

# **FRESH FEVER FROM THE SKIES**

**THE COLLECTED WRITINGS  
OF  
IA0131**

**Anno V:0 *e.n.***



# Fresh Fever from the Skies: The Collected Writings of IAO131



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*Anno Vo, e.n.*

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*<http://www.IAO131.com>*

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

Over the last decade or so, I've encountered many people who have, in some way, contributed directly or indirectly to these various writings manifesting. I see these essays, articles, and other written pieces as being a product of my being-in-the-world, of being intertwined in a vast interconnected network of individuals and events that all combine to produce these works. I am merely their humble mouth-piece (or keyboard-typing hands, usually). I will inevitably neglect to name certain people, but I thought I would name some significant individuals that had an impact on me, my involvement with Thelema, and my writing.

Firstly, thank you to all the many people who have criticized my work, often very viciously (especially on the Internet), since I believe that if no one is criticizing you and your work, you aren't very important. Judging by the level of vitriol I receive, I must be very important! Thank you to Ashley for her encouragement and editing early on in my foray into writing, and for generally exploring Thelema with me. Thank you to Therion-Babalon Oasis (rest in peace) for being my introduction into the OTO, to Brandon for bringing me back into the fold and whipping me into shape, to Joseph for being a friend and brother and co-conspirator in world domination, to Kjetil for being a grumpy but supportive yeti, and to everyone at Blazing Star Oasis for being my family and home. Thank you to Grace for her feedback, editing, and encouragement, to David Shoemaker for his support and his possibly misplaced trust in me to teach classes, to Tau Omphalos for his "Apologia" that begins this book, and to Rosie for her support. Thank you to anyone and everyone who has ever written to me through some medium to give feedback, thank me, and whatever else – it is always much appreciated. Finally, thank you to all those who deserve acknowledgment and gratitude but have remained unnamed, whether out of discretion or poor memory.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

**IAO131**

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# APOLOGIA

*by Tau Omphalos*

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

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*“The flame is in your hands, we trust it to you: our sacred demon of sacred ungovernableness ... Child be strange: dark, true, impure, and dissonant. Cherish our flame. Our dawn shall come.”*

*-David Rudkin*

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I remember well the first time I conversed with Frater IAO131. He had just arrived on the Thelemic scene. Like many newcomers he was full of youthful vigour, brash confidence, and reckless abandon. True to his nature – and perhaps a bit more uncommon – he contacted me and started chewing me out.

People had informed him about my supposed knowledge about Thelema, but he had no interest in bowing to anyone's superior wisdom, let alone mine. His nature was to test me and see if I was worthy of being listened to. If he could pick a hole in my carefully woven tapestry, he would. Better still, if he glimpsed a loose thread, he would gleefully pull at it with no thought of my or anyone else's feelings. To say that this was the start of an uneasy friendship would be an understatement, so I took quickly to calling him “my demon,” and he retaliated in kind by referring to me as “grumpy old yeti.”

More importantly, he quickly demonstrated that he had the knowledge and even – in time – experience to back up his brash claims and at times rude behavior. While I vigorously have disagreed with him over the years, I could always count on him being able to back up his claims by reference to and deep knowledge of our holy books and Crowley's writings. This makes him a rarity, and I can honestly say that he is one of the newcomers who have schooled me in Thelema.

As one would expect by a demon like this, he has made some missteps along the way, some of which I know he kind of regrets himself.

But then, the kingly life that Crowley talked about was never for someone who did not make mistakes and settled for the dull life of safe mediocrity. I think we should excuse a few innocent, and some (fewer still) not so innocent, mistakes along the way to independence.

In time he has grown more even tempered, and started resembling something that one might call manlike. But do not let his chimerical nature fool you. He may have gained a certain cynical appreciation for the social niceties that makes the world go round because of the political capital that comes with it, but he has never lost that maniacal intensity that made him question all dogmas.

Why, might you wonder, do I refer to his many charming qualities? It is because youthful vigor, brash confidence, and reckless abandon are to be cherished when they are backed by obvious talent and a willingness to serve humanity. That it would fall and even topple those around it on its path to maturity is not only to be expected, it is to be commended. It is evidence of a life not lived in fear, but rather the wanton will-to-power, that one might expect to find in someone who attempts to integrate the Law of Thelema in their life. As David Rudkin wrote in his play about sacred ungovernableness, *Panda's Fen*, our enemies are the sick father and mother “who would have us children forever.”

This is a collection of the shorter writings of Frater IAO131 and spans a long period of time where he has grown in initiated insight. It has been an honor to serve as a mentor for him, even as much I have disagreed with him across the years.

He has taught me much, and it is time for old people like me to leave the flame of sacred ungovernableness in the hands of younger and more capable hands like his.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

 T. Omphalos

# INTRODUCTION

**Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.**

*“I mistrust all systematizers and avoid them.  
The will to a system is a lack of integrity.”  
–Friedrich Nietzsche*

I am a man among men. What I write is simply my own perspective. I do not see myself as any kind of Thelemic doctrinal “authority”, nor do I claim to have any kind of formal authority through having high degrees in various Thelemic organizations.

What I offer are simply my own perspectives. These perspectives are birthed from my own understanding, forged in the crucible of my own experience, and constantly refined through continual learning and dialogue.

I firmly believe that Thelema is not only a rich tradition with great potential, but it is a *living* tradition. When gnosis is codified into a systematic theology is when it starts to die; it begins to become the dry and lifeless bark cast off by the Tree of Knowledge, the stilted shadow of the Light that once shone. Being a living tradition means that Thelema is constantly shifting, adapting, and growing. The Light of the Gnosis is perpetuated through the generations by it entering into, filtering through, and being expressed anew by each individual. It is this continual refocusing, reformulating, and re-expressing that indicates the life of a tradition.

Christianity had more than Christ; it had Paul, Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, and others. Buddhism had more than Buddha; it had Bodhidharma, Asoka, Nagarjuna, Milarepa, and others. These individuals reflected the Light of their tradition through the prism of their own experience and attainment. Introducing new perspectives and points-of-view helps us transcend the dull blindness inherent in the systematization of belief; it opens our eyes to new possibilities, new ways of understanding, and new ways of Being. Even the watchword of Liberty – “Do what thou wilt” – can become a lifeless formality if it is not continually re-infused with heated blood of renewed meaning, intention, devotion, and reverence.

Therefore, it has been my primary task to introduce new perspectives in writing about Thelema, to bring “fresh fever from the skies.” I am not attempting to delineate what Thelema is or isn't in any absolute way, nor do I unwaveringly stand by anything written herein as ultimate Truth. There have been more than a few occasions when, having been met with the comment “I don't agree with everything you write,” I have given the response “Neither do I.”

That being said, I believe having a firm foundation in the fundamentals is necessary before trying something new, otherwise one is constructing an edifice upon shifting sand. Much of what I write therefore has its basis in the Holy Books of Thelema as well as the writings of Aleister Crowley in general, the original fertile soil in which these various ideas have their roots. The comically copious amount of footnotes in this book are intended to show these firm roots in the foundational material while also providing avenues for interested readers to look further into relevant source material.

I have been a self-identified Thelemite for around 10 years now, and I have seen a great shift in our tradition in this short time. I believe this is almost entirely due to the rapid growth of the Internet, which I have no doubt is the “war-engine” of our generation. It has allowed for vast amounts of material to be available to unprecedented numbers of people. The birth and expansion of social media has meant that thousands can read something with a simple click that once was only available to the very few. I perceived the potential of the Internet for spreading the Law of Liberty, yet I noticed that many people did not take very full advantage of this opportunity. It seemed there was a large vacuum waiting to be filled.

This was the original impetus for my writing. I saw my writing as an act of service to the tradition of Thelema in helping it reach more and more people. My goal was to write with a style that combined academic rigor and common-sense clarity in order to show that the Law of Thelema represents a new Way of Being that is increasingly relevant in our modern, disenchanted age. I consistently attempted to elucidate a practical, down-to-earth approach to the Law in a way that neither insults the reader's intelligence nor falls into the all-too-common trap of hyper-intellectualism. While my style and approach will inevitably not appeal to everyone, I only ask you to remain open enough to consider these various

perspectives. If my writing facilitates any inspiration or even just one new point-of-view, I will feel that my task will have been accomplished.

As time has passed and I have had more experience with writing and life in general, I have slowly come to view writing itself in a new way. The typical understanding of writing, especially essays, is that they are simply intended to convey information. I believe writing is more than just a transmission of information; it is a form of Art.

Writing is like music in that the content of the words are merely one aspect of a complex array of sounds affecting us physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. Because of this, I have experimented with many forms and styles of writing, from the academic essay to the Dionysian diatribe. In this way, the goal is not just to inform the reader but to *affect* the reader, to not just speak to the brain but to the gut and to the heart. Ideally, the effect is a clarity that makes one's feet lighter, inspiration that puts fire in the belly. While I cannot tell whether my work will give you fervency or indigestion, it is my earnest hope that everyone who is open enough will gain something from reading.

This book is a compilation of writings from early 2007 to mid-2014, representing 7 years of material. I have attempted to avoid publishing anything in this book that has already been published in other books such as *Naturalistic Occultism*, *Thelema Sutras*, or *The Parables & Lessons of LXV*. Much of what is contained herein has been available online for free, but there is also a good deal of material that is not so readily available, is more obscure, or has not been openly published previously.

The book is divided into five main parts. The first part has several essays serving as an introductory material to Thelema. The material in this section is specifically focused on Thelema as a way of life as opposed to attempting to introduce the reader to the many nuanced theological and philosophical aspects of the Law. The second part contains many essays on the philosophy of Thelema, delving into various aspects of our tradition in more depth. It includes many perspectives on fundamental ideas in Thelema such as the Will, ethics, death, politics, and more, and it is undoubtedly the largest and most extensive portion of the book. The third part contains writings on Magick in the context of Thelema. Its foremost goal is to show that the Thelemic magician cultivates Magick as a way of life rather than simply as a set of ceremonial rituals. The fourth part

consists of dramatic rituals written for the “rituals of the elements and feasts of the times” mentioned in *The Book of the Law*. They are by no means “official” in any sense, but they represent attempts to create new ways to express and celebration these rituals and feasts. The fifth and final part is the most personal and experimental section. It is filled with miscellaneous pieces that include a comedic play, aphoristic musings, short essays on Thelema as post-Christianity, symbolic revelations, and inspired writings.

Lege! Judica! Tace!<sup>1</sup>

**Love is the law, love under will.**

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1 “Read! Judge! Keep silence!”







# **PART I**

## **Introduction to Thelema**



# CHAPTER 1

## WHY THELEMA KICKS ASS

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*This article was written in mid-2012 e.v., in response to receiving the question “Why Thelema?” from so many different people. Aside from a few individuals taking issue with the attention-grabbing title, it has been repeatedly mentioned as a favorite among many, especially as something to show people just beginning to become interested in Thelema.*

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One question that I have heard from friends and that I have often asked myself is, “Why Thelema?” Why not identify with any of the other religions or philosophies? I want to explain why I believe in the power of Thelema as a rule of life, and consequently why I believe that Thelema will continue to grow.

### I. Do what thou wilt

The most fundamental point is that we have a certain Law under which everything else is subsumed: Do what thou wilt. It is the simple sublimity of this spiritual infrastructure that differentiates Thelema both from the various New Age religions (or “spiritualities”) that are characterized by the amorphous and cherry-picking nature of their beliefs as well as from the Old Aeon religions that are characterized by their rigid dogmatism and sectarianism. The Law of Liberty is so far-reaching that it has implications in all facets of life including metaphysics (as a philosophy), ethics (as a way of life), and theology (as a religion) yet it is so elegant that can be summed up in a single word, Thelema.

### II. Tolerance

The fundamental Law of Thelema is “Do what thou wilt” which is

a radical exhortation for each individual to explore and express their true nature, whatever that may be. Fundamentally, we as Thelemites uphold everyone's right to be who they are. This involves a revolutionary form of tolerance or acceptance of diversity. Thelema itself is partially the result of a syncretism of many religions and philosophies. It says in *The Book of the Law*, "Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little."<sup>2</sup> We can also find reference to Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Egyptian, Greek, Hermetic, Buddhist, and Hindu ideas within *The Book of the Law* itself, let alone the other Holy Books and writings by Aleister Crowley. This speaks to Thelema's ability to appreciate the truths that are held by the various ideologies across the globe and throughout history.

Our eclectic syncretism is not arbitrary though insofar as everything revolves around the core of "Do what thou wilt": threads are gathered from all corners of human existence to be woven together through the harmony expressed in the word of the Law that is Thelema. The tolerant acceptance of different points-of-view is what distinguishes Thelema from virtually every other religion that has come about in human history. This can be seen very explicitly in the declaration of the rights of man in *Liber OZ*, wherein it is written, "Man has the right to live by his own law—to live in the way that he wills to do."

We are radical in our acceptance of others as they are, however they may think, speak, or act, yet we also take up arms against dogmatism, prejudice, and superstition that impede the full expression of humanity's liberty. This is encapsulated in a quotation where Crowley writes, "Every Star has its own Nature, which is 'Right' for it. We are not to be missionaries, with ideal standards of dress and morals, and such hard-ideas. We are to do what we will, and leave others to do what they will. We are infinitely tolerant, save of intolerance."<sup>3</sup>

### III. Scientific religion

Thelema is wholly against superstition and dogmatism that are so obviously a part of the various religions and philosophies of the past. We do not argue about how many angels can fit on the head of a pin, which

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<sup>2</sup> *Liber AL vel Legis*, I:56.

<sup>3</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:57.

color clothing generates bad karma on a certain day, how many times a mantra should be said to please a god, or what actions will be favorably judged by the Almighty Gaseous God-in-the-clouds.

This has implications in terms of action (morally) and thought (philosophically). Morally, we say, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law”; this places the responsibility on the individual to find what is right for them without reference to any theological threats of the shame and guilt of sin, the eternal hellfire of damnation, an unfavorable response from a god, or even having a reincarnation in an insect.

Philosophically, we do not assert anything that is blatantly contradictory to the knowledge-base of humanity, especially in terms of modern science. There are plenty of cases of people willfully denying the evidence of things as fundamental as evolution or germ theory. For example, it is not difficult to find instances in America of thinly-veiled theology being pushed in schools in the pseudo-scientific guise of “intelligent design.” Stories of people – even children – dying because their parents do not believe in medical care are not unheard of.

In contrast, Thelema is a “scientific religion” that speaks to the vicissitudes of human experience that we often call “religion” or “spirituality” while remaining true to the progress of human knowledge that we often call “science.” A great article was recently written on how Aleister Crowley envisioned Thelema as a scientific religion that I recommend if you would like to know more about this particular aspect of the Law of Liberty.<sup>4</sup>

Further, Thelema is a humanized religion: we place the goal of our aspiration within ourselves and we accept others for who they are. In the Aeon of Isis the focus was Nature, in the Aeon of Osiris the focus was God, and now in the Aeon of Horus the focus is Man, the individual. Our Goal is the fullest expression of ourselves in the True Will, our Path is towards the deepest totality of our selves, and our Community are neither in a “here-after” of Heaven nor gods or demi-gods in some plane “beyond” the world but rather the men and women here on Earth. This ideal is encapsulated in that powerful phrase, “There is no god but man.”<sup>5</sup>

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4 The article, written by Joseph Thiebes in 2012 and titled “Science and Religion”, is available online: <<http://ac2012.com/2012/03/31/science-and-religion/>>

5 *Liber OZ*.

## IV. Embracing the world while transcending materialism

Thelema embraces the world insofar as we do not believe sensual pleasures are evil or bad, and we do not believe that existence or incarnation or awareness is something to be annihilated or transcended or left behind. This attitude is encapsulated in *The Book of the Law* where it is written, “Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.”<sup>6</sup> The Earth is not a prison, but a Temple where the sacrament of Life may be enacted; the body is not corrupt, but a pulsing and thriving vessel for the expression of Energy; sex is not sinful, but a mysterious conduit of pleasure and power as well as an image of the ecstatic nature of all Experience.

While we embrace the world, we do not fall into the trap of petty materialism. This is seen in our distinguishing between want – our conscious desires, wishes, and whims that constantly come and go – and True Will. We embrace the world not to have more and bigger and shinier things but as an expression of our nature and a celebration of the joy of existence. This idea was treated in more depth in another essay, which can be read if you would like to know more about this particular subject.<sup>7</sup>

## V. Sexuality

In line with what was said before about tolerance and acceptance, Thelema specifically embraces all forms of sexual identity, orientation, exploration, and expression that is in line with the Will of the individual. Thelema is a way of life that very explicitly encourages people to be what they are sexually, not to live up to some standard whether dictated by religion or society. We do not view any particular gender identity or sexual orientation as more natural or as superior in any way. The best identity is the one that most clearly and fully is an expression of your nature. We see this encapsulated in *The Book of the Law* where it is written, “take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will!”<sup>8</sup>

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6 *Liber AL*, II:22.

7 See Chapter 11, “The Radical Re-Orienting of True Will”.

8 *Liber AL*, I:51.

Crowley was very far ahead of his time in this way; for example, he wrote in the beginning of the 20th century, “The Beast 666 ordains by His authority that every man, and every woman, and every intermediately-sexed individual, shall be absolutely free to interpret and communicate Self by means of any sexual practices soever, whether direct or indirect, rational or symbolic, physiologically, legally, ethically, or religiously approved or no, provided only that all parties to any act are fully aware of all implications and responsibilities thereof, and heartily agree thereto.”<sup>9</sup> We must remember that – as one very small example – it was more than half a century later before the American Psychological Association stopped labeling homosexuality as a form of mental illness. We as Thelemites take up the banner of acceptance of people as they are, no matter how they may choose to define and express themselves sexually.

## VI. Drugs

Thelemites do not shy away from the use of alcohol and drugs based on philosophical, moral, or theological grounds. Thelema has no prohibitions against drugs (or anything, really) so long as what you are doing is in line with your Will. This requires people to take responsibility for their choices. I often think that it helps to say, “Do what thou wilt... and suffer the consequences” because saying “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt”<sup>10</sup> does not somehow absolve you of the consequences of your action; the Law of Thelema did not somehow abrogate the law of cause and effect. Abusing a substance will still lead to addiction, misusing a substance can still lead to mental imbalance, and rightly using a substance can lead to immense leaps in self-exploration and self-understanding. It is up to every individual to be informed about the use of drugs and to do them responsibly with an intent of finding, exploring, and expressing their true natures.

In a time where the use of psychedelics has only really been explored for their therapeutic potential in the past 5-10 years, this is also a radical approach to drugs. We have Crowley’s own addictions, the history of excess and abuse of drugs as can stereotypically be seen in the late 1960s, and possibly experiences of our own and those around us to warn

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<sup>9</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:51.

<sup>10</sup> *Liber AL*, III:60.

us about the abuse of drugs. Conversely, we have Crowley's own successes, a long history of the successful experimentation with drugs, as well as the experiences of our own and those around us to remind us of the distinct potential of using drugs in harmony with our Wills.

## VII. Aleister Crowley

I believe that Aleister Crowley is exactly the prophet we need in this day and age for one fundamental reason: he was a human being. He was a genius, but he was a human being (despite his attempts to be remembered as a solar myth!)<sup>11</sup>. Crowley pushed the boundaries in virtually every category of life and so we may admire him in this way, but we also see things that challenge us. Crowley played with virtually every taboo he could find and in this way he challenges us to confront our own demons and find our own beliefs about how we should live. Our reaction to Crowley can be seen as a microcosm of our own reaction to taboos in general. This is a valuable task in which each individual can engage: what did Crowley do that particularly offends our sentiments? What things are “too far” or “too much,” and – more importantly – examine why it is that you believe he went too far. In this way, in studying our reaction to the prophet of Thelema we can learn more about our own blind spots, limits, and boundaries.

Crowley's sometimes outrageous behavior also reminds us that we are not supposed to imitate Crowley in any way; we are supposed to find our own Way. That is what Thelema is about. Thelemites are united in a mutual respect and reverence for Crowley, and we are united in a mutual quest to find our Selves. We are not all trying to be Crowley like Christians try to be like Christ or Buddhists like Buddha; we are all trying to be who we really are and that is what sets us apart.

## VIII. Rejoice!

In a document that I believe every Thelemite should read for its

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11 In the prelude of his *Confessions*, Crowley wrote: “posterity might well be excused for surmising that not one but several individuals were combined in a legend, or even for taking the next step and saying: This Aleister Crowley was not a man, or even a number of men; he is obviously a solar myth.”



clarity and incisiveness,<sup>12</sup> Crowley wrote that one of our duties is to “Rejoice!”

Thelema is a religion of joy and beauty. Humor is our armor and laughter our weapon. No longer do we look upon solemnity and self-effacement as synonymous with spirituality. Thelema is a law of Liberty that holds the keys to unlock the innate potential of every individual, to release ourselves from the burden of sorrow and fear, and to allow ourselves to be ourselves and rejoice therein. As it says in *The Book of the Law*, “Remember all ye that existence is pure joy.”<sup>13</sup> With this knowledge, we can consciously and willfully engage in that ultimate Sacrament we know as existence. I therefore say with Crowley, “Look, brother, we are free! Rejoice with me, sister, there is no law beyond Do what thou wilt!”<sup>14</sup>

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12 The reference is to the essay “Duty” which appears in *The Revival of Magick*.

13 *Liber AL*, II:9.

14 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.

***Communion***  
*is based on the Temple at Communion during a Gnostic Mass*

## CHAPTER 2

# THE MANIFESTO OF RA-HOOR-KHUIT

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*This piece was written in early 2011 e.v., and its intention was to be a less intellectually heady and philosophical treatise and more of a passionate plea or “call to arms.” The focus was meant to be on the simplicity and clarity of the Law of Thelema and its direct relation to how we live our lives as Thelemites, as soldiers in Ra-Hoor-Khuit’s army of Truth.*

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*There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.*

### Introduction

This is a manifesto for every man and every woman who recognizes their own right to Divine Kingship, those who recognize themselves to be Stars.

The aim is the complete establishment of the Kingdom of Ra-Hoor-Khuit upon earth. That is, the permeating and infiltration of all facets of life with the sublime Word of Thelema.

This is the establishment of Life, Liberty, Love, and Light in the hearts of all men.

Let those who wish to aid the Crowned and Conquering Child in his manifestation first write the words “Do what thou wilt” upon their heart and soul. Now in this light let them read this Manifesto and bring “fresh fever from the skies.”

*“Help me, o warrior lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men!” – Liber AL vel Legis I:5*

### On the Proper Spirit

Let our actions not be out of regret, pity, malice, envy, jealousy, weariness, hate, or sorrow.

The proper spirit of this revolution is an overflowing of joy and strength.

See all obstacles, all threats, all intimidations, all criticisms as chances to Grow and exert your Will.

Life is a joyous battlefield wherein We Soldiers of Horus rejoice in conflict and strife. Could the artist's statue be created and perfected without chiseling away the dross?

*“Remember all ye that existence is pure joy... Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us... Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty! A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture! A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure of uttermost delight! Aye! feast! rejoice! there is no dread hereafter.” – Liber AL, II:9,20,35,42-44*

## On Relations with the World

The knight-monks – the prince-priests and the hermit-soldiers – are the body of Ra-Hoor-Khuit's Army. They are not the cloistered and emasculated hermits of old.

Although we too attain to the truth of Mystic Solitude wherein All is One and we proclaim, “I am alone: there is no God where I am” (*AL*, II:23), we immerse ourselves into the fecundity of the world instead of retreating therefrom. Work your jobs, do your duties, raise your children, laugh with friends, but let all these things, from the most important to the most trivial, be to the Glory of Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

*“Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermits. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them; there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all the joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this.”*  
– Liber AL, II:24

## On Material Things

We are not to shun material objects, wealth, and power. They are not inherently evil nor are they “un-spiritual.”

