

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE WORLD'S RESPECT FOR ALL LIFE

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they make great plenty of ointment. Then they anoint themselves with it in several parts of the body with great reverence, with quite as great reverence as Christians do with holy water, and much more. . . And if anyone salute them as they go by the way they anoint him on the forehead with this powder by way of something very holy. They do not eat their meat nor any other thing that they must eat in bowls or on trenchers, but they eat all their meat¹ over leaves either of Paradise apple or of other trees, and also on other large leaves, but not while they may be green, but dry. For the green they say that they have souls (for thus will be all the creatures of the world), and so it would be sin. For I tell you that they keep themselves from doing a thing upon all the creatures of the world from which they believed that there would be sin, for they would let themselves die before they would do a thing which they believed according to their law to be sin. And when the other men ask them why they go in this way quite naked and have no shame to show their members, then they answer in this manner and say, We go naked because we wish nothing of this world,² because we came into this world without any clothes [84d] and naked. With regard to this that we have no shame in showing our members, it is that we are righteous & do no sin with them and therefore we have no more shame in them than you have when you show your hand or the face or your other members from which you will not have had sin of self-indulgence; but because you will have your members in sin and in self-indulgence, for this reason you wear them covered & are ashamed of them. But we have no more shame of them than to show our fingers[or]backs because we do no sin with them. Such reason then do they give to the men who ask them why they had no shame to show their members. And again I tell you that they will not kill any creature which has life, I mean bird or fish, nor any animal neither great nor small in the world, neither flies nor fleas nor lice nor any worm they might have upon them, because they say that they have souls, and therefore they say that they would not eat them for anything, for the sin which they would have thereby. And again I tell you that they would eat no green thing nor herb nor fruits nor root until they should be dried, for the aforesaid reason because they say that the leaves and green things all have souls. When indeed these wish to relieve themselves they go to the beaches or shore of the sea, and there near the water ease themselves in the sand, afterwards washing themselves very well in water. And when they are washed they take a little

¹ Z,V: "flesh" FB: viandes ne nulle autre chose . . . toutes leurs viandes These three important versions seem to have taken viandes in the modern sense of "flesh". FA follows F. P: cibos R: viuande Others omit. cf. p. 393 above, where uiandes means "food".

² TA¹: per gran penitenzia