, an adult has to step in here. The naming of happiness is also rich, to name something is to give it power. This soul names what brings it joy and thus with its attitude of gratitude banishes all that it would it would hate. Next line,

[3_54:39] Away from itself doth it banish everything cowardly; it saith: “Bad—THAT IS cowardly!” Contemptible seem to it the ever-solicitous, the sighing, the complaining, and whoever pick up the most trifling advantage.

This soul forbids anything it deems cowardly away from its groves. It sees that as bad, its morals aren't of our typical society. We tend to think of good and evil as what we do to one another while this soul sees good and evil in terms of strength. Being afraid is a moral question and it deems it bad. It has contempt to the people pleasers who fawn, the ones that are broken by dreams they could not achieve, the ones that fill the air with their complaints and whoever pick up the most trifling advantage. Here we see the anti-free market tendencies of Zarathustra. It is not that he is a socialist either, his point is more of beyond economics argument. The endless pursuit of money by bending, by picking up is base. The creation overflow is not. Next line,

[3_54:40] It despiseth also all bitter-sweet wisdom: for verily, there is also wisdom that bloometh in the dark, a night-shade wisdom, which ever sigheth: “All is vain!”

Bitter-sweet maybe better as melancholy. This soul hates melancholy. The bloom in the dark is odd. Few flowers do that, the ones that do do not feed on sunlight, they feed on decaying organic matter or parasitical. Maybe this ties in with his themes of sunlight being the source of wisdom and strength and overflow while night time being its absence. A time where the only real light we have is reflected or we cobbled together chemically with what the sun provides during the day. The image of it is a sorta terrible beauty. Which is like well night shade or in German Nachtschatten, a plant that looks pretty but is deadly to consume. There might be a subtle word

choice here. Schatten is shadow and he meets his person calling him his shadow later on, there are also themes here that a shadow is produced by something blocking the light, in this case real wisdom. Or Plato in that we see shadows of the real, maybe this Nachtschatten implies there is a form of truth here but it's almost to the point of parody of real truth. The last line is from Ecclesiastes which has a part where it mentions the sun going down and coming back up again. Tying into Zarathustra's idea of the yes saying to the eternal reoccurrence. Taken as a whole this line is urging us to despise the cleverly cynical. Next line,

[3_54:41] Shy distrust is regarded by it as base, and every one who wanteth oaths instead of looks and hands: also all over-distrustful wisdom,—for such is the mode of cowardly souls.

The timid mistrust of one another stands on one pole. Base could also be understood as of low utility. As the powerful soul knows they can act this way but does not see the utility. Is contrasted with the all cynical trust no one view. Those that depend on tiny checks to alert them of danger and those that assume cynical stances because they see danger everywhere. Both of the modes of the cowardly soul. While the powerful soul depends on looks and hands. Actions and looking in the eyes of another person. Next line,

[3_54:42] Baser still it regardeth the obsequious, doggish one, who immediately lieth on his back, the submissive one; and there is also wisdom that is submissive, and doggish, and pious, and obsequious.

The ladder of moral decay moves down another rung. The ever helpful, the slightly melancholy sighing, the complainers, and bottom feeder capitalist, the timid, the oath-demanders, cynics, and now the one who does nothing but fawn, weaponized their weakness. The dog doesn't hunt and work with the humans, it rolls on its back exposing its belly. The being that forfeits its dignity, decision making, its strength to the powerful. Then he moves on to describe systems and philosophies in those terms. Ones that instruct that this is right and proper. Next line,

[3_54:43] Hateful to it altogether, and a loathing, is he who will never defend himself, he who swalloweth down poisonous spittle and bad looks, the all-too-patient one, the all-endurer, the all-satisfied one: for that is the mode of slaves.

Even lower than the fawner is the enduring person. The stoic. The person who ingests the poison and the contempt others feel towards them. Eventually they will moralize it. They will deem their situation right and proper, and the whole civilization will become slaves. This being takes pride on turning the other cheek and needing only the basics to survive. The fawner debases themselves, the all enduring one debases the species. Next line,

[3_54:44] Whether they be servile before Gods and divine spurnings, or before men and stupid human opinions: at ALL kinds of slaves doth it spit, this blessed selfishness!

All these people they could bow to God the entity or bow to the divine path or bow to man the people or bow to the ideas man announces. All, all are a form of slaves that blessed selfishness spits on. There is no safe spot, no refuge for its judgment. Follow god, follow a divine plan, follow a state or boss, or follow an ideology. Anything but following your overcoming is a form of slavery. Note the spitting against which we have seen before. The act of feeling so much contempt that words are too much dignity awarded to it. Next line.

[3_54:45] Bad: thus doth it call all that is spirit-broken, and sordidly-servile—constrained, blinking eyes, depressed hearts, and the false submissive style, which kisseth with broad cowardly lips.