Express your overflow of joy and beauty with fine robes, wine, headdresses, or whatever you will.

Feel no regret, guilt, or shame in your reckless expression of being Drunk with the Glory of Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

*“Be goodly therefore: dress ye all in fine apparel; eat rich foods and drink sweet wines and wines that foam! Also, take your fill and will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will! But always unto me... Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of the earth in splendour & pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy... Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.”*  
– Liber AL, I:51, 61; II:22

## On the Work of Each Soldier

Every man, woman, and child who consciously accepts the word of the Law, “Do what thou wilt,” is certainly a warrior in the Army of Ra-Hoor-Khuit. Simply by existing and enacting the Law of Thelema in every circumstance, the stars of Force & Fire (each one of you) will spread the Law by their own example.

We must see the sublime beauty in Thelema’s answers to the conundrums of ethics, reasons, and metaphysics. Therefore must we constantly study the Holy Books of Thelema, especially *Liber AL vel Legis*, the *Book of the Law*.

The most important thing is to exude your overflow of strength, beauty, force and fire in a natural way. Do what thou wilt and let all around you see the joy you have in doing so!

*“The excellence of the Law must be showed by its results upon those who accept it. When men see us as the hermits of Hadit*

*described in [The Book of the Law], they will determine to emulate our joy.” – Khabs am Pekht*

## **A Daily Regimen**

One must make Thelema the center of one’s life, the locus of all meaning and motion. We may remind ourselves through rituals and feasts of all sorts.

But a truly effective Warrior of Life & Light must be strong and healthy in both mind and body.

*“Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be not animal; refine thy rapture!” – Liber AL, II:70*

Every warrior of Ra-Hoor-Khuit needs to exert themselves physically and mentally. We have no room for arm-chair dwellers who manipulate intellectual facts endlessly. Therefore every person should regularly exercise their bodies.

*“Establish at thy Kaaba a clerk-house; all must be done well and with business way.” – Liber AL, III:41*

Your Kaaba, your starry heart and essence of consciousness, must be established within a mind of great power and conciseness, arranged like a business with orderliness and detachment. Therefore practice meditation to make the mind a perfect instrument of the Will: perfect the skills of concentration and non-attachment.

Exercise your body and your mind with diligence but always strive unto higher goals and ideals. Never tire of competition and exceeding your own perceived limits.

*“But exceed! exceed! Strive ever to more!” – Liber AL, II:71-72*

## **On Dealing with Other Fellow-Soldiers**

Every person must be a pyramid: flawless from base to apex, sufficient unto themselves. Yet each Star is part of the Body of Infinite

Space. Therefore make friends and enemies as ye will.

Our attitude to one another must be one of great respect like the chivalry from the West or bushido from the East. Thrill with the joy of vigorous competition and conflict yet always out of overflow of Will, strength, beauty, love, and rapture.

Therefore do not cover yourself to mask your true brilliance. Let the Sun of your Will shine effulgently on all things: care not that it will inevitably nourish some and destroy others.

But also do not fear losing your supposed “freedom” by banding together with other stars. Verily, a galaxy is an inconceivably potent source of gravitational force although it is, in reality, made up of individual stars...

Therefore make camps and lodges and groups and propagate the Spirit of Freedom, enshrined in the Word of the Law: Thelema.

*“But the keen and the proud, the royal and the lofty; ye are brothers! As brothers fight ye!” – Liber AL, III:58-59*

# CHAPTER 3

## YAMA & NIYAMA:

### WHAT IS THE “IDEAL THELEMITE”?

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*This article was written in mid-2013 e.v. in response to a sadly pervasive (yet human) element of Thelemic culture, which is the ironic tendency to dictate to others what a “true” or “ideal” Thelemite really is. This inevitably comes from one's own preconceived notions of what is right and wrong, and it goes against the most fundamental tenet of Thelema which is that each individual has their own sovereign and unique Will. This essay was intended to be a concise refutation of the notion that we can dictate to others what Thelemites “should” look like, achieved by introducing the concepts of Thelema's Yama and Niyama.*

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What is the “ideal Thelemite”? In short: There is no such thing as an “ideal Thelemite.” The Law of Thelema is “Do what thou wilt,” which means that every individual is sovereign. Every man and every woman has their own individual Law, their own unique Will. As William Blake said, “One Law for the Lion and the Ox is Oppression.”<sup>15</sup>

The fact that “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt”<sup>16</sup> is precisely why there are no standard or universal ideals. Each individual has their own Will, and each Law must have its own, unique “ideal.” Regarding the fact that there are no standards or universal ideals, Crowley writes:

*“What is necessary is not to seek after some fantastic ideal, utterly unsuited to our real needs, but to discover the true nature of those*

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<sup>15</sup> *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

<sup>16</sup> *Liber AL, III:60.*



*needs, to fulfill them, and rejoice therein.”*<sup>17</sup>

*“Know then, o my Son, that all Laws, all Systems, all Customs, all Ideals and Standards which tend to produce Uniformity, being in direct Opposition to Nature’s Will to change and to develop through Variety, are accursèd.”*<sup>18</sup>

*“Each child must develop its own Individuality, and Will, disregarding alien Ideals... Let children educate themselves to be themselves. Those who train them to standards cripple and deform them. Alien ideals impose parasitic perversions... Standards of education, ideals of Right-and-Wrong, conventions, creeds, codes, stagnate Mankind.”*<sup>19</sup>

One might argue that Thelema is itself a “universal ideal.” Thelema is a universal Law insofar as “Do what thou wilt” states that each individual must find their own unique Will, their own particular Law. The universal ideal is therefore that there are no universal ideals: each must “discover the true nature of [one’s real] needs, to fulfill them, and rejoice therein.”<sup>20</sup> The only absolute is that there are no absolutes; the only constant is change.

In a way, then, we can say that the “ideal Thelemite” is one who does their own Will and lets others do their Wills. This “ideal Thelemite” follows their own Law and others follow their own, different Laws; there are no universal ideals of “what is best” or “what is absolutely Right and Wrong” beyond this. This is what is sometimes called the “Yama and Niyama of Thelema.”

We borrow the terms “Yama” and “Niyama” from the Hindu system of *raja yoga* as explained, among other places, in Patanjali’s classic treatise called the *Yogasutras*. Yama and Niyama are words that mean opposite things, similar to “Thou shalt not” (Yama) and “Thou shalt” (Niyama). Unfortunately, translating them into English is not easy, but their real meaning in the context of Thelema becomes clear with just a

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17 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 8.

18 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 31.

19 *On the Education of Children*, available in *The Revival of Magick*.

20 *The Constitutions of the Order of Thelemites*.

little explication.

The Yama of Thelema is to have the self-discipline to find one's own Will and to do that Will. As it is said, "Thou hast no right but to do thy will."<sup>21</sup> The Niyama of Thelema is to mind your own business or, in other words, to allow others to find and do their Wills. The Niyama is to extend the same absolute liberty to do your own Will that you rightfully claim to all other individuals. In short:

- **The Yama of Thelema:** Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Thou hast no right but to do thy will.
- **The Niyama of Thelema:** Mind your own business.

**Yama:** Crowley mentions that Yama means something similar to "control" or "the word 'inhibition' as used by biologists."<sup>22</sup> Basically, Yama means the self-discipline to remain on the "track" or "path" of one's True Will and not swerving from it. "Thou hast no right but to do thy will,"<sup>23</sup> which shows that you are by definition outside of your sole right when you deviate from your Path. This requires the self-discipline to remain true to one's own Law. As Crowley writes, "What is true for every School is equally true for every individual. Success in life, on the basis of the Law of Thelema, implies severe self-discipline."<sup>24</sup> Crowley gives a succinct summary of the Yama of Thelema when he writes:

*"I wish to thunder forth once more that no questions of right or wrong enter into our problems. But in the stratosphere it is 'right' for a man to be shut up in a pressure-resisting suit electrically heated, with an oxygen supply, whereas it would be 'wrong' for him to wear it if he were running the three miles in the summer sports. This is the pit into which all the great religious teachers have hitherto fallen, and I am sure you are all looking hungrily at me in the hope of seeing me do likewise. But no! There is one principle which carries us through all conflicts concerning conduct, because it is perfectly rigid and perfectly elastic: – 'Do what thou*

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21 *Liber AL*, I:42.

22 *Eight Lectures on Yoga*.

23 *Liber AL*, I:42.

24 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 8.

*wilt shall be the whole of the Law.' That is Yama."*<sup>25</sup>

**Niyama:** There is no “opposite term” of Yama, or self-discipline, to adequately translate “Niyama.” We might say that the complementary term of “self-discipline “is, in this case, something like “other-discipline.” If Yama is the discipline we have toward ourselves in remaining true to our own Law, Niyama is the discipline we have toward others in allowing them to remain true to their own Laws. This “other-discipline” can be summarized as “Mind your own business.” Crowley says as much in several places:

*“Mind your own business! is the sole sufficient rule.”*<sup>26</sup>

*“I will have thee to know, moreover, my dear Son, the right Art of Conduct with them whom I shall give thee for Initiation. And the Rule thereof is one Rule: Do that thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. See thou constantly to it that this be not broken; especially in the Section thereof (if I dare say so) which readeth Mind thine own Business. This is of Application equally to all, and the most dangerous Man (or Woman, as has occurred, or I err) is the Busy-body. Oh how ashamed are we, and moved to Indignation, seeing the Sins and Follies of our Neighbours!”*<sup>27</sup>

*“Every Star has its own Nature, which is 'Right' for it. We are not to be missionaries, with ideal standards of dress and morals, and such hard-ideas. We are to do what we will, and leave others to do what they will. We are infinitely tolerant, save of intolerance.”*<sup>28</sup>

*“It is necessary that we stop, once for all, this ignorant meddling with other people’s business. Each individual must be left free to follow his own path.”*<sup>29</sup>

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25 *Eight Lectures on Yoga.*

26 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 15.

27 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 96.

28 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:57.

29 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:31.

The name Crowley gives for someone who fails to uphold the Niyama of Thelema is a “busy-body.” A busy-body is someone who is concerned about what other people are doing, how other people are doing things, and why other people are doing things. A busy-body is concerned about someone else’s True Will rather than being concerned with their own. They are indignant about the “sins and follies” of their neighbors rather than focusing on themselves, and generally meddle in others’ affairs. A busy-body, in short, does not mind their own business.

We are all busy-bodies to some degree or another whenever we impose our standards, expectations, or ideals on others, whenever we think that “we know best” for anyone other than ourselves. This can be anything from the most mundane and concrete such as criticizing another’s choice in clothing to the more subtle such as expecting others to perform the same spiritual practices as oneself or insisting that people who believe something different from oneself must be “corrected.”

When put into practice, we quickly see that the Niyama of Thelema – that of minding one’s own business and allowing others to do their Wills – is not simply a limp passivity. It is not “grinning and bearing it,” which implies that – deep down – you actually don’t want them to do their Wills (let alone that you obviously aren’t rejoicing in it!). The Niyama of Thelema is an active, positive thing: we actively affirm the right of each individual to know and do their True Will. When we greet one another, we look fearlessly into each others’ eyes and say, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.” This is to say to everyone you meet, as Crowley writes, “Look, brother, we are free! Rejoice with me, sister, there is no law beyond Do what thou wilt!”<sup>30</sup>

Some might say that it takes strength to control everything, but it is a much greater strength to not need to control everything and everyone. It is a symptom of being unsure and anxious to feel the need to control people by insisting that it’s your way or the highway. That is: Being a busy-body is a symptom of weakness and fear, although it will inevitably mask itself in the “virtue” that essentially comes down to “knowing what is best” for someone else (let alone all other Thelemites!). That is where “compassion” and “altruism” and even “teaching” teeters into the realm of folly.

We will all inevitably hear (or probably have already heard) some

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<sup>30</sup> *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty.*

self-avowed Thelemite question why others are not doing this or that, insisting they are complaining about others because they “really care” about Thelema. Many of us have fallen prey to this ourselves (“Oh no! Definitely not me!” ... Yes, you especially!). This “care” – this “noble cause” of ours – is nothing but the demands of a busy-body cloaking itself in guise of “virtue.” We all should remember to “veil not your vices in virtuous words.”<sup>31</sup> This “care” basically comes down to insisting that everyone else must have the same values as yourself, which is exactly opposite to affirming “Do what thou wilt.” If you ever find yourself asking, or hear someone else asking, something that amounts to “Why doesn’t this other person/these other people think that this is important?” The answer is most likely “Because it *isn’t* important to them, nor does it need to be”... or, more pointedly, “Mind your own business.” This is why there is no “ideal Thelemite.” This is why “One Law for the Lion and the Ox is Oppression.” Any insistence otherwise will quickly fall into the same trap that characterized the Old Aeon, the tyranny of a single standard or ideal for all people, rather than a multiplicity of Laws, each uniquely suited to the individual.

Again: The Niyama of Thelema is not a limp, passive, “grin and bear it” quality. On the contrary: It takes an active, almost virile quality to say to every individual, “I don’t know what your Will is, I don’t know what your 'good' or 'bad' are, I don’t even know how your Will may interact with and effect mine, but I grant you the absolute right to do your Will and I claim the equally absolute right to do my Will.” This is far from a passive “letting things happen”; the Niyama of Thelema is an active affirmation, an enthusiastic encouragement, a joyous battle-cry for each and every man and woman to discover their real needs, to fulfill them, and to rejoice therein. To believe otherwise is the essence of tyranny; to act otherwise is the essence of oppression. This requires the strength to stand in the midst of uncertainty and ambiguity, of accepting variety and difference of style and opinion, of not knowing “how everything should be” for everyone or anyone else. Any concern arising about others “not doing it the right way” should be a reminder to us all to re-focus on our own Will: this should be a reminder of the Yama of staying true to our own Path and the Niyama of affirming the right of others to be true to their Paths.

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31 *Liber AL*, II:52.

This is the simplicity and the beauty of the Law of Thelema: There are no absolute standards or universal ideals. Every man and every woman has the indefeasible right and duty to know and do his or her True Will. Each has their own standard, their own Law. Any occurrence of someone imposing their Law on another, or anyone accepting a Law imposed on them by another, is a distortion and deforming of a star's true nature. It is our Yama to adhere to this Law of our own True Will, and it is our Niyama to affirm the right of every other individual to adhere to the Law of his or her own True Will. This is real Freedom, the perfect order on Earth as the stars move seamlessly in the perfect order in the Heavens; this why our Law of "Do what thou wilt" is the Law of Liberty itself.

***The Magus Speaks***  
*is an interpretation of Atu I: The Magus*

## CHAPTER 4

# IS THELEMA A RELIGION OR NOT?

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*This article was written in mid-2013 e.v. because I was tired of seeing people debate the issue of whether or not Thelema is a religion. Many people have personal issues with the term “religion” that lead them to latch onto one quotation in particular to justify that Thelema is not a religion. The article was intended to lay out the facts: Crowley consistently referred to Thelema as a religion, Crowley saw Thelema as more than just a religion, and – ultimately – it doesn't matter what we call it; what matters is the degree to which we integrate the Law into our lives.*

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One of the ever-present questions in the discourse about Thelema is whether or not it is a religion. I think this question is most poetically answered by someone – I believe the credit goes to Jake Stratton-Kent - who said:

*“There is religion in Thelema for those that require it. There is also freedom from religion in Thelema for those that require it.”*

In short: Yes... and no. All I can attempt to do is elaborate on this position to make it a bit more clear.

Before going too far in depth, it should be said that – according to anthropologists, sociologists, theologians, and the like – Thelema would most definitely be classified as a “religion.” It has a “Bible” (*Liber AL vel Legis*), a moral code (Do what thou wilt), a Prophet (To Mega Therion), a set of practices (Magick), and even a “pantheon” (Nuit, Hadit, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Hoor-paar-kraat, *et cetera*). Whether or not this is entirely an accurate designation is another question.

**We might first look at why people wouldn't want to call Thelema a “religion.”** The answer is fairly obvious: “religion” in the 21st Century has



become synonymous with superstition, tyranny, and oppression. There is no doubt about this: organized religion has, for millenia, been a force for all of these horrible things that stand against the spirit of Liberty. Many people who are most vocal about Thelema not being a religion are those who experienced this superstition, tyranny, and oppression first-hand in their childhood, and I personally do not find their reaction to be hard to understand.

In this light, we can see that Crowley himself was wary of the use of the term “religion” to describe Thelema. He writes:

*“To sum up, our system is a religion just so far as a religion means an enthusiastic putting-together of a series of doctrines, no one of which must in any way clash with Science or Magick. Call it a new religion, then, if it so please your Gracious Majesty; but I confess that I fail to see what you will have gained by so doing, and I feel bound to add that you might easily cause a great deal of misunderstanding, and work a rather stupid kind of mischief.”*<sup>32</sup>

We should note, firstly, that Crowley begins this quotation by saying that – according to a certain definition of religion as “an enthusiastic putting-together of a series of doctrines” – Thelema is, in fact, a religion. He then says that calling Thelema a “religion” may cause misunderstanding and mischief. He does not explain exactly why it would cause misunderstanding and mischief but we can guess that it is most likely for the aforementioned reasons: it associates it with the Old Aeon religions that are gleaming beacons of superstition, tyranny, and oppression, i.e. those exact things we are set to destroy with our Law of Liberty. People may also assume that we believe things that other religions do, especially the Judeo-Christian-Islamic type, such as the belief in a gaseous vertebrate breed of God, which is most certainly false.

In short, we may refrain from calling Thelema a religion because it associates it with superstition, tyranny, and oppression which Thelema is firmly against in every way, being the Law of Liberty. Our Law is simultaneously more simple and more nuanced than a belief in a Judeo-Christian-Islamic Daddy-in-the-sky God. Keep in mind, though, that this implies that calling Thelema a religion may cause misunderstanding and

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<sup>32</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 31.

mischievous, but it does not imply that the designation is inaccurate in some fundamental way.

**Now we may turn to the reasons why Thelema is a religion.** First of all, Crowley calls Thelema a religion repeatedly. Crowley writes:

*“Our religion therefore, for the People, is the Cult of the Sun, who is our particular star of the Body of Nuit, from whom, in the strictest scientific sense, come this earth, a chilled spark of Him, and all our Light and Life.”*<sup>33</sup>

In this line, he very clearly calls Thelema a religion, although there is a caveat that it is “for the People,” by which we may assume he means “the masses” and not necessarily for the “Hermits” or “initiates” or “Adepts” (although this is, admittedly, an assumption).

In *The Constitutions of the Order of Thelemites*, Crowley writes this Order is against “All superstitious religion, as obstacles to the establishment of scientific religion.” Here he clearly calls Thelema a religion, but he opposes “superstitious religion” (those of the Old Aeon and many of those that have cropped up in the New Aeon as well) to “scientific religion.” We get a further clarification that Thelema, insofar as it is a religion, is not opposed to science. Further, he writes:

*“The world needs religion. Religion must represent Truth, and celebrate it. This truth is of two orders: one, concerning Nature external to Man; two, concerning Nature internal to Man.*

*Existing religions, especially Christianity, are based on primitive ignorance of the facts, particularly of external Nature. Celebrations must conform to the custom and nature of the people. Christianity has destroyed the joyful celebrations, characterized by music, dancing, feasting, and making love; and has kept only the melancholy.*

*The Law of Thelema offers a religion which fulfills all necessary conditions. The philosophy and metaphysics of Thelema are sound, and offer a solution of the deepest problems of humanity.*

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<sup>33</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:22.

*The science of Thelema is orthodox; it has no false theories of Nature, no false fables of the origin of things. The psychology and ethics of Thelema are perfect. It has destroyed the damnable delusion of Original Sin, making every one unique, independent, supreme, and sufficient. The Law of Thelema is given in the Book of the Law.”*<sup>34</sup>

Here we have another instance of Crowley explicitly calling Thelema a religion. He insists again that it must “represent Truth, and celebrate it,” concurring with the aforementioned quotation that insists Thelema is a “scientific religion.”

From these quotations, it seems fairly clear that Crowley did – with the caveat that it represents and celebrates Truth and is “scientific” – consider Thelema a religion. There is a further point that, in my opinion, clarifies the entire matter: Thelema is a religion but it is *more* than just a religion. I have said several times that Thelema is an all-encompassing paradigm, and this is meant to imply that Thelema is a religion... and much more.

We have already seen inklings of this idea in the previous quotation where Crowley calls Thelema a religion while also mentioning the philosophy, metaphysics, science, psychology, and ethics of Thelema. Crowley conveys this idea that Thelema is more than just a religion with great clarity when he writes:

*“Thelema implies not merely a new religion, but a new cosmology, a new philosophy, a new ethics. It co-ordinates the disconnected discoveries of science, from physics to psychology, into a coherent and consistent system. Its scope is so vast that it is impossible even to hint at the universality of its application.”*<sup>35</sup>

He says “Thelema implies *not merely* a new religion.” It also implies a new cosmology, philosophy, and ethics. Thelema is not limited to the small sphere of theology. This perspective is reflected in the fact that we, following Crowley, call Thelema a “Law.” This Law is given in *The Book of the Law*. Crowley also calls Thelema a “formula.” For example,

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34 “Editorial” from *The Equinox*, III:1, a.k.a. *The Blue Equinox*.

35 *Confessions*, chapter 49.

Crowley writes:

*“The many religions of the world have all lost their power to guide chiefly because the development of means of transport and of international commerce have convinced the educated that any one religion is about as good or bad as another for the purposes of social discipline, and that none has any validity from the standpoint of actual fact, or historical or philosophical truth.*

*The remedy is evidently to be found only in one way. There must be found a formula based upon absolute common sense, without one trammel of theological theory or dogma, a formula to which no man of intelligence can refuse assent, and which at the same time affords an absolute sanction for all laws of conduct, social and political no less than individual, so that the right or wrong of any isolated or concerted action can be determined with mathematical accuracy by any trained observer, entirely irrespective of his personal idiosyncrasies. This formula is: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”<sup>36</sup>*

When we consider Thelema as a “Law” or a “formula,” we are – first of all – using language that is in common with science (e.g. “the law of gravity” or “the formula for calculating velocity”). More importantly, we are using language that is *universal* insofar as this Law or formula applies to all aspects of life.

I believe the idea that Thelema is not just a religion but a new paradigm of cosmology, metaphysics, ethics, and psychology is the most accurate perspective on whether or not Thelema is a religion. Insofar as Thelema is a religion, it is a religion that is explicitly opposed to superstition, to “theological theory or dogma” (ideally!), and oppression. In the end, what’s in a name? Thelema’s Law is “Do what thou wilt” and people are free to call it a religion or not. Whether you choose to call it a religion or not is your own choice, and whether or not someone else chooses to call Thelema a religion is none of our business. The real question, the one that really matters, is: Are you living the Law of Thelema? Have you written “Do what thou wilt” in your heart and in your

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<sup>36</sup> *The Beginning of a New World*, available in *The Revival of Magick*.

brain? Have you used the simplicity of the Key of the Law to unlock the complexities of philosophy, psychology, theology, and daily life? In short: are you doing your True Will or not? In light of this central consideration all other things, including what names and titles we give to things, are – at best – totally irrelevant and are – at worst – leading us to mischief and futility. As always: There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

# CHAPTER 5

# FUNDAMENTALS OF INITIATION

# IN THELEMA

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*This chapter was written in mid-2014 e.v. as an introductory piece to the idea of Initiation as a whole as viewed within Thelema. The focus is to find certain basic principles underlying the idea of Initiation without getting muddled in too much metaphysical and esoteric jargon.*

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## Introduction

In Thelema, the term “initiation” is used often and in varying ways. This essay is intended to elucidate the basic meaning and fundamentals of initiation, especially in the context of spiritual system of Thelema.

**Basic definition:** “Initiation” essentially refers to the path of spiritual progress of every individual. The “path of initiation” is synonymous with other terms such as “the path of attainment” or “the quest for enlightenment.” It is sometimes called the Great Work, or “climbing the Tree of Life,” or simply “the Path.”

Along the path, one reaches various “degrees” of initiation which can be construed as certain levels of insight or understanding or simply certain shifts in one’s awareness that move progressively from the ignorance of the mundane view of self and the world to the “initiated” or enlightened view. These “degrees” of initiation refer strictly to an internal process, and the ceremonies and “degrees” of temporal organizations can only be a symbolic reflection of one’s inner initiations. As Crowley wrote, “The Master Therion warns all Aspirants to the Sacred Wisdom and the Magick of Light that Initiation cannot be bought, or even conferred; it must be won by personal endeavor.”<sup>37</sup>

This leads to some general principles of initiation that are true

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<sup>37</sup> Letter from Aleister Crowley to Wilfred T. Smith, 1934, e.v.

across all forms of spirituality:

- 1) Initiation can ultimately only come from the endeavors and work of the individual.
- 2) True initiation is always in the form of the direct experience of the individual.
- 3) Initiation cannot be bestowed from others through words, symbols, rituals, or any other way. The most another can do is help point the way and aid one to avoid common pitfalls.

### **Initiation in General**

The basics of initiation are explained fairly succinctly in a text called *Liber LXI vel Causae* or simply *Liber Causae*. It reads:

*“In all systems of religion is to be found a system of Initiation, which may be defined as the process by which a man comes to learn that unknown Crown.”*

This establishes that all systems of religion have some form or another of approaching the same Truth. They all contain some form of “the process by which a man comes to learn that unknown Crown,” which is here called “Initiation.” The “unknown Crown” is a Qabalistic reference to the first Sephirah on the Tree of Life, Kether, which literally means “Crown” and represents the Unity of Godhead to which man may attain. Some have called this “unknown Crown” the term “God,” some have called it “liberation,” or “unity,” or “Truth,” and countless other names. Ultimately, it is “unknown” and nameless because it is beyond the dualities of knower and known, beyond the dualities of the subject and object of language, and therefore cannot be accurately named. It is, to use the language of the Gnostic Mass, always “beyond speech and beyond sight.” Initiation is defined as the process whereby one may come to learn That. *Liber Causae* continues:

*“Though none can communicate either the knowledge or the*

*power to achieve this, which we may call the Great Work, it is yet possible for initiates to guide others.”*

Here we are told what was mentioned above as a general principle of initiation: Initiation cannot be bestowed from others through words, symbols, rituals, or any other way. “None can communicate” does not mean there is not anyone smart or enlightened enough to communicate this Truth, but it is a Truth whose nature is simply incommunicable by virtue of it being beyond all names, forms, signs, and symbols.

Here we also see the process of “Initiation” being equated with the term “the Great Work,” as mentioned previously as well. We also learn that initiates may not communicate “that unknown Crown” but they can guide others toward it. *Liber Causae* continues on this theme:

*“Every man must overcome his own obstacles, expose his own illusions. Yet others may assist him to do both, and they may enable him altogether to avoid many of the false paths, leading no whither, which tempt the weary feet of the uninitiated pilgrim. They can further insure that he is duly tried and tested, for there are many who think themselves to be Masters who have not even begun to tread the Way of Service that leads thereto.”*

Here we have affirmation of another general principle of initiation mentioned before: Initiation can ultimately only come from the endeavors and work of the individual. We also learn that the path of initiation must involve overcoming obstacles and exposing one’s illusions about reality. As another important foundational text says, “Thou then who hast trials and troubles, rejoice because of them, for in them is Strength, and by their means is a pathway opened unto that Light... Rejoice therefore, O Initiate, for the greater thy trial the greater thy Triumph.”<sup>38</sup>

There is a reaffirmation of the fact that initiates may help guide others in order to enable them to not fall into common pitfalls. There is also an assertion that “there are many who think themselves to be Masters” who are not even close, “Masters” being a name for those who have succeeded in treading the Path. Those who “think themselves to be Masters” includes people who earnestly may think they have attained but

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38 *Liber Librae*.



have only obtained minor glimpses of truth as well as those who may be called “charlatans” insofar as they knowingly prey upon earnest seekers by deception and manipulation.

One thing that is particularly striking is the mention that “the Way of Service” is what “leads thereto,” i.e. to becoming a Master. There are several ways to understand what is meant by “the Way of Service” that are all connected. Firstly, there is the fact which has already been mentioned repeatedly: one function of initiates is to be a guide to others on the path. In many systems, once one has become judged to be sufficiently advanced in understanding (or “attainment” or any other similar term), one becomes a teacher or guide to others – there are many traditions that involve the “transmission” of wisdom from guru or Master to disciple, from the initiated to uninitiated.

Related to this way of understanding “the Way of Service” is the fact that, especially within Thelema, there is an emphasis on “coming back to the world” once one has attained. This is virtually identical to the *bodhisattva* vow in Mahayana Buddhism whereby one swears to return from *nirvana* (liberation, attainment, *et cetera*) back to *samsara* (the mundane world of ignorance) in order that all beings may be liberated. There are plentiful examples within the Western tradition of this same idea, often involving the symbolism of someone who has attained returning from a distant and/or isolated place; prominent examples include returning from a mountain (e.g. Moses, Muhammad, and Nietzsche’s Zarathustra) as well as returning from the wilderness (e.g. Jesus). That is, becoming a Master is tied up in the Way of Service for one does not become a Master solely for enlightening oneself but also to help others attain to the Light.

Finally, connected to these other two ways of understanding “the Way of Service,” one can understand this Service in a more general sense: it requires a diminishing of one’s attachment to the ego, the personal identity or sense of self, and one cannot become a Master if one clings to this self with its self-oriented goals. In all systems of attainment, one seeks the “unknown Crown” which is always beyond the personal sense of self or “ego”; it is, to use the language of the Gnostic Mass again, “Thou who art I beyond all I am.” It should be noted that in none of these ways of understanding the Way of Service is there any semblance of “servility,” of abasing oneself before others or self-denigration: it is a Service of strength,

of one who overflows with Light and so bestows it upon others that they may partake of it.

*“Now the Great Work is one, and the Initiation is one, and the Reward is one, however diverse are the symbols wherein the Unutterable is clothed.”*

This is an especially important point: essentially, initiation always leads to the One, to “that unknown Crown,” to “the Unutterable.” The mystics and initiates of all times have spoken of the same “Great Work,” but everyone has used different symbols and language to explain it. In a Holy Book of Thelema it is written, “There must ever be division in the word. For the colours are many, but the light is one.”<sup>39</sup> This is a beautiful image where the Light, the “Unutterable,” is always One, but it enters through the prism of the world, and each individual who speaks about it represents one color among many. There must always be a diversity of expression, but they are all facets pointing to the one Light. An identical idea is expressed in another Holy Book of Thelema where it is written:

*“To you who yet wander in the Court of the Profane we cannot yet reveal all; but you will easily understand that the religions of the world are but symbols and veils of the Absolute Truth. So also are the philosophies. To the adept, seeing all these things from above, there seems nothing to choose between Buddha and Mohammed, between Atheism and Theism.”*<sup>40</sup>

## **The Mysteries in the New Aeon**

It is understood that there is a single Light, “the Absolute Truth,” “the Unutterable,” *et cetera*, and the diversity of expression are simply different ways to symbolize and veil that Unity. In Thelema, there is a further understanding that there are different “formulas” of initiation or attainment that are efficacious in one time but that need to be updated for a new era or “aeon.” A virtually identical notion is held in the Hindu doctrine of the “yugas” or epochs (e.g. the Kali Yuga) where the

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39 *Liber LXV*, I:2.

40 *Liber Porta Lucis sub figura X*, line 19.

requirements to attain liberation change with each “yuga.” This is the essential meaning behind the idea that we are in a “New Aeon.” Let’s look into this idea in more depth:

In the world of Western esotericism or “occultism,” there is a certain symbolic way that the “Mysteries” of the path of initiation are explained. In general, there are a series of ceremonial rituals which each candidate undergoes, symbolizing the stages of illumination and offering guidance on the Path. Most importantly, there is a “Hierophant” (literally meaning “one who reveals sacred things”) whose purpose is to serve as the dispenser of the Mysteries. Ultimately, this Hierophant represents or reflects the God within each individual who is the true Hierophant of every initiate.

In one esoteric tradition, that of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the Path was symbolized in various psycho-dramas of the various “degrees” of initiation. The Hierophant sat in the East, the place of the rising Sun, while other officers sat in other quarters. This Hierophant not only dispensed the Mysteries as the “initiator” but also represented the “formula” of the Mysteries themselves. In this system, the Hierophant was represented as Osiris, a god who underwent death and was resurrected in a more “divine” form. This essentially means that attainment was achieved through a life-death-resurrection process, the “formula” of Osiris. This, of course, includes the formula represented by the death and resurrection of Christ who is seen as one expression of the “Osirian” formula (along with Attis, Adonis, Dionysus, *et cetera*).

In something called the “Ceremony the Equinox,” the various officers rotate around the room, taking on new offices with a new individual becoming the Hierophant. In the same way, there was an “Equinox of the Gods” where the gods themselves shifted their positions: Osiris no longer represented the formula of initiation. This is why the era or aeon where his formula was active is called the “Aeon of Osiris” or the “Aeon of the Dying God.” Now Horus sat in the East as the Hierophant and a new formula of attainment was put in place: “the word of the Law is Thelema.”<sup>41</sup> This is the symbolism at work in *The Book of the Law* when it is written, “Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs. Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods...

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41 *Liber AL*, I:39.

Hoor in his secret name and splendour is the Lord initiating.”<sup>42</sup> In Thelema, this Equinox of the Gods is said to have occurred on the Vernal Equinox of 1904, with the new *Book of the Law* – a new Law for a new aeon – being received a few days afterward. Crowley comments on this verse of *The Book of the Law*:

*“This verse [AL I:49] declares that the old formula of Magick – the Osiris-Adonis-Jesus-Marsyas-Dionysus-Attis-et cetera formula of the Dying God – is no longer efficacious. It rested on the ignorant belief that the Sun died every day, and every year, and that its resurrection was a miracle. The Formula of the New Aeon recognizes Horus, the Child crowned and conquering, as God. We are all members of the Body of God, the Sun; and about our System is the Ocean of Space. This formula is then to be based upon these facts. Our 'Evil', 'Error', 'Darkness', 'Illusion', whatever one chooses to call it, is simply a phenomenon of accidental and temporary separateness. If you are 'walking in darkness', do not try to make the sun rise by self-sacrifice [i.e. the formula of Osiris], but wait in confidence for the dawn, and enjoy the pleasures of the night meanwhile. The general allusion is to the Equinox Ritual of the G[olden] D[awn].”*<sup>43</sup>

There are many aspects of the path of initiation that have changed – or rather, are better understood – in the New Aeon. A more in-depth look into the major aspects that have changed is given in the essay “New Aeon Initiation.”<sup>44</sup> What is notable in Thelema is the understanding that the Law of this Aeon will shift again in the future: Thelema is for this Aeon and a new Law will come about when there is another shift, another “Equinox of the Gods.” This is what is spoken to in another line of *The Book of the Law*:

*“But your holy place shall be untouched throughout the centuries: though with fire and sword it be burnt down & shattered, yet an invisible house there standeth, and shall stand until the fall of the*

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42 *Liber AL*, I:49.

43 New Comment on *AL*, I:49.

44 “New Aeon Initiation” may be found in the next chapter.

*Great Equinox; when Hrumachis shall arise and the double-wanded one assume my throne and place. Another prophet shall arise, and bring fresh fever from the skies; another woman shall awake the lust & worship of the Snake; another soul of God and beast shall mingle in the globèd priest; another sacrifice shall stain the tomb; another king shall reign; and blessing no longer be poured To the Hawk-headed mystical Lord!”*<sup>45</sup>

There will be a “fall of the Great Equinox” and, instead of Horus, the god “Hrumachis” will arise, and a new god – “the double-wanded one” – will be installed in the East as Hierophant with a different “formula” for a new aeon. Crowley comments, “Hrumachis is the Dawning Sun; he therefore symbolizes any new course of events.”<sup>46</sup> Therefore “Hrumachis shall arise” is another way to say the light of a new aeon will come. Crowley continues, “The 'double-wanded one' is 'Thmaist' of dual form as Thmais and Thmait, from whom the Greeks derived their Themis, goddess of Justice.”<sup>47</sup> Crowley is referring to Thmaist as an officer of the Golden Dawn ceremonies; Thmaist is identical to the Greek “Themis” and the Egyptian “Maat” (or simply “Ma”), both gods of Justice and balance. Crowley continues, “Following him [Horus] will arise the Equinox of Ma, the Goddess of Justice, it may be a hundred or ten thousand years from now; for the Computation of Time is not here as There... Strength will prepare the Reign of Justice. We should begin already, as I deem, to regard this Justice as the Ideal whose Way we should make ready, by virtue of our Force and Fire.”<sup>48</sup>

## Summary

Initiation is the process whereby we come to the one Light, the “unknown Crown” within each of us. It can only be attained through our own efforts, although other initiates and adepts may guide us to point the way and help avoid common pitfalls. There is a single Light, although it is expressed in many different ways; it is the same Light regardless of belief

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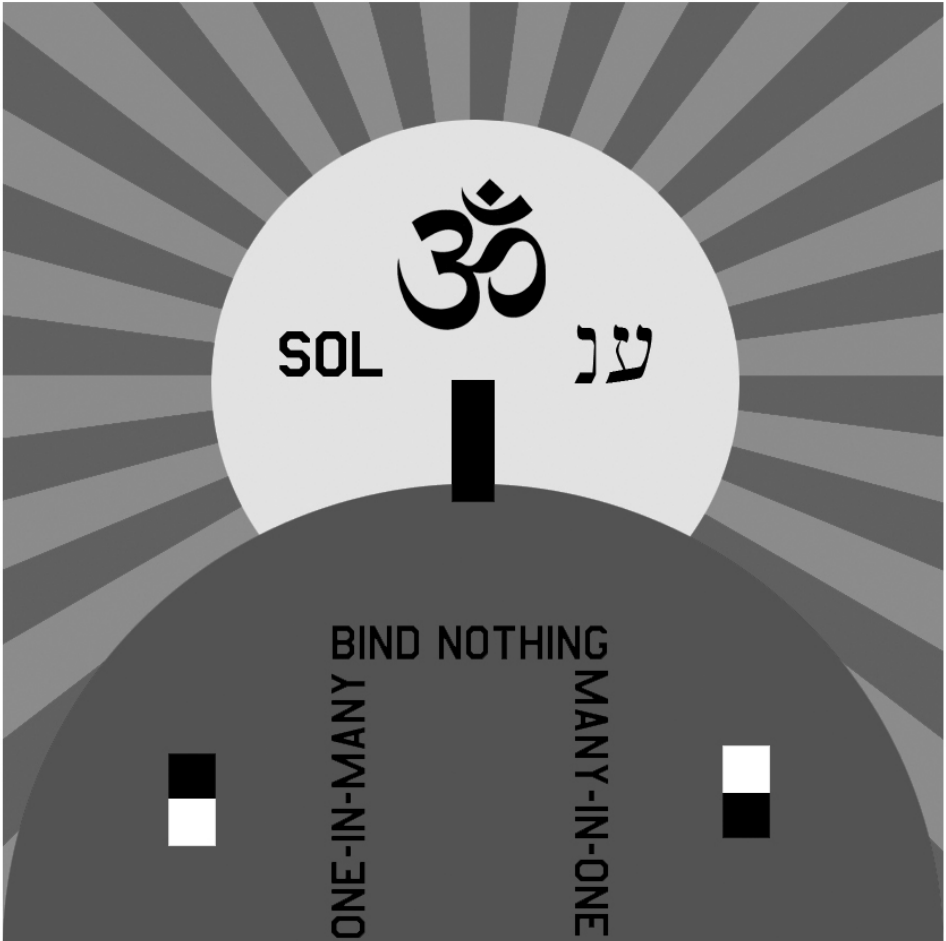
45 *Liber AL*, III:34.

46 New Comment on *AL*, III:34.

47 New Comment on *AL*, III:34.

48 New Comment on *AL*, III:34.

or tradition. The old initiatory formula of Osiris became no longer efficacious with the dawning of the New Aeon of Horus whose word of the Law is Thelema. Further details of the nature of initiation in this New Aeon can be explored in the series “New Aeon Initiation.” In the distant future, the Aeon of Horus will itself end and a new god, that of Justice, will arise with a new Law.



# GOLGOTHA IAO

*Golgotha*  
is based on a Vision from a  
Working of Atu XIX: The Sun

## CHAPTER 6

# NEW AEON INITIATION

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*This chapter was originally a series of articles written in mid-2009 e.v. The intention was to clearly elucidate how the understanding of the path of Attainment has shifted in the New Aeon. The focus is placed on fundamental ideas that are different from many other traditions rather than on obscure occult metaphysics or formulas.*

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### 0) Introduction

*“In the name of the Lord of Initiation. Amen.”<sup>49</sup>*

A New Aeon was proclaimed and begun in April of 1904 with the reception of *The Book of the Law, Liber AL vel Legis*. A New Aeon implies a new paradigm or a new point-of-view with which to view the world. As it is written, “In all systems of religion is to be found a system of Initiation, which may be defined as the process by which a man comes to learn that unknown Crown.”<sup>50</sup> If Initiation is common to “all systems of religion,” then how is Initiation to be understood in this Aeon of the Crowned & Conquering Child? What are the paradigm-shifts which characterize the point-of-view from this New Aeon?

I intend to outline the basic views of New Aeon Initiation in this essay. There will be as little recourse to esoteric jargon as possible; ideally, an individual who has never encountered Thelema should be able to grasp many of the ideas explained here. It should be noted that the various ideas & formulae which are still valid in this New Aeon, i.e. those ideas that are “superseded” and not “abrogated,” will not be mentioned (as nothing has changed in these cases from the Old Aeons).

The basic ideas surrounding New Aeon Initiation are: death/

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49 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 0 & 44.

50 *Liber LXI vel Causae*.



attainment as non-cataclysmic, the True Self contains both good and evil, an embracing of the world, the self as redeemer, and no perfection of the soul. All of these points will be treated in turn, and each will be exemplified by a central quotation from the corpus of Thelema.

## 1) Death/Attainment as Non-cataclysmic

*“...There is that which remains.”*<sup>51</sup>

The basic idea associated with the last, Old Aeon is an obsession with death. The symbolic proponents of the Old Aeon paradigms – Osiris, Dionysus, Jesus, Adonis, *et cetera* – are all bound by the central motif of a (painful) death. Death is seen as catastrophic and a ritual act must be performed for the dead to be resurrected (or avenged). The cosmological parallel with this initiatory viewpoint is the idea that the Sun dies each night and the priesthood must perform a ritual for the Sun to rise again in the morning. Crowley often writes of the switch from the Old Aeon to the New Aeon view as paralleling the switch from a geocentric to a heliocentric view of our Solar System. Now we know that the Sun does not “die” each night, nor does any priest need to perform any kind of ritual for the Sun to rise in the morning. We know the Sun is constantly shining and it is only the turning of the earth which creates the succession of day and night: the apparent sight of the Sun “dying” and being “reborn” each night has changed to the understanding that the Sun is never born nor dies. Frater Achad, or Charles Stansfeld Jones, encapsulated this idea in his essay “Stepping Out of the Old Aeon Into the New”:

*“You know how deeply we have always been impressed with the ideas of Sun-rise and Sun-set, and how our ancient brethren, seeing the Sun disappear at night and rise again in the morning, based all their religious ideas in this one conception of a Dying and Re-arisen God. This is the central idea of the religion of the Old Aeon but we have left it behind us because although it seemed to be based on Nature (and Nature’s symbols are always true), yet we have outgrown this idea which is only apparently true in Nature.*

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51 *Liber AL*, II:9.

*Since this great Ritual of Sacrifice and Death was conceived and perpetuated, we, through the observation of our men of science, have come to know that it is not the Sun which rises and sets, but the earth on which we live which revolves so that its shadow cuts us off from the sunlight during what we call night. The Sun does not die, as the ancients thought; It is always shining, always radiating Light and Life.”*

Crowley reiterates this view and explains the spiritual significance when he writes:

*“...When the time was ripe, appeared the Brethren of the Formula of Osiris, whose word is I A O; so that men worshipped Man, thinking him subject to Death, and his victory dependent upon Resurrection. Even so conceived they of the Sun as slain and reborn with every day, and every year. Now, this great Formula being fulfilled, and turned into abomination, this Lion came forth to proclaim the Aeon of Horus, the crowned and conquering child, who dieth not, nor is reborn, but goeth radiant ever upon His Way. Even so goeth the Sun: for as it is now known that night is but the shadow of the Earth, so Death is but the shadow of the Body, that veileth his Light from its bearer.”<sup>52</sup>*

Assimilating this idea of the Sun, in reality, never setting goes a long way to help the aspirant understand the spiritual truth of Thelema that this mirrors. In short, **death (both of the ego and of the body) is no longer seen as cataclysmic in the New Aeon.** This is because of two connected ideas: Death is complementary with Life, and Death is actually Change (“life to come”).

Let’s start with the first idea that Death is complementary with Life. “Death is the apex of one curve of the snake Life: behold all opposites as necessary complements, and rejoice.”<sup>53</sup> Life and death are the two complements that constitute existence, and all things are formed from the interplay of Life and Death. All things in the universe, including the mind and body of the aspirant, are subject to Life and Death. One might

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<sup>52</sup> *The Heart of the Master.*

<sup>53</sup> *The Heart of the Master.*

visualize existence as an undulating serpent, where the crest of a wave is Life and the trough is Death.

This leads into the idea of Death as Change. We often think of Life as constituting change and Death as constituting stagnation: death implies a stop or an end. The New Aeon views Death not as an end but as the possibility for new Life. Just as the Winter brings “death” to plant life, it also gives nutrients to the soil to allow for the inevitable new Spring. (As a note, “Death” refers to the death of the physical body, but more importantly to the “death” or “dissolution” of the ego which can and does occur during an individual’s life). Crowley explains this idea that Death is Change very succinctly:

*“Verily, love is death, and death is life to come. Man returneth not again; the stream floweth not uphill; the old life is no more; there is a new life that is not his. Yet that life is of his very essence; it is more He than all that he calls He.”*<sup>54</sup>

The succinct idea that “death is life to come” is expounded here along with the idea that in the life that arises from death, we become “more ourselves.” The Life which arises from Death “is more He than all that he calls He.” This is because “all that he calls He” is his ego and in the death of the ego, we come to identify with the True Self which contains both Life and Death (and is therefore Eternal and Infinite). This death is not cataclysmic, but even equated with “love.” In the Tarot, which symbolically mirrors the initiatory paradigm of its age, traditionally has “Atu XIII” (or the 13th Trump) as “Death.” In the New Aeon, we may understand this card not as “Death” but “Transformation” or “Change.” In *The Heart of the Master*, Crowley writes short, poetic stanzas to describe each Tarot card. For “Atu XIII: Death” he writes, “The Universe is Change; every Change is the effect of an Act of Love; all Acts of Love contain Pure Joy. Die daily. Death is the apex of one curve of the snake Life: behold all opposites as necessary complements, and rejoice.” This is the fundamental paradigm-shift of the New Aeon: not only is Death actually Change (and “life to come”), but it is a form of Love, and “all Acts of Love contain Pure Joy.” There is no trace of cataclysm, sorrow, or suffering in this conception of Death in the New Aeon.

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<sup>54</sup> *The Book of Lies*, chapter 18.