Suggest an alternative translation as: bad, she bites everything bent and cheap-submissive, bound, winking eyes, and that lying yielding way that kisses with broad, cowardly lips. Bad as in bad not evil, she bites. A physical reaction. It is so revolting it requires a physical response, much like spiting. Cheap-submissive, it isn't even earned submissiveness. It is given for nothing and means nothing. Bound eyes of a slave forced to look at their master, winking eyes of a slave that thinks he has gotten comfortable with the masters' vices/ The lying yielding not overcoming yielding, that kisses the ring with a fake smile. And is a coward while doing so. Next line,

[3_54:46] And spurious wisdom: so doth it call all the wit that slaves, and hoary-headed and weary ones affect; and especially all the cunning, spurious-witted, curious-witted foolishness of priests!

Spurious wisdom here is After-Weisheit. After can be translated as fake or pseudo or in this translation spurious, After can also be translated as anus. The sentence double meaning is the witticisms of these groups are fake wisdom or just the emissions of a butt. The witticisms of the slaves of the old man i.e. the hoary-headed and those that are tired of living is not real wisdom. It is overflow in the sense it comes from the rear. Perhaps think of all the cynical takes you have heard in your life from same shit different day to FUBAR and consider this section. Was it people asserting what little good they had left or was it farting in verbal form? These jokes aren't even funny, they aren't wise. They fill the air with decay and stink. Nothing will ever change, nothing can change, caring is burdensome, accept the grind and the joke about the chains, not a ha ha joke one lower than a fart.

The second part of the sentence handles the religious leaders or possibly things in their wheelhouse. Not required that any shaman ever said this but something that people identify as something they could have said. The particular fart-speech of the priest is over-witty and terrible and has a sorta stupid-smart property. It is clever in a way that breaks. The priests are too clever for “nothing ever changes” so they crank out “everything happens for a reason”. Next line,

[3_54:47] The spurious wise, however, all the priests, the world-weary, and those whose souls are of feminine and servile nature—oh, how hath their game all along abused selfishness!

Again spurious wise can be translated as fart wit instead. He adds the priests to the list of all the souls of submission. Calling the submissive feminine is not ideal, the author was a product of his time, worth noting that Blessed Selfishness in this entire passage was of feminine tense. In any case the cowardly of humanity have played games with Blessed Selfishness and abused her with it. Perhaps one should imagine a well made doll being broken slowly in reckless games by small girls and grown men. Next line,

[3_54:48] And precisely THAT was to be virtue and was to be called virtue—to abuse selfishness! And “selfless”—so did they wish themselves with good reason, all those world-weary cowards and cross-spiders!

They create a value system that entrenched their power. Teach their congregations that blessed selfishness is vile and they can control them. The reference to cross-spiders we have seen in section 52. The image of not a hunt but a spider building its web to catch flies under the cross. To Zarathustra virtue for this class is self-serving, lower humanity and ride on top of those lowered. Next line,

[3_54:49] But to all those cometh now the day, the change, the sword of judgment, THE GREAT NOONTIDE: then shall many things be revealed!

This feels very fire and brimstone, matches with a theme we are seeing in the book that after Zarathustra encounters someone he begins to match their tone. He just heaped on two passages on priests and now is beginning to talk like one. If you follow the events the store begins at dawn and Zarathustra notes the noon is coming. Noon when the shadows are smallest and everything is visible. Not the time for nightshade the time for proper flowers that bees will gather from to make honey. Possible allusion of sword being next to sunlight in the passage, the link between swords and light is found in western stories. Indicating that Zarathustra or the one he inspires will be what the priests could never be, the bringer of the light. Next line,

[3_54:50] And he who proclaimeth the EGO wholesome and holy, and selfishness blessed,
verily, he, the prognosticator, speaketh also what he knoweth: “BEHOLD, IT COMETH, IT IS
NIGH, THE GREAT NOONTIDE!”

And he, not Zarathustra not a particular person, not a state, anyone, anyone at all that declares the self as blessed is already a prophet of the coming era. Not the speaking, it isn't a vague thought it is proclaimed. What is the coming era? The noon-tide the new table of values being forged. Zarathustra lists 3 virtues but he singles out one here. Eros which just happens, passion for power which is part of the universe, but blessed selfishness is not a given. It had to be brought in. The section as a whole follows a very traditional form of sermon. A beginning of claiming authority, an announcement that reality is not what you think it is, the listing of sins and virtues, visions of heaven and hell presented, and here a reminder that the current state is temporary. Zarathustra uses the structure of a sermon to sneak in a new system. Next line,

[3_54:51] Thus spake Zarathustra.

Traditional ending of the section.

As a side note there are references to Buddhism throughout this section at the same time there just is not the evidence to suggest that the author was intending a non-European audience for this work. While he used the imagery of the east if he was interested in speaking to them we have no indication. The man himself was a bigot and thought provincially. Using Buddhism was likely just an exotic spice and not an attempt to reach out to say the people of Cambodia. However, trees do not get to decide where their seed's land and all seeds grow towards the light.