Symbolically, this means **Initiation (the myth-drama of each individual's Path)** is no longer portrayed as **"The Man performing Self-Sacrifice"** but as **"The Child Growing to Maturity."** On this Crowley writes, "What then is the formula of the initiation of Horus? It will no longer be that of the Man, through Death. It will be the natural growth of the Child. His experiences will no more be regarded as catastrophic. Their hieroglyph is the Fool: the innocent and impotent Harpocrates Babe becomes the Horus Adult by obtaining the Wand."<sup>55</sup> The idea is one of coming to maturity, specifically of "obtaining the Wand" which represents the creative, generative power: this experience constitutes "spiritual puberty" for the individual, one might say. The process is not a cataclysm that needs rectifying (although puberty often seems cataclysmic!) but a natural process of growth and fulfillment of human potential.

Each person must destroy their ego self and come to identify with the True Self. Every man and woman must "break down the fortress of thine Individual Self, that thy Truth may spring free from the ruins."<sup>56</sup> This necessarily involves the death or dissolution of the ego ("thine Individual Self") to which many people are strongly attached. This is why death is seen as catastrophic: people view losses as catastrophic and the greatest loss to people is the loss of their personal ego-identity. In both the Old and New Aeons, the ego must experience death in process of Initiation. The difference is the view of this phenomenon: **the Old Aeon views death as a cataclysmic event whereas the New Aeon views it as a necessary step in the progress of Growth.** As Crowley explains, "The Ego fears to lose control of the course of the mind... The Ego is justly apprehensive, for this ecstasy will lead to a situation when its annihilation will be decreed... Remember that the Ego is not really the centre and crown of the individual; indeed the whole trouble arises from its false claim to be so."<sup>57</sup> Before the individual personally experiences the dissolution of their own ego, they must assimilate this New Aeon idea that "there is that which remains" after this death. Each person then must come to directly experience and even embody this truth – that is, each individual must come to know this truth through their own experience. "Faith must be

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55 *Liber Samekh.*

56 *The Heart of the Master.*

57 *Commentary to Liber LXV, I:60.*

slain by certainty,”<sup>58</sup> as Crowley wrote. We might even say that each person is psychologically stuck in the Old Aeon paradigm until they have this experience of the death of the ego. Only then can they be “freed of the obsession of the doom of the Ego in Death.”<sup>59</sup> Only then can the individual identify with “that which remains,” which transcends but contains both Life and Death. In the New Aeon, each person “Let[s] the Illusion of the World pass over thee, unheeded, as thou goest from Midnight to the Morning.”<sup>60</sup> The New Aeon is the Aeon of the Crowned & Conquering Child: Horus, Heru-Ra-Ha, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and many other names. **Horus is a symbol of the True Self which transcends Life and Death just as the Sun is a symbol of that which constantly shines even though day (Life) and night (Death) pass on earth, and just as the Child is a symbol of that which contains but transcends both mother (Life) and father (Death).** In the *The Vision and the Voice*, Horus himself says of his nature:

*“I am light, and I am night, and I am that which is beyond them. I am speech, and I am silence, and I am that which is beyond them. I am life, and I am death, and I am that which is beyond them. I am war, and I am peace, and I am that which is beyond them. I am weakness, and I am strength, and I am that which is beyond them. ...And it shall be unto them a grace and a sacrament, and ye shall all sit down together at the supernal banquet, and ye shall feast upon the honey of the gods, and be drunk upon the dew of immortality – FOR I AM HORUS, THE CROWNED AND CONQUERING CHILD, WHOM THOU KNEWEST NOT!”*<sup>61</sup>

As mentioned in later sections of this essay, in the New Aeon we view each individual as God Him/Herself. Therefore **the work of each person is the release of identification with the ego and the consequent identification with Horus, That which transcends Life and Death (and all dualities).** This is expressed symbolically by Frater Achad (and Crowley) by the idea of switching one’s perspective from Earth (the geocentric

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58 *The Book of Thoth.*

59 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, “Mastery.”

60 *The Heart of the Master.*

61 *The Vision & the Voice*, 1<sup>st</sup> Aethyr.

viewpoint where we experience day/life and night/death; the perspective of the ego) to the perspective from the Sun (the heliocentric viewpoint where we experience perpetual shining through day and night; the perspective of the True Self).

This paradigmatic change from Old Aeon to New, in the sense of no longer seeing Death as cataclysmic, is captured symbolically in Crowley's changes to old "formulae" to conform with the New Aeon point-of-view. Specifically, the change from IAO to VIAOV and the change from AUM to AUMGN<sup>62</sup> exemplify the paradigm shift from Old Aeon to New Aeon.

On the formula of IAO, Crowley writes, "This formula is the principal and most characteristic formula of Osiris, of the Redemption of Mankind. 'I' is Isis, Nature, ruined by 'A', Apophis the Destroyer, and restored to life by ['O'] the Redeemer Osiris."<sup>63</sup> The basic idea is that I = Life which is ruined by A = Death/Chaos which must then be redeemed by O. Existence is therefore a process of endless cataclysms which require redemption from this point-of-view. How is this view changed from the point-of-view of New Aeon Initiation? Crowley continues, "THE MASTER THERION, in the Seventeenth year of the Aeon, has reconstructed the Word I A O to satisfy the new conditions of Magick imposed by progress."

Now, no one would deny that all things change, that "all things must pass," but from the point-of-view of physics, energy is never created nor destroyed. It is simply transformed into different forms. If we identify with any of these partial phenomena which inevitably must be transformed, we are subject to death. If we "die daily" to our ego-self, to our sense of division or separateness from the world, then we come to identify with the Whole Process. "The many change and pass; the one remains."<sup>64</sup> The All contains all opposites within itself, it is the symbol of the Serpent itself whose undulations are Life and Death, and therefore is eternal. This True Self, the All which knows no division, is Horus and "that which remains."

It is with these ideas in mind we can understand why, in the New

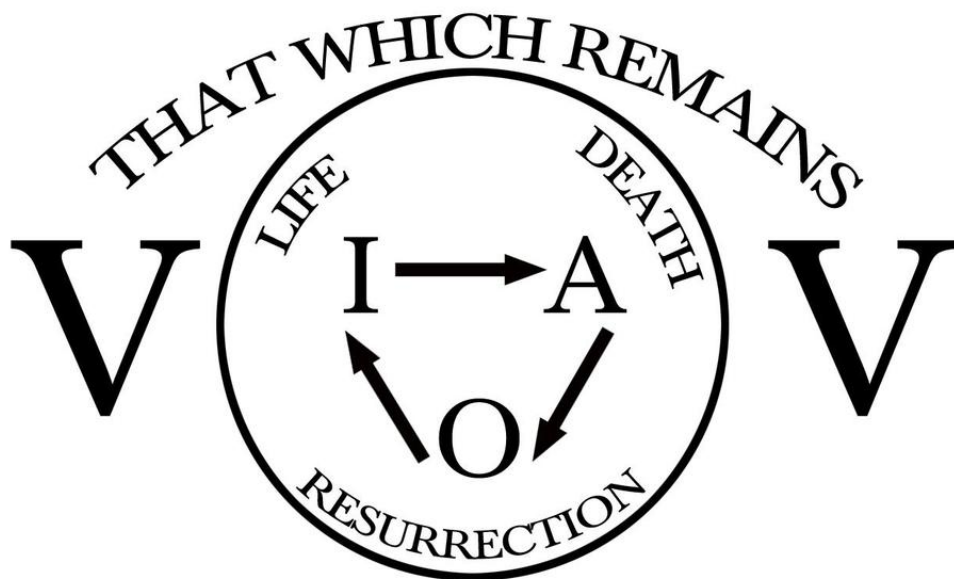
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62 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapters 5 and 7.

63 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 5, which should be consulted for a more full examination of VIAOV.

64 *Liber Porta Lucis*, line 20.

Aeon, IAO has become VIAOV. Basically, IAO has been surrounded by two “V”s.<sup>65</sup> What does this mean?



Essentially, the “V” represents “that which remains.” There may be processes of creation, destruction, and reconstruction (IAO) but there is always “that which remains.” The “V” remains unchanged through the various “IAO processes” one might say. Even though the phallus of the father must “die” in ejaculation, it is a necessary step for new Life – the Child – to emerge... And the Semen, the Quintessence, remains unchanged (“that which remains”) throughout the entire process. This symbolic process exemplifies the ideas of the New Aeon, especially because the “death” in this case is ecstatic: the death is literally orgasmic. Further, Crowley writes, “the snake is the hieroglyphic representation of semen”<sup>66</sup> and so the semen which is “that which remains” is identified with the snake or serpent which, as explained above, represents That which contains the complements of Life and Death (being the crest and trough of His undulations).

There is another interesting idea which this symbolic formula,

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65 These refer to the Hebrew letter “Vav” or the Greek letter “Digamma” for various reasons which can be investigated in chapter 5 of *Magick in Theory & Practice*.

66 *The Book of Lies*, commentary to chapter 8.

VIAOV, conceals: One might consider the original “V” as ignorant man, i.e. man as ignorant of his True Self/his identity with All Things, and the final “V” as man conscious of his own Divinity. It is through the process of IAO, or death of the ego, that each individual becomes consciously aware of him or herself as Horus, “that which remains,” for since all things are contained in the All-Self, it cannot be created or destroyed. Also, the “V” or the True Self was always there, except the individual was simply ignorant of this fact: “The series of transformations has not affected his identity; but it has explained him to himself.”<sup>67</sup> Crowley explains, “...the 'Stone' or 'Elixir' which results from our labours will be the pure and perfect Individual originally inherent in the substance chosen, and nothing else... the effective element of the Product is of the essence of its own nature, and inherent therein; the Work [then] consists in isolating it from its accretions.”<sup>68</sup> As it is written in our Holy Book *Liber LXV*, “Thou wast with me from the beginning.”<sup>69</sup>

Moving onto AUM becoming AUMGN, Crowley writes:

*“The word AUM is the sacred Hindu mantra which was the supreme hieroglyph of Truth, a compendium of the Sacred Knowledge... Firstly, it represents the complete course of sound... Symbolically, this announces the course of Nature as proceeding from free and formless creation through controlled and formed preservation to the silence of destruction... We see accordingly how AUM is, on either system, the expression of a dogma which implies catastrophe in nature. It is cognate with the formula of the Slain God.”*<sup>70</sup>

The formula of AUM therefore suffers from the same attitude problem as the formula of IAO: nature is catastrophic. Moving beyond this idea of existence as catastrophic is, as explained above, one facet of New Aeon Initiation. Crowley explains:

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67 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 5.

68 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 20.

69 *Liber LXV*, II:60.

70 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 7, which should be consulted for a more full examination of AUMGN.



*“The cardinal revelation of the Great Aeon of Horus is that this formula AUM does not represent the facts of nature. The point of view is based upon misapprehension of the character of existence. It soon became obvious to The Master Therion that AUM was an inadequate and misleading hieroglyph. It stated only part of the truth, and it implied a fundamental falsehood. He consequently determined to modify the word in such a manner as to fit it to represent the Arcana unveiled by the Aeon of which He had attained to be the Logos. The essential task was to emphasize the fact that nature is not catastrophic, but proceeds by means of undulations.”<sup>71</sup>*

The essential idea appears in the final sentence. As we have gone over above, the New Aeon point-of-view conceives existence as a Serpent whose undulations are Life and Death. The word AUM ends in “M” which symbolizes the fact that, “the formation of the individual from the absolute is closed by his death.”<sup>72</sup> Again the idea is one of Death as a stop or an end instead of “life to come” or one instance of Change. Now, how would “GN” be added to the end of AUM “fix” the word? Crowley writes, “The undulatory formula of putrefaction is represented in the Qabalah by the letter N, which refers to Scorpio.”<sup>73</sup> Both of these (the letter N and Scorpio) are traditionally attributed to “Atu XIII: Death” in the Tarot which was spoken of above (when it was suggested it might be more accurately titled “Change” or “Transformation”). Basically, “N” represents the idea that, “Death is life to come;” that is, Death is not an end but one apex of the curve of endless undulations. Crowley continues, “Now it so happens that the root GN signifies both knowledge [gnosis] and generation combined in a single idea, in an absolute form independent of personality.”<sup>74</sup> The idea is basically that AUM does not accurately describe the course of nature because existence does not end in cataclysm. Therefore, by adding “GN” to AUM to form “AUMGN,” we assert that the process of nature is not cataclysmic. In fact, it does not end at all but

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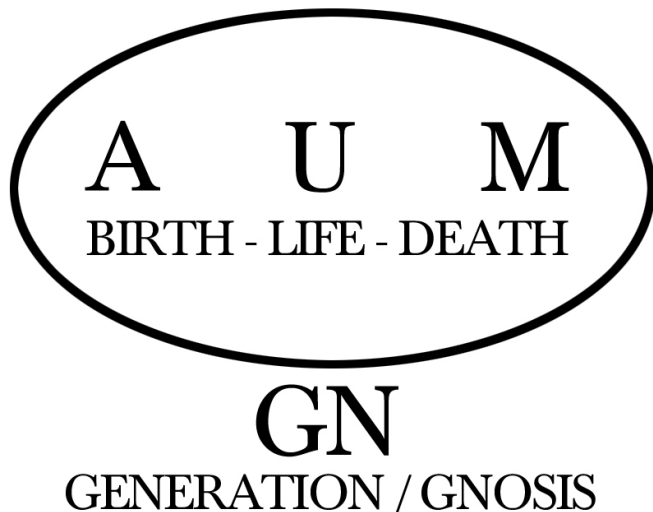
71 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 7, which should be consulted for a more full examination of AUMGN.

72 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 7.

73 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 7.

74 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 7.

instead “proceeds by means of undulations”: Death is not the end but simply one trough of the endless winding of the Serpent of the All-Self.



Essentially, “all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.”<sup>75</sup> It is the work of each individual to dissolve and de-identify with the ego-self and identify with “that which remains,” the True Self which transcends all division (especially between Life and Death) in that it contains All. The death of the ego is not cataclysmic because we know the Sun of the True, All-Self which “is more He than all that he calls He,”<sup>76</sup> is always shining regardless of our ignorance (our “darkness”). In short, in the New Aeon we give the advice, “If you are 'walking in darkness', do not try to make the sun rise by self-sacrifice, but wait in confidence for the dawn, and enjoy the pleasures of the night meanwhile.”<sup>77</sup>

*“With courage conquering fear shall ye approach me: ye shall lay down your heads upon mine altar, expecting the sweep of the sword. But the first kiss of love shall be radiant on your lips; and all my darkness and terror shall turn to light and joy. Only those*

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<sup>75</sup> *Liber AL*, II:9.

<sup>76</sup> *The Book of Lies*, chapter 18.

<sup>77</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:49.

*who fear shall fail.”*<sup>78</sup>

## 2) The True Self contains Good & Evil, Upright & Averse

*“My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells.”*<sup>79</sup>

Initiation in the New Aeon is “the Child Growing to Maturity” by the slaying of the ego-self whose “death is life to come” for the True Self. But what is the nature of that True Self? Essentially, the True Self transcends dualities. Specifically, the True Self transcends the moral duality of Good and Evil.

People have a common tendency to imagine their goal as their “Higher Self” which they imagine as Absolute Good, caring, benevolent, *et cetera*. In short, many people construct an ideal or an abstraction of their highest ideals and believe that to be the goal. Crowley asserts, “He is not, let me say with emphasis, a mere abstraction from yourself; and that is why I have insisted rather heavily that the term 'Higher Self' implies a damnable heresy and a dangerous delusion.”<sup>80</sup> The term “Higher Self” is a delusion because the aim of Initiation in the New Aeon is to bring the individual to identify with the “Total Self” or “All-Self,” not the “Higher Self” (or “Lower Self”). We must explore and conquer both the “good” and “evil” sides of ourselves: in terms of modern psychology, we cannot neglect our own Shadow. As Crowley advises, “every magician must firmly extend his empire to the depth of hell.”<sup>81</sup> As Nietzsche says, “The great epochs of our life are the occasions when we gain the courage to rebaptize our evil qualities as our best qualities.”<sup>82</sup>

Much of Thelema’s imagery may be seen as “sinister.” Examples include the “Beast” and “Babalon” from the Book of Revelations (where they do not appear in a favorable light), the experience of divinity as “evil kisses corrupt[ing] the blood... as an acid eats into steel, as a cancer that

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78 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 16-18.

79 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 40.

80 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 43.

81 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 21.

82 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good & Evil*.

utterly corrupts the body”<sup>83</sup> and “poison,”<sup>84</sup> “the concealed” within oneself wherein “all things are in thine own Self”<sup>85</sup> is called Hell or Satan,<sup>86</sup> *et cetera*. These could all be considered as attempts to bring the psyche of the individual to acceptance of both the upright and averse aspects of existence. One might even say it is the “darker” side of the self emerging because of its neglect in Old Aeon systems which focus on Good, Virtue, Grace, *et cetera*, and exclude their opposites. **In the New Aeon we assert that the True Self contains (and thereby transcends) both Good and Evil.** “Less than All cannot satisfy Man.”<sup>87</sup>

This idea of the True Self as containing both Heaven and Hell, Good and Evil, Upright and Averse, is captured succinctly in our Holy Books:

*“I reveal unto you a great mystery. Ye stand between the abyss of height and the abyss of depth. In either awaits you a Companion; and that Companion is Yourself. Ye can have no other Companion. Many have arisen, being wise. They have said ‘Seek out the glittering Image in the place ever golden, and unite yourselves with It.’ Many have arisen, being foolish. They have said, ‘Stoop down unto the darkly splendid world, and be wedded to that Blind Creature of the Slime.’ I who am beyond Wisdom and Folly, arise and say unto you: achieve both weddings! Unite yourselves with both! Beware, beware, I say, lest ye seek after the one and lose the other! My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells... Thus shall equilibrium become perfect.”*<sup>88</sup>

As mentioned in the previous section of this essay, the True Self transcends the duality of Life and Death. In this section we see that the True Self transcends the duality of Upright and Averse, Good and Evil. The True Self is even “beyond Wisdom and Folly.” We must unite both

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83 *Liber LXV*, I:13,16.

84 *Liber LXV*, III:39, IV: 24-25, V:52-53,55-56.

85 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 124.

86 Who is identified with the Sun in *Liber Samekh*.

87 Blake, William. *There is No Natural Religion*.

88 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 33-42.

with the Upright, “the glittering Image in the place ever golden,” and with the Averse, “that Blind Creature of the Slime.” Only thereby may man come to knowledge of his true Self: otherwise the individual will have a lopsided perspective of the self. One must remember that it is only because of its roots deep into the dark ground that a tree is able to produce fruit. As the psychologist Abraham Maslow noted, “Man’s higher nature rests upon man’s lower nature, needing it as a foundation and collapsing without this foundation.”<sup>89</sup>

**The method of Initiation in the New Aeon is therefore one of Union of Opposites and Equilibrium.** The equilibrium is not that of moderation, the Middle Path of Buddha (or the Doctrine of the Mean of Aristotle), where we seek to avoid extremes and remain in the center. The equilibrium of New Aeon Initiation is understood as the balance attained by pushing to both extremes of any duality. “Go thou unto the outermost places and subdue all things.”<sup>90</sup> We don’t take the upright (“white light”) or averse (“satanic”) of the Upright/Averse duality and aim for that alone, we aim for both the heavens and the hells. One might say, symbolically, the Old Aeon is like a pole or a tree, where the vertical section is straight and narrow, avoiding extremes. The New Aeon is then like a large building or a pyramid where the base is expanded horizontally. This symbolically shows that, by pushing towards the extremes (expanding the base horizontally in this metaphor), we enlarge our foundations which thereby allow us to withstand the “winds” of experience better. As it says in *The Book of the Law*, “Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be not animal; refine thy rapture! ...But exceed! exceed! Strive ever to more!”<sup>91</sup> William Blake also enigmatically stated, “The road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom.”<sup>92</sup>

We can look again to Horus (with the Infinitely Contracted Core of Flame as His Heart and the Infinitely Expansive Space as His Body) as a symbol of That which transcends the dualities of Good and Evil, Upright and Averse. In uniting with both the “glittering Image” and the “Blind Creature of the Slime,” we come to know ourselves as the All which contains but transcends both: “For two things are done and a third thing is

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89 Maslow, Abraham. *Toward a Psychology of Being*.

90 *Liber LXV*, I:45.

91 *Liber AL*, II:70-72.

92 Blake, William. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

begun... Horus leaps up thrice armed from the womb of his mother.”<sup>93</sup> Again, as Horus says in *The Vision and the Voice*, “I am light, and I am night, and I am that which is beyond them. I am speech, and I am silence, and I am that which is beyond them. I am life, and I am death, and I am that which is beyond them.”<sup>94</sup> We might add, “I am good, and I am evil, and I am that which is beyond them.” **Horus, the Sun, is a symbol of That which contains & transcends dualities, an image of our True Selves, identical in essence yet diverse in expression for each individual;** other cognate symbols include the point in the circle (the Solar glyph), the Rose-Cross, seminal and vaginal fluid combined (two live, generative fluids combined into a third which “is one substance and not two, not living and not dead, neither liquid nor solid, neither hot nor cold, neither male nor female”<sup>95</sup>), the Heart Girt with the Serpent,<sup>96</sup> the cross in the circle, the circle squared,<sup>97</sup> the Sun and the Moon conjoined,<sup>98</sup> the Lion and the Eagle, the word ABRAHADABRA, and infinite others. In a certain ritual where the individual comes to identify with Horus, we proclaim our transcendence of the moral duality: “There is no grace: there is no guilt: / This is the Law: DO WHAT THOU WILT!”<sup>99</sup>

*“For Perfection abideth not in the Pinnacles, or in the Foundations, but in the ordered Harmony of one with all.”*<sup>100</sup>

### 3) Embrace of the World

*“Enjoy all things of sense and rapture...”*<sup>101</sup>

We found the True Self with which we come to identify in Initiation is beyond the duality of Life and Death (part 1) as well as the

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93 *Liber A'ash vel Capricorni Pneumatici*, line 8.

94 *The Vision & the Voice*, 1<sup>st</sup> Aethyr.

95 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 20.

96 See *Liber LXV*.

97 *Liber AL*, II:47.

98 Called “the Mark of the Beast” in *Liber Reguli* and “the secret sigil of the Beast” in the 1st Aethyr of *The Vision & the Voice*.

99 *The Mass of the Phoenix*.

100 *Liber LXI vel Causae*.

101 *Liber AL*, II:22.

duality of Good and Evil (part 2). Now we unite yet another divide with an embrace of the physical, “mundane” world. Another common dichotomy (at least in the West) that has split the psyche of man is Spirit versus Matter, or Sacred versus Profane.

In the ancient and medieval world, the predominant conception of the universe was of an earth below and the heavens above. People conceived the law of the Heavens as perfect and the Earth as degraded. Isaac Newton was one of the main figures who helped bridge the gap between Heaven and Earth. He said that the same force which makes objects fall on earth is the same force which makes the celestial objects in heaven move in their orbits: gravity. Symbolically and literally, Newton said the heavens and earth do not have separate laws but abide by one law. Also, we now know that the heavens are not above us but surround us on all sides. There is no separation between the “mundane” Earth and the “spiritual” Heavens: Earth is literally immersed in the Heavens.

In the New Aeon we assert that “Every man and every woman is a star.”<sup>102</sup> On the physical level, we are all literally made of star-stuff (or “stardust”), as Carl Sagan was fond of noting, but there is a more important meaning here. Nuit – who says of herself, “I am Heaven”<sup>103</sup> – is a symbol of the Infinite Space in which we are all immersed. **Each star – each individual – is the center of self-awareness & expression of Heaven on Earth.** Crowley writes, “Know firmly, o my son, that the true Will cannot err; for this is thine appointed course in Heaven, in whose order is Perfection.”<sup>104</sup> In an important sense, this asserts that we too are in a perfect course through Heaven just as the celestial stars are. In the New Aeon there is an “unveiling of the company of heaven”<sup>105</sup>: every man and every woman. We are each Gods, Stars going our unique Ways in Heaven. Crowley comments, “[The] Pantheism of *AL: The Book of the Law* shows forth all things as God”<sup>106</sup> and “The 'company of heaven' is Mankind, and its 'unveiling' is the assertion of the independent godhead of every man and every woman!”<sup>107</sup>

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102 *Liber AL*, I:3.

103 *Liber AL*, I:21.

104 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 13.

105 *Liber AL*, I:2.

106 *Djeridensis Working*, I:2.

107 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:2.

From all these considerations it is easy to see that in the New Aeon, not only does the True Self transcend the duality of Heaven and Earth/Spiritual and Mundane, but there is essentially no distinction between them at all. **The Earth is not a prison, but a Temple where the sacrament of Life may be enacted; the body is not corrupt, but a pulsing and thriving vessel for the expression of Energy; sex is not sinful, but a mysterious conduit of pleasure and power as well as an image of the ecstatic nature of all Experience.**

In fact, the embrace of the world, and even an ecstatic embrace of the world, naturally comes from cosmological perspective of the New Aeon. “Existence is pure joy”<sup>108</sup> in the New Aeon (and not pure sorrow as some hypochondriacs and many pessimists since have suggested). We are also told, “the Truth of the universe is delight.”<sup>109</sup> This is because **the Cosmological Picture of the New Aeon is that all Experiences are acts of Love between Infinite Forms (“Nuit”) and Infinite Forces (“Hadit”).**

*“Hadit, who is the complement of Nuit [‘the infinite in whom all we live and move and have our being’]... is eternal energy, the Infinite Motion of Things, the central core of all being. The manifested Universe comes from the marriage of Nuit and Hadit; without this could no thing be. This eternal, this perpetual marriage-feast is then the nature of things themselves; and therefore everything that is, is a crystallization of divine ecstasy.”*<sup>110</sup>

Therefore, in the New Aeon we see every experience as the joyful union between Form and Force, Infinite Space and Infinite Motion. The world itself is an expression of Divinity, and therefore there is no reason to retreat from it in New Aeon Initiation. Just as we must transcend the dualities of Life & Death and Good & Evil, we must transcend the duality of Heaven & Earth, Sacred & Profane. We are told, “Worship all things; for all things are alike necessary to the Being of the All.”<sup>111</sup> This idea of worshiping all things and not making a distinction between “spiritual” and “mundane” leads to the Formula of the Scarlet Woman.

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108 *Liber AL*, II:9.

109 *The Vision & the Voice*, 17<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

110 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.

111 *The Vision & the Voice*, 19<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.



“The Formula of the Scarlet Woman” refers to a certain attitude to the world. The Scarlet Woman is traditionally associated with the image of a whore, who symbolically represents “that which allows anything and everything into itself.” The opposite image is that of a chaste woman who shuts herself up and does not allow any intimate contact with anything around herself. Crowley writes, “The Enemy is this Shutting up of things. Shutting the Door is preventing the Operation of Change, i.e. of Love... It is this 'shutting up' that is hideous, the image of death. It is the opposite of Going, which is God.”<sup>112</sup> The whore is an image of Change and the embrace of all things without distinction, and the chaste woman is an image of Stagnation and the separation from all things. The chaste woman is also therefore an image of the ego which refuses to give up its claim to be “King of the Mountain” (the True Self is the rightful “King” and the ego its minister, but the ego insists on claiming this title). Just like a chaste woman will not “let herself go” to have intimate relations with others, the ego will not “let itself go” to dissolve in the non-ego, the rest of the world, so that the individual may become One (beyond dualities). As mentioned in the first section of this essay, the work of each person is the release of identification with the ego and the consequent identification with Horus, That which transcends Life and Death (and all dualities). We are therefore a “chaste woman” if we refuse to release identification with the ego and insist on a world of division (i.e. ego vs. world/non-ego). This is another example of the “averse” or “sinister” symbolism that is often used in the New Aeon: the symbol of stagnation is a chaste woman (chastity being a “virtue” in the Old Aeons) and the symbol of growth & change is a whore (promiscuity/sensuality being a “vice”/“sinful” in the Old Aeons).

In summary: **the Formula of the Scarlet Woman applies to every individual (not just females) and refers to the attitude of accepting all things into oneself, refusing nothing, and growing through their assimilation.** Crowley writes, “[this is] a counsel to accept all impressions; it is the formula of the Scarlet woman; but no impression must be allowed to dominate you, only to fructify you; just as the artist, seeing an object, does not worship it, but breeds a masterpiece from it.”<sup>113</sup> Therefore, we accept all things but we do not thereby become a passive, lifeless receptacle which is buffeted by external forces; instead we must allow all things “to

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112 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:55.

113 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 4.

fructify” us. We all accept all things but we also turn these things towards the accomplishment of our Wills. Here is an illustration of this point: a musical composer does not neglect C# as “profane” or “not worthy” but accepts all notes as worthy and beautiful in themselves, but that does not mean his song will consist of hitting all the keys at once. On the contrary, he selects among the possible notes, arranges them in accordance with his vision, and produces a particular composition. The same idea is true for the Scarlet Woman, for the Formula of the Scarlet Woman is the acceptance of all things no matter if they are “unclean” or “mundane.” Crowley insists, “I urge you to beware of the pride of the spirit, of the thought of anything as evil or unclean. Make all things serve you in your Magick [causing Change in conformity with Will] as weapons.”<sup>114</sup>

In short, in the New Aeon we do not avoid the things of the world or the world itself in fear of it being “un-spiritual,” “profane,” or “mundane.” On the contrary, each individual is immersed in Heaven itself, as a Star among Stars. In the New Aeon, each individual proclaims, “All things are sacred to me”<sup>115</sup> and enacts “the Formula of the Scarlet Woman,” refusing nothing and accepting all. Thereby does each individual come to embody the union between (and the fruit of) Heaven and Earth.

*“Behold! these be grave mysteries; for there are also of my friends who be hermits. Now think not to find them in the forest or on the mountain; but in beds of purple, caressed by magnificent beasts of women with large limbs, and fire and light in their eyes, and masses of flaming hair about them; there shall ye find them. Ye shall see them at rule, at victorious armies, at all the joy; and there shall be in them a joy a million times greater than this.”*<sup>116</sup>

#### 4) Self as Redeemer

*“There is no god but man.”*<sup>117</sup>

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114 *Djeridensis Working*, I:51.

115 *Liber A'ash*, line 29.

116 *Liber AL*, II:24.

117 *Liber OZ*.

One common attribute of the Old Aeon systems is their insistence on the baseness, sinfulness, and helplessness of humanity. In this view, mankind is naturally in a state spiritual blindness, deafness, and dumbness; we don't know what is best for ourselves, and we're aimless when left to our own devices. This often translates into the necessity of giving oneself up to a higher power outside of oneself: to the priest class, to the guru, to God, to the State, and (most recently) to advertisers. **In the New Aeon, we place no faith on the grace of any god or guru; we assert no need to become an Initiate beyond oneself.**

As was mentioned in a previous section of this essay, each person must unite with both the "lower" ("the abyss of depth," "that Blind Creature of the Slime") and "higher" ("the abyss of height," "the glittering Image") Companion – those "Upright" and "Averse" aspects of themselves beyond the current awareness of the ego, which must be released, explored, and assimilated. A very important facet of this "great mystery" is that, "that Companion is Yourself. Ye can have no other Companion."<sup>118</sup> Although we seek to unite with those abysses beyond our selves (insofar as "self" is here considered as the ego-self), those abysses are parts of Yourself. In terms of psychology, they are the unconscious aspects of the human psyche, which isn't just "below" the ego (i.e. just "lower," "animalistic" drives, the *qliphothic* in Qabalistic terms; "that Blind Creature of the Slime") but is also "above" (insofar as it contains the "higher," "divine," the *Neschamah* in Qabalistic terms; "the glittering Image").

**We realize then that Initiation does not consist in "coming to God" or receiving "the grace of God" insofar as we consider a God separate or "above" ourselves, but rather, in the New Aeon, each person coming to a fuller, truer understanding of the Self is what constitutes Initiation.** This is because "Initiation means the Journey Inwards,"<sup>119</sup> and the Godhead we seek is not something other than our True Selves. As Crowley writes, "Behold! the Kingdom of God is within you, even as the Sun standeth eternal in the heavens, equal at midnight and at noon. He riseth not: he setteth not: it is but the shadow of the earth which concealeth him, or the clouds upon her face."<sup>120</sup> Again, we assert that this Self is always present,

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118 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 34-35.

119 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, "Mastery".

120 *De Lege Libellum*.

even at the beginning of the Great Work of coming to know it, although we normally function in and revert to the state of identifying with our minds and bodies (i.e. our normal ego-conception of the self).

This Work of coming to reveal and identify with the True Self does not require the blessing of priests, the empowerments of gurus, the presence of a “Master,” the grace of God, or the funding of the State. Each person must “Lift up thyself!”<sup>121</sup> In one sense, it is only by the individual’s own courage, persistence, and hard work that the Great Work can ever be accomplished. In another sense, Truth – the realization of one’s True Self beyond dualities – cannot be communicated.

It is as futile to try to communicate the experience of Unity with All Things as it is describing red to a blind person. We can use metaphors or analogies but they will never actually understand until they have experienced it themselves. As Crowley says, “all real secrets are incommunicable,”<sup>122</sup> and this is because “truth is supra-rational” and so it is therefore “incommunicable in the language of reason.”<sup>123</sup> Therefore, if there is any “faith,” it is the confidence conferred by the “consciousness of the continuity of existence.”<sup>124</sup> **This perception of Truth can only be partially communicated in poetics, metaphors, symbols, and analogies: it is the direct, individual experience of the True Self which brings real understanding of the Truth as That which is beyond dualities.**

One can imagine the perception of Truth as a flower unfolding in the heart of every man and every woman: it is something inherent in the individual which is revealed. Humanity is not sinful, degenerate, empty, or untrustworthy but, rather, each individual is a Star, each a fountain of Godhead, and each inherently Divine.

It is the work of the individual to realize this Divinity in themselves, coming to know themselves not as the ego but as the True Self which transcends all opposites: “ye [shall] look upon yourselves, and behold All Things that are in Truth One Thing only.”<sup>125</sup> This “consciousness of the continuity of existence” is no supernatural, extraterrestrial, supra-mundane, posthumous fantasy: each person can attain to this awareness

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121 *Liber AL*, II:78.

122 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 9.

123 *Postcards to Probationers*.

124 *Liber AL*, I:26.

125 *De Lege Libellum*.

here on earth, during this life.

*“Every man must overcome his own obstacles, expose his own illusions.”*<sup>126</sup>

## 5) No Perfecting of the Soul

*“The soul is, in its own nature, perfect purity, perfect calm, perfect silence... This soul can never be injured, never marred, never defiled.”*<sup>127</sup>

This idea is related strongly to the ideas in the last section of the Self as Redeemer. We assert there is no reliance on God, guru, priest, or any external authority, but it is a misnomer to say we “redeem” ourselves for there is nothing to redeem. Crowley writes, “Redemption is a bad word; it implies a debt. For every star possesses boundless wealth; the only proper way to deal with the ignorant is to bring them to the knowledge of their starry heritage.”<sup>128</sup> The “soul” does not need to be redeemed for it is perfect and pure in itself, it only is because of ignorance of our own Divine Birthright that we think ourselves imperfect and transient. This “soul” isn’t the personality of the individual – the ego-self which identifies with the mind and body – but rather the Self which is coterminous with All Things.

**The True Self never dies as it is beyond all limitation, containing all things and relations within Itself. The body along with the mind surely will expire but it is only through the mysterious mechanisms of this mind and body that the Self, beyond all limits and opposites, may become self-aware and consciously experience the rapture of existence.** This Self does not need to be redeemed or perfected: there is no Fall of Man to be rectified (Abrahamic religions) nor a Wheel of Suffering to be liberated from (Dharmic religions).

There is even no sense of the soul incarnating to attain to higher and higher “spiritual states” or towards “enlightenment.” In the New Aeon, the “starting point” is not a fallen, suffering, and sinful state, but

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<sup>126</sup> *Liber LXI vel Causae.*

<sup>127</sup> “The Soul of the Desert” available in *The Revival of Magick.*

<sup>128</sup> *The Book of Thoth.*

rather we are all Royal and Divine, Divinity-made-manifest, and “existence is pure joy”<sup>129</sup> if it is seen with eyes that “Bind nothing!”<sup>130</sup> i.e. eyes that see the unity underlying apparent dualities. As it is said, “Since all things are God, in all things thou seest just so much of God as thy capacity affordeth thee.”<sup>131</sup> **The essential symbol-metaphor is that the Star of Unity is always shining, potentially conscious, but we identify with the ego-self and are therefore mired in duality and limitation** (once you identify with the ego, you are immediately not the non-ego or the world and therefore the world becomes Two instead of One). Crowley writes:

*“We are not to regard ourselves as base beings, without whose sphere is Light or 'God'. Our minds and bodies are veils of the Light within. The uninitiate is a 'Dark Star,' and the Great Work for him is to make his veils transparent by 'purifying' them. This 'purification' is really 'simplification'; it is not that the veil is dirty, but that the complexity of its folds makes it opaque. The Great Work therefore consists principally in the solution of complexes. Everything in itself is perfect, but when things are muddled, they become 'evil'.”*<sup>132</sup>

The important point is that “everything in itself is perfect” but our minds inevitably “muddle” the situation which ends with us identifying with the ego instead of the True Self. **Because all things are perfect in themselves, we obviously do not need any kind of God or guru to bestow redemption, liberation, or initiation upon us: the aspirant need only clear away the cloud-veils of ignorance around her Star, and the True Self will leap up within her awareness and burn away all division and limitation.** As Crowley explains:

*“This 'star' or 'Inmost Light' is the original, individual, eternal essence....we are warned against the idea of a Pleroma, a flame of which we are Sparks, and to which we return when we 'attain'. That would indeed be to make the whole curse of separate*

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129 *Liber AL*, II:9.

130 *Liber AL*, I:22.

131 *The Vision & the Voice*, 17<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

132 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:8.

*existence ridiculous, a senseless and inexcusable folly... The idea of incarnations 'perfecting' a thing originally perfect by definition is imbecile. The only sane solution is... to suppose that the Perfect enjoys experience of (apparent) Imperfection."*<sup>133</sup>

In the New Aeon we go even further than one might expect: the "ignorance" of duality is not inherently evil or bad at all either. In short, duality is "ignorance" for one who still identifies with the ego, but once one has dissolved the ego and identified with the True Self one recognizes duality as the necessary means for self-awareness. For the individual mired in duality and identification with the ego, "coition-dissolution" is her formula, but one who has dissolved the ego and identified with the True Self has the formula of "creation-parturition"... and "The All, thus interwoven of These, is Bliss."<sup>134</sup> **The body and the mind, with its inherently dualistic conceptions, are a prison of ignorance for the uninitiate and a temple for performing the Sacrament of Life for the initiate.**

It takes the experience of the dissolution of the ego to overcome the morbid fear of death and accept duality, not as the condition of our suffering, but as the opportunity for us to rejoice in the uniting of diverse elements (self and world in each experience, along with the Supreme Union of ego and non-ego/subject and object). The world is both "None... and two"<sup>135</sup>... None, the continuous, is "divided for love's sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all."<sup>136</sup> In this conception, duality and the "creation of the world" as we know it (i.e. the normal dualistic world which we commonly inhabit) is actually the condition of "the chance of union." Only if two things are separate can they unite and have the possibility of "the joy of dissolution" wherein the self becomes "all." Crowley explains, "Nuit shews the object of creating the Illusion of Duality. She said: The world exists as two, for only so can there be known the Joy of Love, whereby are Two made One. Aught that is One is alone, and has little pain in making itself two, that it may know itself, and love

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133 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:8.

134 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 3.

135 *Liber AL*, I:28.

136 *Liber AL*, I:29-30.

itself, and rejoice therein.”<sup>137</sup> Thereby does one embrace both unity and multiplicity (duality) in a higher Unity.

This perception of “the consciousness of the continuity of existence”<sup>138</sup> is not something given by a god or a guru but a natural birthright of each individual. It is, as described in the first section of this essay, a natural step of Growth towards psychological-spiritual Maturity. And this also leads us to the final point: even this is a step along the Path. It may be the “End” in one sense (the end of the dominance of the ego, for once thing) but it is also the beginning, for “death is life to come.”<sup>139</sup> One still has to live one’s life. One might say, “Before initiation: work, live, and play; after initiation: work, live, and play,” for coming to identify with the True Self doesn’t mean the end of one’s mind and body along with their normal needs. In fact, the mind and body – the ego-self – are not destroyed permanently but rather they are reborn with renewed energy, the veils of ignorance (of duality as well as the falsity of the doctrines of the Fall of Man and the inherent Suffering of the world) having been torn away. One does not suddenly obtain the earthly power of a king or have the intellectual power of Einstein, but the change is something largely “internal,” for in initiation, “nothing is changed or can be changed; but all is trulier understood with every step.”<sup>140</sup> It is this understanding of our True Selves, beyond the veils of mind and body, which we each strive to attain so that we may more effectively and joyfully manifest our wills in the world. The task is then simple yet difficult: each individual must dissolve the ego and their identification with it to identify with the True Self, always shining though we are unaware, which is beyond dualities and all limitation. In the end, “All you have to do is to be yourself, to do your will, and to rejoice.”<sup>141</sup>

*“No star can stray from its self-chosen course: for in the infinite soul of space all ways are endless, all-embracing: perfect.”*<sup>142</sup>

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137 *Djeridensis Working*, I:30.

138 *Liber AL*, I:22.

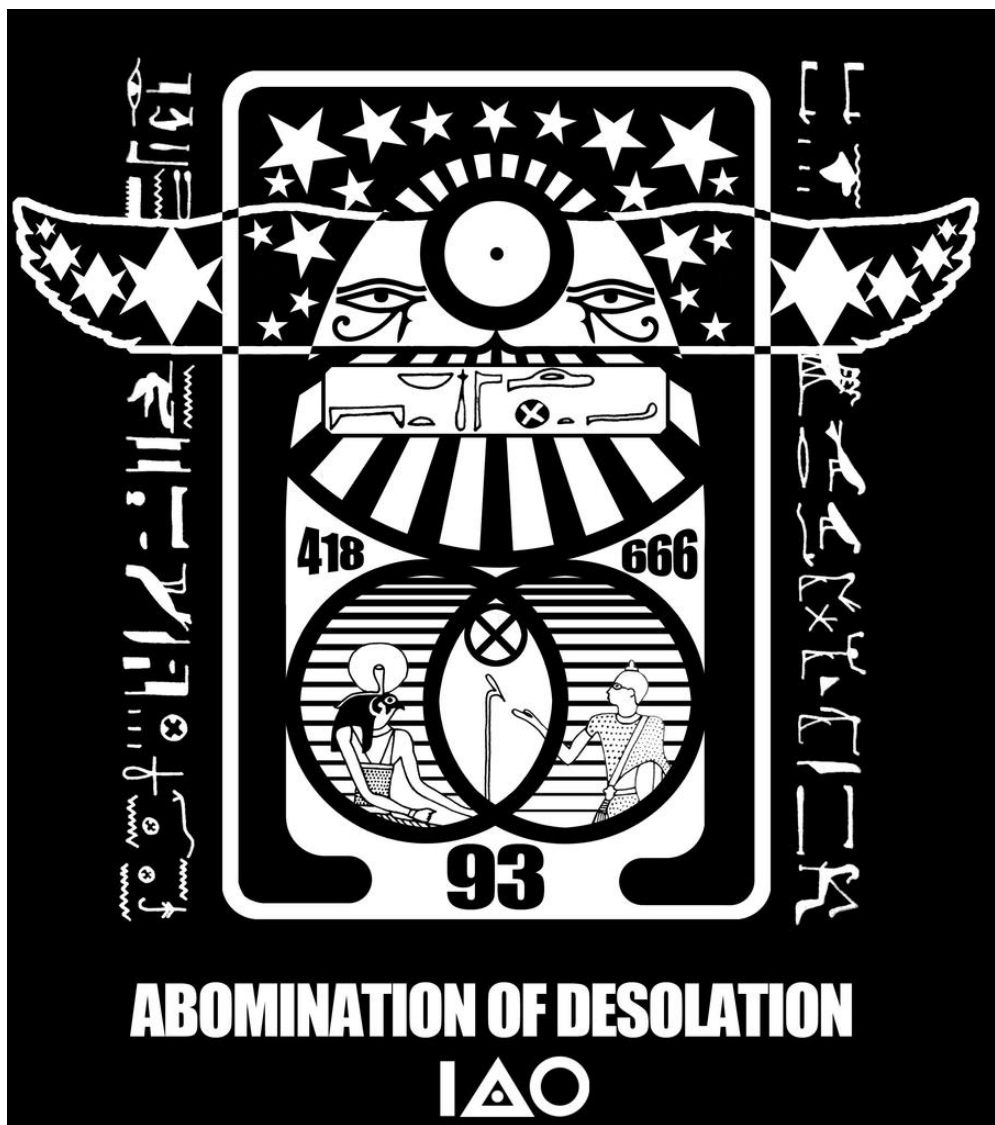
139 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 18.

140 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, “Mastery”.

141 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.

142 *The Heart of the Master*.





*Abomination of Desolation*  
 is an interpretation of Atu XX: Aeon

# CHAPTER 7

## ACTIVE THELEMA

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*This chapter was originally two different but connected articles written in early 2008 e.v. The impetus behind writing these pieces was the recognition that, with all the theology and intellectualism that is so readily apparent and available in Thelemic circles, we often lose touch with the most basic connection to the concepts we often speak about including Nuit as the night-sky and the Child of the New Aeon. This essay was intended to help rectify that situation in some small way by facilitating the reconnection with these symbols on a more direct, experiential level.*

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### A Star Among Stars, All in the Night-Sky

Thelema is an all-encompassing paradigm. One problem with any kind of system of ideas that is conveyed primarily through writings is that the concepts can often be difficult to practically apply to life. These contemplations are offered to allow both the symbolic and more practical considerations of Thelemic philosophy to be more materialized in one's life.

**Consider the night sky.** Please, really do whenever you can. (In French, night is called *nuit*...) When we see this immense expanse, a couple ideas often come to mind:

*Boundlessness;*

*Immense Power;*

*Infinite Possibilities...*

The night sky is incredibly, unfathomably large. The poor ability of

our eyeballs to only see a small fraction of the electromagnetic spectrum of light may very well be to keep us from being continually dazzled in wonder at the immensity of the space and power of the universe. Friedrich Nietzsche characterized the world as a play of great power better than any other author I know when he wrote:

*“And do you know what 'the world' is to me? Shall I show it to you in my mirror?”*

*This world: a monster of energy, without beginning, nor end; a firm, iron magnitude of force that does not grow bigger or smaller, that does not expend itself but only transforms itself; as a whole, of unalterable size, a household without expenses or losses, but likewise without increase or income; enclosed by 'nothingness' as by a boundary; not something blurry or wasted, not something endlessly extended, but set in a definite space as a definite force, and not a space that might be 'empty' here or there, but rather as force throughout, as a play of forces and waves of forces, at the same time one and many, increasing here and at the same time decreasing there; a sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back, with tremendous years of recurrence, with an ebb and a flood of its forms; out of the simplest forms striving toward the most complex, out of the stillest, most rigid, coldest forms toward the hottest, most turbulent, most self-contradictory, and then again returning home to the simple out of this abundance, out of the play of contradictions back to the joy of concord, still affirming itself in this uniformity of its courses and its years, blessing itself as that which must return eternally, as a becoming that knows no satiety, no disgust, no weariness: this, my Dionysian world of the eternally self-creating, the eternally self-destroying, this mystery world of the twofold voluptuous delight, my 'beyond good and evil,' without goal, unless the joy of the circle is itself a goal; without will, unless a ring feels good will toward itself—do you want a name for this world? A solution for all of its riddles? A light for you too, best-concealed, strongest, most intrepid, most midnightly men? – This world is the will to power, and nothing besides! And you yourselves are also this will to power – and*

*nothing besides!”*<sup>143</sup>

Thelema places us all symbolically and philosophically into this world. In *The Book of the Law*, the speaker of the first chapter proclaims, “I am known to ye by my name Nuit... I am Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof...”<sup>144</sup> We have already considered the night sky, and now we must firmly realize that Nuit, the Egyptian star goddess is but a symbol of the night sky, and the night sky is a symbol of boundlessness, immense power & potential, and infinite possibilities; she is the field of space-time in which all events may potentially manifest. Essentially, Nuit is symbolically all possibilities. **Every time you look at the night sky, one should be reminded of this conception Nuit with “Her” infinite potential.** Within this “Infinite Space” of possibilities are “Infinite Stars,” and the third line from this same book, *The Book of the Law*, proclaims this memorable line:

*“Every man and every woman is a star.”*

The reading of this line in *The Book of the Law* may be memorable to some as the point when he or she put the book down and took it to be nonsense (although I am going to assume the reader got past that initial reaction if they are reading this!).

Really consider what this is saying: Every man and every woman is a star... Last time I checked, every man and every woman is literally not a star, but human organisms – our own scientists label us *homo sapiens*, specifically.

Let us be realistic: this statement cannot be taken literally with much benefit, but taken as a metaphor it has many rich meanings. As one conception, insofar as every man and every woman is an accretion of matter-energy or “star-stuff,” they are no different than stars... Let us take this contemplation further.

**Consider the continually burning and churning energy of a star.** Remember, our sun is the star closest to us. What are some other ideas related to stars?

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143 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*.

144 *Liber AL*, I:22.

*Constantly Going;*

*Energy Radiating;*

*Self-luminous;*

*Center, perspective, or point-of-view of its own Universe...*

With these conceptions of “Infinite Space and the Infinite Stars thereof,” we can imagine the Universe to symbolically be represented as the boundless night sky of possibilities filled with infinite amounts of varying energy-clusters, stars, which are each a continually moving center of self-luminous light & energy.

Now that we have considered the boundless possibilities of the night sky and the infinitely varied points of motion (force) and energy (fire), the stars, let us consider another aspect of the same idea: The fact that every man and every woman is a star.

**Consider, first, yourself.**

You are the center of your universe, a point-of-view, a star among stars. You radiate your energy, transforming the world physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. You attract and repel other stars – other men and women – by laws more subtle and complex than gravity which rules the motions of the macrocosmic stars. Think of all the directions you can go in, both physically and mentally. Everyone wants to be able to fulfill their own unique & utmost potential. The famous philosopher Nietzsche called this the “will-to-power.” The famous psychologist Carl Rogers called this the “actualizing tendency.” Thelema understands this to be each person’s and every star’s Will.

Just like each object is understood physically to have both active energy (which comes in many forms) and potential energy, every man and every woman is a storehouse of both potential and active energy. Physically we have a bit of energy but psychologically, we have an incredible store of energy waiting to be let loose. It is often said the part of our psyches that we are aware of, the consciousness, is like the tip of an iceberg with the enormous majority being submerged out of sight underwater, the unconscious. The psyche’s untapped potential latent in

the unconscious is but one source of the many ways of fulfilling one's Will more fully. Essentially, we are all big masses of energy, both active and potential energy, which is waiting to be actualized.

Now, let us consider that even as each one of us desires the freedom to fully actualize our potential, so does every other star – every man and every woman – surrounding us. Many have self-destructive, divergent, and dampening tendencies which prevent the Will from actualizing in its full potency, but each person is a star nonetheless – and each has a particular, unique, and necessary Will that is part of the whole.

**Next time you see a person – when you are on a bus, driving next to people in cars on the freeway, talking to a friend – consider yourself and these other people all as stars.** Each is going its own direction, actualizing its own potential. Treat them as fellow stars, as royalty would greet royalty (with great respect & admiration), as children would greet children (with great openness & energy); this is enacting the formula of the Crowned & Conquering Child on the social plane. As one human with much will-power once said, “You must be the change you wish to see in the world.” This man grasped the power of love that is invigorated by and issued from the Will of each individual.

## **The Formula of the Child is Continual Growth**

*“[In the Aeon of] Horus, the child... we come to perceive events as a continual growth...”*<sup>145</sup>

This new Aeon of human existence is a new dawn of a shift in our points-of-view. With the reception of *The Book of the Law* in 1904 by Aleister Crowley, the paradigm of Thelema was brought to the world. Only a year after, Einstein had his famous “miracle year” which revolutionized physics and brought us, among other things, the special theory of relativity. Less than two decades later, quantum mechanics would spring onto the scene with full force and lead to technological achievements like transistors, computers, and A-bombs. In this century, not only were protons, neutrons, and quarks discovered, but so was the double-helix structure of DNA, genes, and other biological advances like

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145 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

stem-cell and cloning. There was the rise of psychology and neurology. There were incredible leaps in transportation (e.g. personal cars and commercial airliners) and communication (e.g., cell phones and the Internet). With the turn of the 21st century, it is an exciting time as ever to exist with much amazing growth remaining possible ahead of us.

**Consider how much growth has happened to the human race in the last century, especially in terms of the advances in physics, biology, and technology.**

**Consider one's own development and how much growth one has gone through physically, emotionally, and intellectually.**

One may easily recognize the immense amount of growth that occurred in the period when one was a child. Childhood is a time of great openness and vitality, among other things. Being in this New Aeon of the Crowned & Conquering Child, each person may (much to their benefit) identify with this symbol of a child.

Now let us consider the characteristics of a child:

*Openness to Experience;*

*Ever-renewed Vitality & Resilience;*

and most importantly...

*Ever-continuing Growth...*

As a symbol of this ideal, Thelema has Horus, the Egyptian sky and sun god, especially under the form of "Ra-Hoor-Khuit" (Ra-Horakhty was a synthesis of the gods of Ra and Horus in ancient times). Speaking in terms of the occult mysteries, Crowley writes:

*"In the Neophyte Ritual of Golden Dawn the Hierophant is the perfected Osiris, who brings the candidate, the natural Osiris, to identity with himself. But in the new Aeon the Hierophant is Horus<sup>146</sup> therefore the Candidate will be Horus too. **What then is the formula of the initiation of Horus? It will no longer be that of the Man, through Death. It will be the natural growth of the Child.***

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146 See *Liber AL*, I:49.

*His experiences will no more be regarded as catastrophic. Their hieroglyph is the Fool: the innocent and impotent Harpocrates Babe becomes the Horus Adult by obtaining the Wand. 'Der reine Thor' [the pure fool] seizes the Sacred Lance. Bacchus becomes Pan.*" <sup>147</sup> (emphasis added)

In the occult mysteries, one formerly identified with a form of the ideal man which was typified by the dying-and-resurrecting form – in this case it is the Egyptian Osiris. Now the ideal is the child with the formula of Ever-continual Growth. Just as dawn is understood to always follow the ordeals of midnight and spring always follows the ordeals of winter, we understand that all psychological ordeals – including the death of the ego – are not catastrophic (although they, like the hour of midnight and the season of winter may seem so while living through them), but are in fact part of our Ever-continual Growth.

But Thelema doesn't just deal with the occult mysteries because, as mentioned at the beginning of this essay, Thelema is an all-encompassing paradigm and it is advantageously applicable to all facets of life. Thelemites therefore are open to all experience, however much joy or suffering may arise because all things are accepted as part of "love under will"; all experiences of all degrees add to one's being. As it is written in our Holy Books:

*"My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells."* <sup>148</sup>

This line perfectly captures the Thelemite's acceptance of all facets of oneself, from the most apparently hellish to the most divine, and also all facets of Nature, spanning all degrees of beauty and terribleness.

**Consider how, in your life, certain events that seemed to be a time of great trouble (physically, financially, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually) eventually faded away into greater strength, energy, and insight.**

**Consider how the events that seemed wonderful or even divine have transpired and what they have added to one's experience. Ask**

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<sup>147</sup> *Liber Samekh.*

<sup>148</sup> *Liber Tzaddi*, line 40.



**oneself: how does integrating these diverse experiences of both joy & sadness into a coherent whole allow me to perform my Will more effectively?**

Crowley writes about how experience is necessary for the individual when he says “All experiences contribute to make us complete in ourselves. We feel ourselves subject to them so long as we fail to recognise this; when we do, we perceive that they are subject to us... To live is to change; and to oppose change is to revolt against the law... which govern[s] our lives.”<sup>149</sup>

Consider the many times one has needed to do something or been forced to do something that one did not want to (e.g. fold your laundry, take an entrance exam, go to the dentist, travel to a foreign country). How many times was your immediate desire (i.e. to leave the dentist’s office) in conflict with longer goals (i.e. to have healthy teeth)? **How has pushing oneself to have experiences, however undesirable and uncomfortable, led to increased understanding, knowledge, strength, and adaptability?**

Continuing with the attributes of this ideal symbol of Horus, “the Crowned and Conquering Child,” Crowley writes, “The child is not merely a symbol of growth, but of complete moral independence and innocence.”<sup>150</sup> This subject of morality in Thelema, related to the symbol of the child, growth, and innocence, is treated more fully in another essay.<sup>151</sup> We may then focus on how “innocence” is also characteristic of the Child.

The “innocence” of the formula of the Child in Thelema is certainly not the uninformed, unexperienced innocence of actual children but refers to their point-of-view. Children are much less unimpeded by the imposed values from their family, friends, and society. Not only are their values less imposed but even their very basic way of understanding the world is unclouded by preformed opinions, systems, and maps. Instead, the “innocence” of a Child – which is, again, an ideal that all Thelemites can advantageously identify with – refers to its **openness**.

The child is open to experience, mentioned previously as one of the characteristics of the Child, and is open to new and different ways of perceiving ideas. This openness to physical experiences and mental ideas

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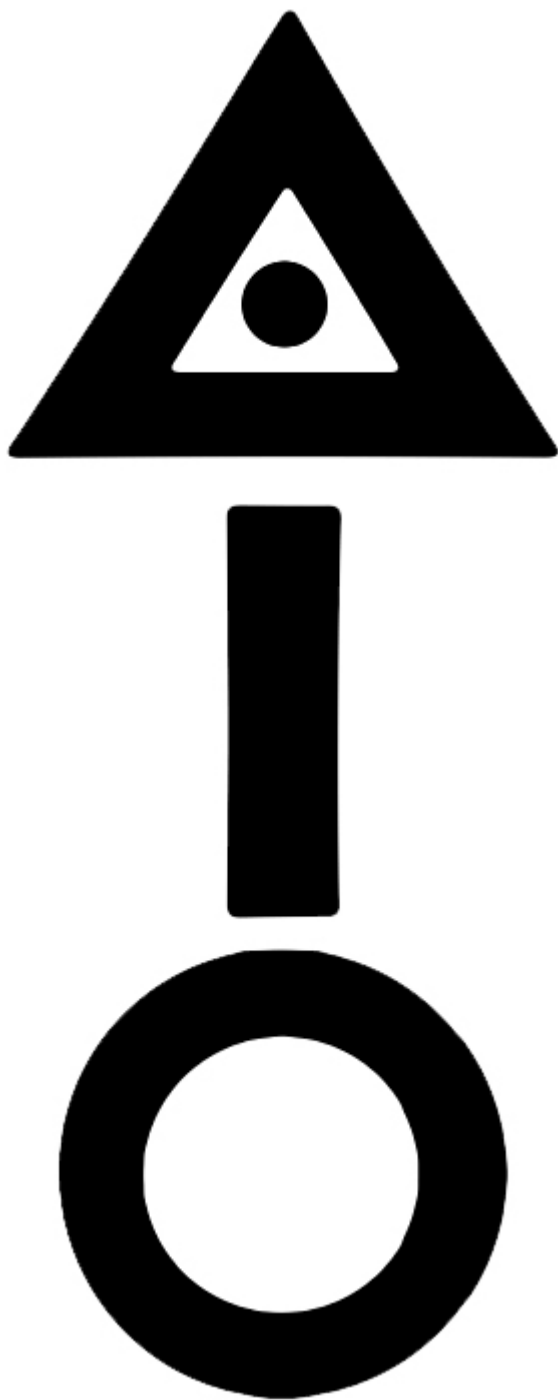
149 *Liber Samekh*.

150 *Confessions*, chapter 49.

151 See chapter 12 on “Thelemic Values: A New View of Morality.”

ties directly back into the formula of the Child being Ever-continuing Growth. It is this innocent openness which allows us to submerge our feet in the deepest hells and raise our heads to the highest heavens. Instead of fearing our comfortable balance may be lost, Thelemites push ever onward to new horizons, invigorated by the seemingly infinite possibilities and potential symbolized by the starry night sky of Nuit.





**PART II**

**The Philosophy of  
Thelema**



# CHAPTER 8

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THELEMA

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*This article was written in early 2011 e.v. as a three-part essay. The intention was to try to organize the many rich and complex ideas in Thelema into some of the traditional categories of Western philosophy: metaphysics (further sub-divided into ontology, cosmology, eschatology, and teleology), epistemology, and ethics. Since the metaphysics of Thelema are incredibly vast and deep, the first part is intended more to begin to understand Thelema's ideology within the framework of Western philosophy's categories than to try to give a comprehensive account thereof. The second part on epistemology attempts to give a concise overview of Thelema's approach to Reason and knowledge, answering the question "what are the limits of and the place of Reason in Thelema?" The third part on ethics attempts to do the same for the question of "How does Thelema tell us to act in the world?"*

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### METAPHYSICS

#### Introduction

This essay will look at how Thelema approaches the classic divisions of philosophy including metaphysics ("What exists?"), epistemology ("How do we know what we know?"), and ethics ("How should we act?"). Metaphysics is essentially the study of the nature of the world. It is split into ontology, cosmology, eschatology, and teleology.

#### Ontology: None & Two

Ontology is the study of being, existence, or reality. Thelema's ontology is stated simply as "None and Two." The world is understood as "Nothing" or "Naught," which is something completely beyond all

description and limit. In *Liber AL* I:27, it is written “Then the priest answered & said unto the Queen of Space, kissing her lovely brows, and the dew of her light bathing his whole body in a sweet-smelling perfume of sweat: O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!”

Many mystics have called it “Unity” but even this, some may argue, implies something as “not-One.” Crowley writes, “All Things that are in Truth One Thing only, whose name hath been called No Thing.”<sup>152</sup> From this comes the necessity of explaining the appearance of duality. Instead of a “Fall of Man” or an imprisonment of the soul in matter, Thelema explains the appearance of duality in this fashion: “None... and two. For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all.”<sup>153</sup> In this way, the many or divided are in such a position so they may become one and unite. This is given further explanation when Crowley writes, “The Many is as adorable to the One as the One is to the Many. This is the Love of These; creation-parturition is the Bliss of the One; coition-dissolution is the Bliss of the Many. / The All, thus interwoven of These, is Bliss.”<sup>154</sup>

...see also the essay “Berashith” by Aleister Crowley; *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 5; and *The Book of Lies* chapters 3, 12, and 46.

## **Cosmology: Nuit, Hadit, Ra-Hoor-Khuit, and Stars**

Cosmology deals with what the Universe is essentially. One might argue that there exist several similar but interchangeable cosmologies in Thelema: for example, the Creed of the Gnostic Mass gives a rudimentary cosmology, the “Matter in Motion” idea in the New Comment,<sup>155</sup> and the Qabalistic understanding in chapter 0! of *The Book of Lies*. In the end, the most widespread cosmology, and the one rooted in *The Book of the Law*, is the idea of Nuit, Hadit, and Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

Thelema understands Nuit as Infinite Space which is “Heaven” that

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152 *De Lege Libellum*.

153 *Liber AL*, I:28-30.

154 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 3.

155 New Comment to *Liber AL* I:1.



is occupied by various Points-of-View, or Hadit. Each star - “every man and every woman”<sup>156</sup> – is in the Body of Infinite Space and has Hadit as its core, who is “the complement of Nu, my bride,”<sup>157</sup> “the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star,”<sup>158</sup> as well as “Life, and the giver of Life.”<sup>159</sup> These together create the Universe as we know it. “In the sphere [Hadit is] everywhere the centre, as [Nuit], the circumference, is nowhere found.”<sup>160</sup> There are many interpretations of Nuit and Hadit – for example, with Nuit as matter and Hadit as motion and their interplay being the universe but the basic idea remains the same.

...see also *Liber AL vel Legis*, chapters 1 and 2; *The Book of Lies*, chapters 0 and 11; the *Creed of Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

## **Eschatology: The destruction of the self & the dawning of the Aeon of Horus**

Eschatology deals with the idea of end-times. There is certainly no Last Judgment in the philosophy of Thelema. In a sense, one can view the attainment of the Crossing of the Abyss, the destruction of the personality or ego, as the end-times of the “self” and the waking to the Self.

Another interpretation of eschatology is the “destruction of the world by fire” (which can also be interpreted in the former sense of the destruction of the self), which Crowley gives symbolically in “Atu XX: Aeon” of the Tarot. In this other interpretation, the world was “destroyed by fire” with the reception of *Liber AL vel Legis* in 1904. Crowley writes in *The Book of Thoth*, “The old card was called The Angel: or, The Last Judgment. It represented an Angel or Messenger blowing a trumpet, attached to which was a flag, bearing the symbol of the Aeon of Osiris... The card therefore represented the destruction of the world by Fire. This was accomplished in the year of the vulgar era 1904, when the fiery god Horus took the place of the airy god Osiris in the East as Hierophant.”

...see also *The Book of Thoth*, “XX. The Aeon”.

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156 *Liber AL*, I:3.

157 *Liber AL*, II:2.

158 *Liber AL*, II:6.

159 *Liber AL*, II:6.

160 *Liber AL*, II:3.

## Teleology: Will

Teleology deals with the purpose or the understanding of the design of the universe. In Thelema, the teleology is clearly one of “Will.” One might contrast the teleology of Thelema with that of Schopenhauer’s Will-to-Life and Nietzsche’s Will-to-Power, where Thelema understands it as a Will-to-Love. All experiences and events are occurrences of two things uniting into a third. The necessary formula of each star is then “love under will” – to find that Will and do it.

Just as each star has its particular orbit in the macrocosm of space, every man and every woman has their particular Way on earth. As Crowley writes, “Each action or motion is an act of love, the uniting with one or another part of 'Nuit'; each such act must be 'under will,' chosen so as to fulfil and not to thwart the true nature of the being concerned.”<sup>161</sup>

## EPISTEMOLOGY

There are two stances on reason that are expounded in *Liber AL vel Legis*. The first stance is that reason must be subservient to Will and the second stance is the importance of direct experience over reason. These ideas about reason intertwine and support one another.

First, the Will is “supra-rational” or beyond reason. The section in *Liber AL* that deals with this comes from chapter 2:

*“There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason. Now a curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursed for ever! If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness. Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise. Enough of Because! Be he damned for a dog! But ye, o my people, rise up & awake!”*<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Introduction to *Liber AL*.

<sup>162</sup> *Liber AL*, II:27-34.

Here we have a curse upon “Because,” “Reason,” and “Why.” There is no “Why” or “Because” to Will: it simply GOES, it simply IS. Because we inhabit a world of Infinite Space and since reason can only work with finite ideas and quantities, then reason cannot express the Infinite purely and accurately. It is a “lie” because of this “factor infinite & unknown.” Crowley writes, “There is no 'reason' why a Star should continue in its orbit. Let her rip! ...It is ridiculous to ask a dog why it barks. One must fulfil one’s true Nature, one must do one’s Will. To question this is to destroy confidence, and so to create an inhibition.”<sup>163</sup> Therefore, reason should attend to its own business (solving problems of rationality) and allow the Will to flow uninhibited; otherwise, “One risks falling form the world of Will ('freed from the lust of result') to that of Reason.”<sup>164</sup> Crowley continues:

*“We must not suppose for an instant that the Book of the Law is opposed to reason. On the contrary, its own claim to authority rests upon reason, and nothing else. It disdains the arts of the orator. It makes reason the autocrat of the mind. But that very fact emphasizes that the mind should attend to its own business. It should not transgress its limits. It should be a perfect machine, an apparatus for representing the universe accurately and impartially to its master. The Self, its Will, and its Apprehension, should be utterly beyond it.”*<sup>165</sup>

*“When reason usurps the higher functions of the mind, when it presumes to dictate to the Will what its desires ought to be, it wrecks the entire structure of the star. The Self should set the Will in motion, that is, the Will should only take its orders from within and above.”*<sup>166</sup>

Another claim is made in *Liber AL*, “I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest,

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163 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:30-31.

164 *Djeridensis Working*, II:30.

165 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:27.

166 *Djeridensis Working*, II:31.

ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.”<sup>167</sup> The Will does not require articles of faith to be accepted but rather asks that the individual rely on their experiences. It is the faith conferred by the direct experience of the “consciousness of the continuity of existence”<sup>168</sup> that is offered.

Rational precepts are not proposed, debated over, accepted, and rejected but rather one attains various realizations or trances and learn from one’s experiences. When one attains the “consciousness of the continuity of existence”<sup>169</sup> and becomes “chief of all,”<sup>170</sup> the unity of this perception is not explainable by the duality of reason. In relation to this experience we find “there could be no reality in any intellectual concept of any kind, that the only reality must lie in direct experience of such a kind that it is beyond the scope of the critical apparatus of our minds. It cannot be subject to the laws of Reason; it cannot be found in the fetters of elementary mathematics; only transfinite and irrational conceptions in that subject can possibly shadow forth the truth in some such paradox as the identity of contradictories.”<sup>171</sup>

Crowley also says, “To have any sensible meaning at all, faith must mean experience... Nothing is any use to us unless it be a certainty unshakeable by criticism of any kind, and there is only one thing in the universe which complies with these conditions: the direct experience of spiritual truth. Here, and here only, do we find a position in which the great religious minds of all times and all climes coincide. It is necessarily above dogma, because dogma consists of a collection of intellectual statements, each of which, and also its contradictory, can easily be disputed and overthrown.”<sup>172</sup> This perception of the world as continuous and unitary is not offered on faith but can be achieved and recognized as a certainty by those who attain thereto.

One other doctrine relating to reason that appears in Crowley’s writings but not explicitly in *Liber AL* is the idea of the circularity of reason. Reason can only manipulate and work with articles of reason; this

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167 *Liber AL*, I:58.

168 *Liber AL*, I:26.

169 *Liber AL*, I:26.

170 *Liber AL*, I:23.

171 *Eight Lectures on Yoga*.

172 *Eight Lectures on Yoga*.

relates to what was said above because the problems in the sphere of reason should not usurp the power of or dictate actions to the sphere of Will. We have an example of this doctrine of the circularity of reason when Crowley writes, “All proofs turn out on examination to be definitions. All definitions are circular. (For  $a = bc$ ,  $b = de \dots w = xy$ , and  $y = za$ .)”<sup>173</sup> In this sense, reason deals with relations between illusion. This is certainly useful – science is a good example of this – but it doesn’t give us any powerful facts of the way things truly are.

In a deeper sense, reason works within the realms of duality while the Will must remain one-pointed and therefore not mired in the relations of reason. Crowley writes further, “All knowledge may be expressed in the form  $S=P$ . But if so, the idea  $P$  is really implicit in  $S$ ; thus we have learnt nothing...  $S=P$  (unless identical, and therefore senseless) is an affirmation of duality; or, we may say, intellectual perception is a denial of Samadhic truth. It is therefore essentially false in the depths of its nature.”<sup>174</sup> Reason is understood as simply the relation of words which point to other words, *ad infinitum*. Further, as mentioned above, because reason works with relations between ideas (the relation between “ $S$ ” and “ $P$ ” above), it affirms duality in the world. Two things can only be related in reason if they are distinct and therefore separate.

Again, all of these ideas about reason intertwine to give us a general picture of Thelema’s approach to the place of knowledge and reason. Essentially, the Will of the individual is beyond reason, or supra-rational, so one cannot ask “Why” of it or justify it with “Because.” The individual must then constantly go forward and experience new and various things, not depending on articles of faith. Reason is a human faculty that allows us to manipulate & find the relations between finite facts and ideas. Because of this it must work within its own sphere (i.e. deal with problems of rationality like mathematics, science, *et cetera*) while leaving the Will to act uninhibited. With this understanding, one can be guarded against reason when it asks “whence camest thou? Whither wilt thou go?” with the response “No whence! No whither! ...Is there not joy ineffable in this aimless winging? Is there not weariness and impatience for who would

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173 “The Antecedents of Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

174 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, “Knowledge.”

attain to some goal?”<sup>175</sup>

## ETHICS

The proclamation ”Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” from *Liber AL vel Legis* has especially profound implications in the sphere of morality. There is an immense amount of material on this topic throughout all of Crowley’s works.

Since “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt,”<sup>176</sup> the only “right” action is that which fulfills that Will and the only “wrong” action is that which thwarts that Will: “The Word of Sin is Restriction.”<sup>177</sup> Crowley explains, “[This] is a general statement or definition of Sin or Error. Anything soever that binds the will, hinders it, or diverts it, is Sin.”<sup>178</sup> Essentially, any form of morality that works in absolutes, saying any quality is *a priori* “right” or “wrong” (or “evil”) is anathema to Thelema. “To us, then, 'evil' is a relative term; it is 'that which hinders one from fulfilling his true Will.’”<sup>179</sup>

The attitudes toward oneself and others are necessary outgrowths of “Do what thou wilt.” Since “Thou hast no right but to do thy will,”<sup>180</sup> the value of self-discipline helps one do one’s Will with one-pointedness. As Crowley explains, “What is true for every School is equally true for every individual. Success in life, on the basis of the Law of Thelema, implies severe self-discipline.”<sup>181</sup> Further, since ”Every man and every woman is a star”<sup>182</sup> and each star has its own unique path, each “star” is must pursue their own Will and avoid interference in the affairs of others. In short, mind your own business. “It is necessary that we stop, once for all, this ignorant meddling with other people’s business. Each individual must be left free to follow his own path.”<sup>183</sup> This consequently means there is total moral freedom, including sexual freedom. “Also, take your fill and

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175 *Liber LXV*, II:21-22, 24.

176 *Liber AL*, III:60.

177 *Liber AL*, I:41.

178 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:41.

179 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:5.

180 *Liber AL*, I:42.

181 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 8.

182 *Liber AL*, I:3.

183 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:31.

will of love as ye will, when, where and with whom ye will!”<sup>184</sup> This is not “individualism run wild” – that is, it does not mean there is no possibility of government. The understanding in Thelema is that each star has its own particular function in the scheme of things and must perform that function with one-pointedness, and this can include one’s function in state affairs. “For every Individual in the State must be perfect in his own Function, with Contentment, respecting his own Task as necessary and holy, not envious of another’s. For so only mayst thou build up a free state, whose directing Will shall be singly directed to the Welfare of all.”<sup>185</sup>

Aside from moving the locus of morality to the individual, making the Will the measure of what is “right” and “wrong,” Thelema does emphasize certain moral traits over others and views certain experiences as “good.”

One course of action that Thelema encourages is towards the attainment of Knowledge & Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, Union with God, the dissolution of the ego or any other metaphor used in mysticism. Crowley explains, “A man must think of himself as a LOGOS, as going, not as a fixed idea. 'Do what thou wilt' is thus necessarily his formula. He only becomes Himself when he attains the loss of Egoity, of the sense of separateness. He becomes All, PAN, when he becomes Zero [see the 'Ontology' section of this essay].”<sup>186</sup> Crowley puts it plainly when he writes, “There are many ethical injunctions of a revolutionary character in the Book, but they are all particular cases of the general precept to realize one’s own absolute God-head and to act with the nobility which springs from that knowledge.”<sup>187</sup> These attainments are understood to be available to anyone and to help one understand the world, oneself, and one’s will more completely.

Another common moral theme in Thelema is strength over weakness.

*“Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.”*<sup>188</sup>

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184 *Liber AL*, I:51.

185 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 38.

186 “The Antecedents of Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

187 *Confessions*, chapter 49.

188 *Liber AL*, II:20.

*“My disciples are proud and beautiful; they are strong and swift; they rule their way like mighty conquerors. The weak, the timid, the imperfect, the cowardly, the poor, the tearful – these are mine enemies, and I am come to destroy them.”*<sup>189</sup>

Consequently, Thelema has a different view on “compassion”:

*“This also is compassion: an end to the sickness of earth. A rooting-out of the weeds: a watering of the flowers.”*<sup>190</sup>

*“We have nothing with the outcast and the unfit: let them die in their misery. For they feel not. Compassion is the vice of kings: stamp down the wretched & the weak: this is the law of the strong: this is our law and the joy of the world.”*<sup>191</sup>

That is, “compassion” is not understood to be the support of the weak but rather the opposite: the “rooting-out of the weeds” or the destruction of the weak and the “watering of the flowers” or the promotion of the strong. This is compassion because it is “an end to the sickness of earth.”

A different view of pity is also held in light of Thelema’s view that “Every man and every woman is a star.”<sup>192</sup> Crowley writes:

*“Pity implies two very grave errors – errors which are utterly incompatible with the views of the universe above briefly indicated. The first error therein is an implicit assumption that something is wrong with the Universe... The second error is still greater since it involves the complex of the Ego. To pity another person implies that you are superior to him, and you fail to recognize his absolute right to exist as he is. You assert yourself superior to him, a concept utterly opposed to the ethics of Thelema – ‘Every man and every woman is a star’ and each*

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189 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 24-25.

190 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 26.

191 *Liber AL*, II:21.

192 *Liber AL*, I:3.



*being is a Sovereign Soul. A moment's thought therefore will suffice to show how completely absurd any such attitude is, in reference to the underlying metaphysical facts.*" <sup>193</sup>

*"The Book of the Law regards pity as despicable... to pity another man is to insult him. He also is a star, 'one, individual and eternal.' The Book does not condemn fighting – 'If he be a King, thou canst not hurt him.'*" <sup>194</sup>

This leads to another view, which is that Thelema embraces conflict:

*"Despise also all cowards; professional soldiers who dare not fight, but play; all fools despise! But the keen and the proud, the royal and the lofty; ye are brothers! As brothers fight ye!"* <sup>195</sup>

*"Lo, while in The Book of the Law is much of Love, there is no word of Sentimentality. Hate itself is almost like Love! 'As brothers fight ye!' All the manly races of the world understand this. The Love of Liber Legis is always bold, virile, even orgiastic. There is delicacy, but it is the delicacy of strength."* <sup>196</sup>

Thelema also enjoins the individual to rejoice because of life. A general theme of embracing and seeing the joy in all facets of life permeates Thelema:

*"Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains... They shall rejoice, our chosen: who sorroweth is not of us... But ye, o my people, rise up & awake! Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty! ...a feast for life and a greater feast for death! A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my rapture! A feast every night unto Nu, and the pleasure of uttermost*

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193 "The Method of Thelema" available in *The Revival of Magick*.

194 *Confessions*, chapter 49.

195 *Liber AL*, III:57-59.

196 *Liber II*.

*delight! Aye! feast! rejoice! there is no dread hereafter... Write, & find ecstasy in writing! Work, & be our bed in working! Thrill with the joy of life & death!”*<sup>197</sup>

*“There is joy in the setting-out; there is joy in the journey; there is joy in the goal.”*<sup>198</sup>

This view of the world arises out of the metaphysical ideas [see the 'Cosmology' section of this essay] that Thelema entertains:

*“[Nuit] is the infinite in whom all we live and move and have our being. [Hadit] is eternal energy, the Infinite Motion of Things, the central core of all being. The manifested Universe comes from the marriage of Nuit and Hadit; without this could no thing be. This eternal, this perpetual marriage-feast is then the nature of things themselves; and therefore everything that is, is a crystallization of divine ecstasy.”*<sup>199</sup>

In the end one must remember “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”<sup>200</sup> All of these ideas are subservient to the central law of “Do what thou wilt.” This is the beauty of the word Thelema, that it implies such a succinct and sublime answer to the problems of morality while also having complex and intricate implications.

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197 *Liber AL*, II:9,19,34-35,41-44,66.

198 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 22.

199 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.

200 *Liber AL*, III:60.



*Leviathan*  
is based on a Working  
of the Element of Water

## CHAPTER 9

# THE WILL IN THELEMA

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*This essay was originally several separate essays written in between 2007 and 2013 e.v., each created at a different time with their focus on different aspects of the idea of Will. They are all brought together as a series, not to create some sort of systematic or even consistent presentation of Will, but rather in order to present many different perspectives from which to examine the idea of “True Will.” By having multiple points-of-view, I believe we can more easily avoid the pitfall of falling into one or another view which may serve as a limitation to our understanding and the accomplishment of our Wills. The word of Sin is Restriction, after all.*

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### Introduction

*“The really valuable thing in the pageant of human life seems to me not the State but the creative, sentient individual, the personality; it alone creates the noble and the sublime, while the herd as such remains dull in thought and dull in feeling.”*

*–Albert Einstein, Mein Weltbild (1931)*

“Thelema” is Greek for “will.” The Will of the individual is central in the Law of Thelema, which can be summarized as “Do what thou wilt.” This is “the whole of the Law”<sup>201</sup> and “There is no law beyond”<sup>202</sup> it. Since this concept of doing one's Will is absolutely fundamental to Thelema, it must be understood clearly. One way in which to better understand a concept is to approach it from different angles. The following sections represent different perspectives of the concept of Will.

At the very beginning of *The Book of the Law*, there is one of the

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201 *Liber AL*, I:40.

202 *Liber AL*, III:60.

most important statements in Thelema:

*“Every man and every woman is a star.”*<sup>203</sup>

By this is meant that “we are all free, all independent, all shining gloriously, each one a radiant world”<sup>204</sup> and further that “the Individual is the Autarch.”<sup>205</sup> In the same sense that the sun, as a star, is center of the solar system in the physical macrocosm, every man and every woman is understood to be a sort of microcosmic star and center of his or her own system. “A star is an individual identity; it radiates energy, it goes, it is a point of view. Its object is to become the whole by establishing relations with other stars. Each such relation is an Event: it is an act of Love under Will”<sup>206</sup> – Each individual is “an aggregate of such experiences, constantly changing with each fresh event, which affects him or her either consciously or subconsciously.”<sup>207</sup>

Certainly, from a psychological standpoint, it can be easily understood that we are all centers of our own universe<sup>208</sup> and also “aggregates of experience” as our own memories show. Further, stars are self-luminous implying that we derive power and strength from within ourselves and not an outside source, and also stars are constantly in motion interacting with the gravitational pulls of the infinite other stars and systems.

Thelema posits that Hadit is “the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star.”<sup>209</sup> Crowley writes, “He is then your own inmost divine self; it is you, and not another, who are lost in the constant rapture of the embraces of Infinite Beauty.”<sup>210</sup> In fact, Nuit tells us

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203 *Liber AL*, I:3.

204 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.

205 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 48.

206 “The Antecedents of Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

207 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

208 This also attests to the universal import of mandala-like art pieces across cultures, for they are all expressions of that central point of consciousness and the apparent unfolding and expression of the psyche & universe around it. This was a subject of study for Carl Jung.

209 *Liber AL*, II:6.

210 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.

“Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart & my tongue!”<sup>211</sup> showing that we are intimately interconnected with divinity, mirroring the general Eastern sentiment of the soul’s link to God and the sentiment seen in the West in mystics like Meister Eckhart and Miguel de Molinos:

*“Thou art to know, that thy Soul is the Center, Habitation, and the Kingdom of God.”*<sup>212</sup>

In a word, by saying “every man and every woman is a star,” we assert both the individual’s sovereignty and their divinity. Just as physical stars each have their unique course in the span of space, each individual is understood to have their own unique Will. In fact, “Thelema” itself means “Will” and this is the foundation of the entire philosophy of Thelema. It is said:

*“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”*<sup>213</sup>  
*“There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”*<sup>214</sup>

These two statements clearly establish that everything in Thelema revolves around the dictum of “Do what thou wilt.” As Crowley often noted, this does not mean, “do what you like” but is a command to perform one’s “true” or “pure will” and nothing else. *Liber AL* proclaims, “Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay.”<sup>215</sup>

Now we can see the general point-of-view of existence formulated in Thelema: each individual is considered as a “star” whose sole right or duty is to perform their Will. In the core of this star is Hadit and about the star are the infinite space & possibilities of Nuit. We have established that each individual is at the center of his or her own universe, a “secret centre, heart, & tongue” of the divine, each performing their unique Will amidst Nuit, Infinite Space.

Since the Will is considered absolutely paramount in Thelema, we

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211 *Liber AL*, I:6.

212 *The Spiritual Guide of Miguel de Molinos*.

213 *Liber AL*, I:40.

214 *Liber AL*, III:60.

215 *Liber AL*, I:42.

must understand how a Thelemite is supposed to “Will” things. *Liber AL* asserts something distinguished as “pure will” and explains its conditions:

*“For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.”*<sup>216</sup>

Therefore, for will to be considered “pure” and “every way perfect” by the conditions set forth in *Liber AL*, it must be:

- 1) “unassuaged of purpose” and
- 2) “delivered from the lust of result”

The first consideration, “unassuaged of purpose,” has two meanings to be considered. The first is the more obvious, which is that will is impeded or weakened by “purpose” and it is meant to go on its way unrestricted by these notions of “purpose.” The mind and reason are generally an obstacle to the full expression of a person’s Will in many ways and this idea is treated in a later section more fully. The next consideration is simply that it means “with purpose unassuaged” or “with tireless energy.”<sup>217</sup>

Secondly, to be “delivered from the lust of result” means to be unaffected by or unattached to the results of one’s actions. This doctrine is a central tenet to the Eastern system of karma yoga where it is generally called “non-attachment to the fruits of action.” It might also be said that it is known to the West under the aphorism of “Art for art’s sake.” The *Bhagavad Gita* succinctly describes this doctrine of being “delivered from the lust of result” when it says,

*“Those whose consciousness is unified abandon all attachment to the results of action and attain supreme peace. But those whose desires are fragmented, who are selfishly attached to the results of their work, are bound in everything they do. Those who renounce attachment in all their deeds live content in the ‘city of nine gates,’ the body, as its master.”*<sup>218</sup>

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216 *Liber AL*, I:44.

217 *Liber II: The Message of the Master Therion*.

218 *Bhagavad Gita*, chapter 5.

Essentially, this line from *Liber AL vel Legis* means that to perform our “pure will” which “is every way perfect,” we must do our will with tireless energy, without regard to purpose, and without concern for results. Crowley wrote:

*“Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will. (2) Do that Will with (a) one-pointedness, (b) detachment, (c) peace. Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God’s will, Thou art That.”*<sup>219</sup>

In *Liber AL*, Nuit declares, “Invoke me under my stars! Love is the law, love under will.”<sup>220</sup> Crowley explains that this means “while Will is the Law, the nature of that Will is Love. But this Love is as it were a by-product of that Will; it does not contradict or supersede that Will; and if apparent contradiction should arise in any crisis, it is the Will that will guide us aright.”<sup>221</sup> Therefore the method or *modus operandi* of Thelema is “love under will,” which means the assimilation of experience in accordance with one’s Will.<sup>222</sup>

It must be recognized that “Love” in the context of Thelema and *Liber AL* is understood in a very universal way. It is not what most would consider the emotion of love or kindheartedness. Crowley writes, “Lo, while in The Book of the Law is much of Love, there is no word of Sentimentality. Hate itself is almost like Love!”<sup>223</sup> for even hate is an experience worthy of our assimilation and integration. Instead, it

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219 *Liber II*.

220 *Liber AL*, I:57.

221 *Liber II*.

222 This harkens back to the Christian mystic Meister Eckhart who wrote, “The place where love has its being is only in the will; the person who has more will, also has more love. But no one knows about anyone else, whether one has more of it; that lies hidden in the soul, so long as God lies hidden in the soul’s ground. This love lies wholly in the will; whoever has more will, also has more love.” –excerpted from *Counsels on Discernment* (Counsel 10).

223 *Liber II*.



essentially refers to all acts whatsoever, any “Change in conformity with Will,” for all actions are lawful and necessary. Crowley explains “Every event is a uniting of some one monad with one of the experiences possible to it,”<sup>224</sup> and further that “Each action or motion is an act of love, the uniting with one or another part of 'Nuit'; each such act must be 'under will', chosen so as to fulfill and not to thwart the true nature of the being concerned.”<sup>225</sup>

Therefore, while “love” may refer specifically to acts of “union” (in the sense that sex is union on the physical plane, and *samadhi*<sup>226</sup> is union on the mental plane), all experiences are understood as acts of “love” in the more universal sense that “every event is a uniting of some one monad with one of the experiences possible to it,” including acts of what may be perceived to be acts of “division.”

Now we can understand that “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt,”<sup>227</sup> and “love under will” is essentially the assimilation of experience in accordance with the nature of the individual. The conception mirrors Carl Roger’s<sup>228</sup> propositions which are the assertions underlying his system of “client-centered therapy.” He writes as his sixth proposition,

*“The organism has one basic tendency and striving – to actualize, maintain and enhance the experiencing organism.”*<sup>229</sup>

These acts of actualizing, maintaining, and enhancing the experiencing organism are what Thelema terms acts of “love.” The one

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224 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

225 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

226 “Samadhi” is the Hindu term used in the practice of yoga for the psychological phenomenon of the disappearance (or “union” or “cessation”) of subject and object known in various forms under different names in various cultures. This subject is too extensive to go into depth in this essay.

227 *Liber AL*, III:60.

228 Carl Rogers (1902-1987) was one of the founders of the “humanistic” approach to psychology, he was one of the founders of psychotherapy research, he was the founder of the person-centered approach to therapy, and he was awarded by the American Psychological Association (of which he was the 55th president in 1947) with the Award for Distinguished Scientific Contributions in 1952 and the Award for Distinguished Professional Contributions to Psychology in 1972.

229 *Client-Centred Therapy*, chapter 11.

condition that is important from the standpoint of *Liber AL* is that acts of “love” must be done “under will,” or in accordance with the nature of the particular circumstance and the individual (or the “organism” if we are to use Rogerian terminology). An act of “love under will” performed properly is what Carl Rogers would term “psychological adjustment” as opposed to “psychological maladjustment.” Rogers writes as his fourteenth and fifteenth propositions:

*“Psychological adjustment exists when the concept of the self is such that all the sensory and visceral experiences of the organism are, or may be, assimilated on a symbolic level into a consistent relationship with the concept of self.*

*Psychological maladjustment exists when the organism denies awareness of significant sensory and visceral experiences, which consequently are not symbolized and organized into the gestalt of the self structure. When this situation exists, there is a basic or potential psychological tension.”*<sup>230</sup>

“Psychological adjustment” consists in proper “assimilation” of experiences being equivalent to the “love under will” method of Thelema, whereas “psychological maladjustment” consists of the improper “assimilation” of experience, which creates “psychological tension.” Essentially, we can see that Thelema coincides with, and in a certain fashion anticipated, the Rogerian “propositions” that form the basis of his “client-centered therapy.”

*“All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is dying. Therefore love for love’s sake, because it is law of life, just as you breathe to live.”* –Swami Vivekananda

### **The Will: Absolute & Relative**

There are two “planes” that one must consider the Will on for it to be understood completely. The first plane will be labeled the

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<sup>230</sup> *Client-Centred Therapy*, chapter 11.

“theoretical/absolute” and the second will be labeled “practical/relative.” As Aleister Crowley warns in many places, we are not to “confuse the planes” – that is, we must keep the considerations of each plane within its own sphere and not let the judgments that pertain to one be confused as pertaining to the other.

On the theoretical/absolute plane, everyone and everything is already doing its “true” or “pure” Will.

*“Know firmly, o my son, that the true Will cannot err; for this is thine appointed course in Heaven, in whose order is Perfection.”*<sup>231</sup>

*“There are much deeper considerations in which it appears that 'Everything that is, is right'...”*<sup>232</sup>

*“The uninitiate is a 'Dark Star', and the Great Work for him is to make his veils transparent by 'purifying' them. This 'purification' is really 'simplification'; it is not that the veil is dirty, but that the complexity of its folds makes it opaque. The Great Work therefore consists principally in the solution of complexes. Everything in itself is perfect, but when things are muddled, they become 'evil'.”*<sup>233</sup>

*“...Each of us stars is to move on our true orbit, as marked out by the nature of our position, the law of our growth, the impulse of our past experiences. All events are equally lawful – and every one necessary, in the long run – for all of us, in theory; but in practise, only one act is lawful for each one of us at any given moment. Therefore Duty consists in determining to experience the right event from one moment of consciousness to another.”*<sup>234</sup>

This last quotation touches on the pertinent issue of this short essay: “All events are equally lawful – and every one necessary, in the long

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231 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 10.

232 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 1.

233 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:8.

234 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

run – for all of us, in theory.” This is the Will perceived from the theoretical/absolute plane – Crowley himself uses the terminology of “in theory” to describe this aspect. In an “absolute” sense, or from an “absolute” perspective, “all events are equally lawful – and every one necessary.”

He then writes, “but in practise, only one act is lawful for each one of us at any given moment... Duty consists in determining to experience the right event from one moment of consciousness to another.” This is the Will perceived from the practical/relative plane. In a relative sense, there is discrimination needed.

The first and most common “confusion of the planes” occurs when one perceives the truth of the theoretical/absolute plane of Will. In this sense, all events are lawful and necessary and there is no “wrong” or “evil.” This means in the world that no actions are to be restricted whatsoever because all things “work out in the end,” you might say. This will literally be the death of you if one decides to adopt the theoretical/absolute perspective as a practical/relative philosophy. Although the Will is “perfect” and “necessary” on the theoretical/absolute plane, there is a “Duty” that is the practical necessity of determining the action that is “right.”

The theoretical/absolute plane of Will is virtually useless on a practical level, although knowledge of the fact that Will cannot truly ever err may give rise to a certain confidence, detachment, and carefree attitude. It is on the practical/relative plane of existence that we normally function on, therefore a practical/relative understanding of Will is needed.

In Thelema, the practical/relative application of this is stated as, “Love is the law, love under will.”<sup>235</sup> Love is the *modus operandi* of the Thelemite, and it must be “under will”:

*“Each action or motion is an act of love, the uniting with one or another part of 'Nuit'; each such act must be 'under will,' chosen so as to fulfill and not to thwart the true nature of the being concerned.”*<sup>236</sup>

Therefore, the “Will” of Thelema must be considered as

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<sup>235</sup> *Liber AL*, I:57.

<sup>236</sup> Introduction to *Liber AL*.

simultaneously operating on two planes: the theoretical/absolute and the practical/relative. On the plane of the theoretical/absolute, all events are perfect, pure, & necessary; on the plane of the practical/relative, the Thelemite operates under the formula of “love under will,” assimilating experience in accordance with their unique nature.

### **The Will: Finite & Infinite**

The central goal of Thelema is the discovery and accomplishment of one’s Will. It can be said that there are two aspects of the Will which must be discovered: the finite will and the infinite will, and both are necessary.

Aleister Crowley writes in *De Lege Libellum*:

*“The great bond of all bonds is ignorance. How shall a man be free to act if he know not his own purpose? You must therefore first of all discover which star of all the stars you are, your relation to the other stars about you, and your relation to, and identity with, the Whole. In our Holy Books are given sundry means of making this discovery, and each must make it for himself, attaining absolute conviction by direct experience, not merely reasoning and calculating what is probable. And to each will come the knowledge of his finite will, whereby one is a poet, one prophet, one worker in steel, another in jade. But also to each be the knowledge of his infinite Will, his destiny to perform the Great Work, the realization of his True Self.”*

The infinite will is therefore tied up with the Great Work, in going beyond the body (*Nephesh*) and mind (*Ruach*) to reach the Secret Self in the Supernal Triangle (*Neshamah-Chiah-Yechidah*). It is entirely removed from one’s earthly position, proclivities, and ambitions and the perception of this Truth is open to all people. It is the goal of Yoga – complete dissolution in the Infinite, in the Beloved – and it is also the end of all true Magick, being directed towards Knowledge & Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel and eventually the dissolution of the self in crossing the Abyss.

Whereas the infinite will unites us with that identity which one in essence and diverse in expression in each star, the finite will defines us as

a particular star in relation with other stars and the entire expanse of Space. Crowley writes in *Liber ThISHARB*, a book dedicated to the practice of magical memory: “This book is not intended to lead to the supreme attainment. On the contrary, its results define the separate being of the Exempt Adept from the rest of the Universe, and discover his relation to that Universe.” The finite will therefore refers to the karma of the particular individual – their specific point in space & time – where each person has their own different, unique will to follow out. This is the aspect of oneself where one discovers if poet, prophet, steel worker, or anything else, so to speak.

To find our will completely we must then both perform the Great Work of coming to know our True Selves beyond all manifestation along with understanding our particular star’s manifestation. To become truly One, we must become both None and Two.

### **The Will: Positive & Negative aspects**

One of the most common misconceptions of Thelema is that “Do what thou wilt” is interpreted or promoted as “Do whatever you want.” Why is “Do what thou wilt” different from “Do what you want?” Is it also similar in some respects? To understand more clearly, we may examine the “positive” and “negative” aspects of Thelema/Will insofar as positive means affirming and negative means denying.

#### **The negative aspect of “Do what thou wilt”**

The negative aspect of “Do what thou wilt” and Thelema/Will in general refers to those tenets and suggestions which we may answer with a “No” or negatively.

The foremost idea that Thelema says “No” to is the idea of an absolute, binding morality and any kind of moral pronouncement. In this sense, “Do what thou wilt” is nearly identical to “Do what you want” because both deny that pronouncements of “You should/ought to do this or that” are irrelevant to our concerns. This is explained succinctly by Crowley when he writes:

*“The formula of this law is: Do what thou wilt. Its moral aspect is simple enough in theory. Do what thou wilt does not mean Do as you please, although it implies this degree of emancipation, that it*

*is no longer possible to say a priori that a given action is 'wrong.' Each man has the right – and an absolute right – to accomplish his True Will.”*<sup>237</sup>

Here Crowley asserts that “Do what thou wilt” “implies [the same] degree of emancipation” as “Do as you please” insofar as “it is no longer possible to say *a priori* that a given action is 'wrong.’” This is the crux of the “negative aspect” of Thelema/Will – that one cannot argue against a certain action as bad, evil, not useful, unholy, *et cetera*. Crowley also writes:

*“There are no 'standards of Right.' Ethics is balderdash. Each Star must go on its orbit. To hell with 'moral Principle;' there is no such thing; that is a herd-delusion, and makes men cattle.”*<sup>238</sup>

Again, each individual must have their own unique standards of what is right and wrong for them. The fact that there are no objective, external standards firmly allows us to do whatever we Will.

This brings us to the “positive aspect” of Thelema/Will: What is it that we Will? What exactly is our particular “orbit” as a star in the Body of Infinite Space?

### **The positive aspect of “Do what thou wilt”**

Insofar as morality and dogma are burdens upon the free exercise of one’s unique and individual Will, they are restrictions, and “the word of Sin is Restriction.”<sup>239</sup> To this we may add the “dogs of Reason” with its questions of “Why” and “Because” for the Will is supra-rational and not to be limited by it. Again, the pressing question once one has discarded the fetters of restriction in their many forms is “What is my Will?” This comes to the aspect of Will to which we may say “Yes”...

The most succinct command in this “positive aspect” is that ancient aphorism and command to “Know Thyself.” This is where “Do what thou wilt” splits apart from and is superior to the simple notion of “Do what you want” or “Do as you please.” Most people do not even know what they

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<sup>237</sup> “The Method of Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

<sup>238</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:28.

<sup>239</sup> *Liber AL*, I:41.

really want – what they really Will – and this requires an intense, continuing process of exploration and introspection. Traditionally, this is done by the methods of Magick and Yoga in Thelema. This allows us to not only control our body and mind but also explore the hidden regions and expand the understanding of ourselves to the uttermost. Crowley writes:

*“The value of any being is determined by the quantity and quality of those parts of the universe which it has discovered, and which therefore compose its sphere of experience. It grows by extending this experience, by enlarging, as it were, this sphere.”*<sup>240</sup>

Therefore we must use Magick, Yoga, and whatever methods we Will to explore ourselves and therefore manifest our Wills more fully, freely, purely, and perfectly.

With these considerations of both the negative & positive aspects of Thelema/Will, we may better understand the proclamation of the Master Therion when he says:

*“From [this], it should be clear that 'Do what thou wilt' does not mean 'Do what you like.' It is the apotheosis of Freedom; but it is also the strictest possible bond. Do what thou wilt – then do nothing else. Let nothing deflect thee from that austere and holy task. Liberty is absolute to do thy will; but seek to do any other thing whatever, and instantly obstacles must arise. Every act that is not in definite course of that one orbit is erratic, an hindrance. Will must not be two, but one.”*<sup>241</sup>

## **The Will: The Will is Supra-Rational**

*“Our own Silent Self, helpless and witless, hidden within us, will spring forth, if we have craft to loose him to the Light, spring lustily forward with his cry of Battle, the Word of our True Wills.”*<sup>242</sup>

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240 “On Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

241 *Liber II*.

242 New Comment on *AL*, I:7.



The first question one might ask when embarking upon the quest to understand the philosophy of Thelema is “What is my Will?” or “How do I know what my Will is?” The answer to these questions might initially be presumed to be answerable in the form of a sentence such as “my Will is to be a doctor” or “my Will is to eat this sandwich,” but this is not so, for this is to restrict the Will to the trappings of language and reason. The Will is the innermost Motion of one’s being, an individual expression of the Eternal Energy of the cosmos.

*“The Way that can be named is not the Eternal Way.”*<sup>243</sup>

To confine the Will to logical expression is to inherently assert a limit. Further, it assumes that one must have a logical reason for acting such-and-such way, but to do so would make one “fall down into the pit called Because” to “perish with the dogs of Reason.”<sup>244</sup> As Crowley remarked, “It is ridiculous to ask a dog why it barks,”<sup>245</sup> for this is simply an expression of its nature, not determined by any kind of rational process.

*“One must fulfil one’s true Nature, one must do one’s Will. To question this is to destroy confidence, and so to create an inhibition... There is no ‘reason’ why a Star should continue in its orbit. Let her rip! Every time the conscious acts, it interferes with the Subconscious, which is Hadit. It is the voice of Man, and not of a God. Any man who ‘listens to reason’ ceases to be a revolutionary.”*<sup>246</sup>

Again, to express one’s Will in terms of reason is to assert a limit. This is because of the inherently dualistic nature of not only logic & reason but language & thought themselves. To do this would be to drive a cleft into one’s being, fracturing it into multiplicity.

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243 *Tao Teh Ching*, chapter 1.

244 *Liber AL*, II:27.

245 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:31.

246 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:30-31.

“Thoughts are false.”<sup>247</sup>

To experience and manifest one’s pure Will, one must not act out of notions of purpose nor out of desire for some pre-formed result or outcome.<sup>248</sup> Both of these things are manifestations of the dualistic mind and restrict one unnecessarily to the trappings of logic. The Will can only be the genuine and spontaneous manifestation of one’s inmost nature, the united whole of one’s being.

Since “the word of Sin is Restriction,”<sup>249</sup> the Will is certainly not deduced from the workings of the mind which, by its very nature, asserts division & separation and therefore restriction. When we clear away the morass of morality and the over-contemplated categories of metaphysics, the Will may more easily spring forward uninhibited.

*“In logic there is a trace of effort and pain; logic is self-conscious. So is ethics, which is the application of logic to the facts of life... Life is an art, and like perfect art it should be self-forgetting; there ought not to be any trace of effort or painful feeling. Life... ought to be lived as a bird flies through the air or as a fish swims in the water. As soon as there are signs of elaboration, a man is doomed, he is no more a free being. You are not living as you ought to live, you are suffering under the tyranny of circumstances; you are feeling a contract of some sort, and you lose your independence... Not to be bound by rules, but to be creating one’s own rules...”*<sup>250</sup>

And this last point is important because Thelema is not illogical in that it wishes reason to be entirely abolished, but rather it wishes that it be put in its rightful place, under the governance of the Will. The mind is a harsh master and a good mistress, for once one realizes that one’s Will is not amenable to the dualisms of thought, once freed from one’s earlier bonds of logic, one may again employ reason to one’s benefit in those circumstances that call for it.

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247 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 5.

248 A reference to *Liber AL*, I:44, “For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.”

249 *Liber AL*, I:41.

250 Suzuki, D.T. *Intro to Zen Buddhism*.

*“It is not the object... to look illogical for its own sake, but to make people know that logical consistency is not final, and that there is a certain transcendental statement that cannot be attained by mere intellectual cleverness... When we say 'yes,' we assert, and by asserting we limit ourselves. When we say 'no,' we deny, and to deny is exclusion. Exclusion and limitation, which after all are the same thing, murder the soul; for is it not the life of the soul that lives in perfect freedom and in perfect unity? There is no freedom or unity... in exclusion or in limitation.”<sup>251</sup>*

Here – outside logical dualisms, outside notions of ethics, purpose, and metaphysics – the Will can be known. This knowledge is not that of the mind which asserts duality – a knower and a thing known – but the experiential knowledge, the gnosis, of immersion in the flow of the world. Here the Eternal Will runs through oneself, is oneself, for “...mind, never at ease, creaketh “I”. This I persisteth not, posteth not through generations, changeth momentarily, finally is dead. Therefore is man only himself when lost to himself in The Charioting.”<sup>252</sup> Therefore, one “knows” one’s Will in doing one’s Will. The Will that is not restricted by mental formulations springs freely from one’s innermost Self, crowned & conquering.

*“Life is fact and no explanation is necessary or pertinent. To explain is to apologize, and why should we apologize for living? To live – is that not enough? Let us then live!”<sup>253</sup>*

## **The Will: Thought Experiments**

Here are a couple of thought-experiments to ponder the intricacies of what many people take to be simple on the face of things... There is no “right” answer to any of these but are meant to bring some subtle complications to light

### **1) Addiction:**

a) Suppose that someone is addicted to a substance or some

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251 Suzuki, D.T. *Intro to Zen Buddhism*.

252 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 8.

253 Suzuki, D.T. *Intro to Zen Buddhism*.

behavior. Does this mean that they are *a priori* NOT doing their Will?

b) If you answer yes: Suppose that this person conquers their addiction and therefore learns more about themselves - they learn about their limitations and the extent of their willpower. Now are they doing their Will?

c) Is the person doing their Will “better” or “more completely” because of this ordeal? If yes, then wouldn't this imply that going through addiction is beneficial to the development of Will?

## 2) The problem of other Wills:

a) Suppose that person A does not enjoy what person B is doing. Does person A have a right to say that person B is not doing their Will?

b) Suppose that person A feels he is being infringed upon by what person B is doing, but person B feels she is doing their Will. Does person A have a right to say that person B is not doing their Will?

c) Suppose person A thinks person B is being irrational. Does person A have a right to say that person B is not doing their Will? Can person B point to the doctrines of Reason, Why, and Because being hindrances to assert her their position?

d) Is there any circumstance where person A can be sure about their right to tell person B that they are not doing their Will?

e) Is there any circumstance where person B can prove to person A that they are doing their Will?

## 3) Lust of result:

a) Suppose Person A wants circumstance X to come about (for example, getting an A on a test, retrieving groceries, getting a paycheck, wooing some person, *et cetera*). Does this mean this person A suffers from “lust of result”? If so, should all desires for anything be destroyed?

b) Suppose Person A does not achieve circumstance X. Is Person A's lamentation of this fact “lust of result”? Conversely: Suppose Person A does achieve circumstance X. Is Person A's celebration of this fact “lust of result”?

#### 4) Pure will & duality:

- a) Suppose Person A has not attained to a Trance of Non-Duality/Unity. Is Person A *a priori* not doing their Will? Not doing their Will to the full extent? Are there different extents of doing one's Will or is it simply Doing your Will & Not doing your Will?
- b) Suppose Person A has attained to a Trance of Non-Duality/Unity but has “come down” from it - back to duality. Is Person A not doing their Will while in duality? Does the Trance of Non-Duality/Unity help this person to do their Will “better” or “more completely”?
- c) Suppose Person A enjoys a constant Trance of Non-Duality/Unity. Is this person necessarily doing their Will?

#### 5) Killing others:

- a) Suppose Person A kills Person B. Was Person A *a priori* not doing their Will?
- b) Suppose Person A kills Person B out of self-defense. Was Person A not doing their Will?
- c) Suppose Person A kills Person B because Person B is infringing on their rights (a la *Liber OZ*). Was Person A not doing their Will? Was Person B *a priori* not doing their Will even if they think they are doing their Will?
- d) Suppose Person A kills Person B because they *believe* Person B is infringing on their rights. Was Person A not doing their Will?
- e) Suppose Person A kills Person B in a fit of ecstasy. Was Person A not doing their Will? Can Person A appeal to the ideas of Reason, Because, Why, *et cetera*, being hindrances in justifying this act?
- f) Suppose Person A decides to have an abortion. Was Person A not doing their Will? Suppose Person A knows that they do not have the means to support their baby. Was Person A not doing their Will in having an abortion?

#### 6) A priori Will:

- a) Is it possible to say *a priori* that anyone else is not doing their Will in any circumstance? What circumstances?

## The Will: The Symbolic Lessons of Life

All individuals are united by sharing a single task: finding and doing their True Will. In fact, “Thou hast no right but to do thy will.”<sup>254</sup> The sole right and duty of every individual is encapsulated in the Word of the Law of this Aeon: **THELEMA**.

Though everyone shares this same goal, each individual’s Path is unique. Thelema is universal insofar as it recognizes the same goal of all individuals (True Will) while acknowledging the unique nature of that goal for each person. Therefore, no real universal guidance can be given beyond “find your Will and do it.” As it has been written, “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”<sup>255</sup>

Though there is no written guidance especially suited to us as unique individuals with unique Paths, there is still guidance to be found in the world: everyone’s own life provides the necessary language and symbols to guide one on one’s particular path to the accomplishment of one’s True Will... provided only that one is open and attentive enough to read the writing of this language. The intuition of the soul, the “Neshamah,” the promptings of the Holy Guardian Angel, the wisdom of the unconscious – regardless of what we choose to name it, it will speak to the mind in terms of the symbols in which the individual is immersed. This intuition simply requires the openness and attentiveness to these symbols, and lessons suited to one’s own particular Path will naturally emerge. For example, a chemist may use the language of atoms and chemical compounds, an actor the language of directing and acting, a mason the language of building tools, a musician the language of instruments and composing, and so on and so forth. Again, the question becomes, “Are you open enough to the symbols and attentive enough to the messages they speak to you?”

There are an infinite number of examples because of the limitless amount of symbolic languages of Nature and the endless amount of potential messages within each of these languages. Here are but a few examples to illustrate the point:

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<sup>254</sup> *Liber AL*, I:42.

<sup>255</sup> *Liber AL*, III:60.

- A mason worked with tools to construct a building. He picked up a rough stone that he needed to chisel into the right shape so that it could be used in the building of the structure. The mason was open and attentive to the symbols of his trade that spoke to him, and they said, “You are this rough stone. By the chisel of virtue, you are shaped into a perfected man, even as the stone is formed into the proper shape. The building is your community which will crumble from its ill-fitting parts if you don’t undertake the work of chiseling away the scrap from your self.”
- A musician desired to learn guitar that he might eventually play in a band, so he practiced endlessly. He was open and attentive to the symbols of his trade and they said to him, “Each string is an aspect of oneself – each needs to be perfectly tuned, neither too loose nor too taut, and only then will all work to create harmony. This is just as one must tune the various aspects of oneself, always striving toward perfect equilibrium so that one’s life is joyful and harmonious like a chord played on your guitar. The discipline you show in playing scales and finger exercises repeatedly may seem monotonous and tiresome but this allows, when the time comes to perform, for you to play effortlessly. Even so, the disciplines of magick and meditation may seem monotonous and tiresome at times, but they prepare the soul for those times when it may leap forward with full intensity to consummate itself with its goal in rapturous ecstasy.”
- An alchemist devoted his life to the task of turning lead into gold. He bought many instruments and spent endless hours watching the flame of the athanor slowly heat the metals inside. Because he was open and attentive to the symbols of this language, he heard them say, “The purification of these metals is like the purification of your soul. The slow heat removes the dross to reveal the underlying gold, just as one’s slow but constant practice of meditation is the heat that burns away the dross of your self to reveal the pure gold of the Soul.”

In this age, many of us do not have a single career or trade to which we devote ourselves exclusively for our whole lives. This only

means we have the responsibility and the privilege to learn several “languages.” We may be a teacher, musician, magician, cook, and bicyclist simultaneously, and each of these has its own symbolic “language” and lessons... provided that one is open and attentive to them.

Now the question becomes, “What are your trades or passions?” To what do you devote your time and energy? If you are open and attentive to these trades or passions or skills or hobbies or whatever else, then you must ask “What lessons are they writing to me toward the end of accomplishing my True Will?” Since only you can answer these questions for yourself, it’s now your responsibility to listen for the answers and to never stop listening.



***The Virgin Initiatrix***  
*is an interpretation of Atu II: The High Priestess*

## CHAPTER 10

# TOP 10 MYTHS ABOUT TRUE WILL

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*This article was written in early 2014 e.v. and, while many of these concepts overlap with those of the previous chapter, they are laid out here in order to have a single place where many commonplace misconceptions about the concept of True Will are concisely challenged.*

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For Will being such a central concept in Thelema, there are many misconceptions about it that limit our understanding as well as limit our potential for accomplishing or manifesting our Wills. Many of these myths or misconceptions are highly interrelated, but they are also different in their emphasis or approach; the list is not meant to be exhaustive or comprehensive but to hopefully lead to further thought and clarity about the notion of Will. Most fundamentally, this is a short list intended to challenge some common misconceptions about the Will in order that we may know and do our Wills more freely and joyously.

### **1) True Will is found at a certain point in time.**

The first myth is that True Will is discovered during a discrete event, a certain point in history. This means that you don't know your Will but in the future you might, upon having some kind of insight or experience, suddenly know it. In contrast, Crowley informs us that "The will is but the dynamic aspect of the self..."<sup>256</sup> In this sense, the Will is simply the expression of our Nature. However poorly or incompletely, our Nature can't help but be expressed in some way, which is to say: We are always doing our Wills to some extent, but we could also always do a little "better" in the sense of doing it more fully and with more awareness. Even if we do have sudden or life-altering insight into the nature of our Wills, this doesn't mean that this understanding might not need to change or be

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256 *Liber II.*

revised in the future.

## **2) True Will is something to be found in the distant future.**

Related to the first myth is the notion that True Will is not found in the present but at some point in the future. That is, one thinks “I don’t know my Will now but I will hopefully know it in the future.” Now, it is perfectly reasonable to believe that one’s knowledge or understanding of one’s Will may increase in the future, but – again – we are always doing our Wills to some extent. That is, the Will is not “found,” but our awareness and understanding of it may increase. Viewing Will as something found in the future forecloses on the potential for us working our best to do our Wills in the present moment. We may bemoan our circumstances, wishing that “if we only knew our Wills...” that everything would be alright, rather than working with ourselves in the present to be more fully aware and joyful with what is already occurring. That is, our very concepts of the Will as being something distant prevent us from seeing what is already here: we are all stars<sup>257</sup> and Hadit, the flame of our Wills, is always at the core of our Being.<sup>258</sup> It is our job or duty to figure out how to work with ourselves and our environment in order to most fully manifest that inherent Truth within us.

## **3) You’re either doing your Will or you’re not doing it.**

The language used around Will is often “digital” in the sense that we speak of it in “on or off” terms. I believe it is both more effective and more accurate to think of Will in “analog” terms, i.e. that we are always doing Will to some extent. The language of “True Will” implies this kind of digital dichotomy of true/false. In contrast, the idea of “pure will” is one of a matter of degrees. A totally “pure” Will is 100% Will with no admixture or contaminants, just like pure juice is 100% juice – there is no moral connotation whatsoever. We may (for the sake of explanation) say that we may not be currently doing 100% of our Will but we may be at 30% or 80% of our potential at any given moment. This puts the responsibility on ourselves to try to enact our Will in the fullest, most

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<sup>257</sup> *Liber AL*, I:3.

<sup>258</sup> *Liber AL*, II:6.

“pure” way possible. It also means that we don’t need to think of others in terms of them doing or not doing their Wills; rather, everyone is doing their Will to some extent or another, and we can all engage in more intentional effort to get closer to the ideal of “100% Will.”

#### 4) True Will is a single, unchanging thing.

The language used around Will also often implies that Will is a single thing, i.e. “It is my Will to be a doctor.” In fact, the idea of Will being a certain career in particular is one of the most common examples of this misconception. One example of Crowley speaking in this way is when he writes, “to each will come the knowledge of his finite will, whereby one is a poet, one prophet, one worker in steel, another in jade.”<sup>259</sup> The error comes in taking the idea of “Will = the right career” literally rather than metaphorically. That is, a career is a metaphor for what you do with your life, hopefully suited to your proclivities, talents, and aspirations. Obviously the Will is not confined to a single career – especially nowadays when most people on average have multiple careers throughout their lives – as is apparent with Crowley’s own life. It would not be correct to say it was Crowley’s Will to be a poet because it would neglect that he was a magician; it would not be correct to say it was Crowley’s Will to be a mountain climber because it would neglect that he was a chess player, *et cetera*. In fact, the Will is – as already mentioned - “the dynamic aspect of the self.”<sup>260</sup> It is dynamic, meaning constantly in motion. Crowley reinforces this when he writes that the “True Self[’s]... Nature is to move continually, it must be understood not as static, but as dynamic, not as a Noun but as a Verb.”<sup>261</sup> This dynamic nature of Will is further implied in the language that describes it as “Motion” as when Crowley writes that the Will is “the true Motion of thine inmost Being.”<sup>262</sup>

#### 5) True Will can be completely encapsulated in a phrase.

Connected to the previous misconception is the notion that Will

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<sup>259</sup> *De Lege Libellum*.

<sup>260</sup> *Liber II*.

<sup>261</sup> “Duty” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

<sup>262</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 9.

can be completely encapsulated in a phrase. Since the Will is dynamic, its Nature being “to Go”, no phrase can ever completely encapsulate it. There are certainly benefits to being able to encapsulate one’s Will in a phrase such as having a consciously articulated standard by which one can judge if a certain course of action is expressive or inhibitive of the Will. For example, one might formulate the Will as “It is my Will for my body to be healthy,” which can act as a standard by which you determine that eating junk food is not part of your Will (for all practical purposes).

That being said, there must be an understanding that the Will is ultimately beyond verbal articulation. As it is said, “Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise.”<sup>263</sup> The Will is supra-rational insofar as it cannot be accurately described or completely described by the faculty of Reason and thought. As Crowley says, “[The mind] should be a perfect machine, an apparatus for representing the universe accurately and impartially to its master. The Self, its Will, and its Apprehension, should be utterly beyond it.”<sup>264</sup> The mind with its thoughts and Reason is simply a part of one’s Being; the Will is the Verb of our whole Being so naturally a small part can not entirely comprehend or encompass the Whole.

## **6) True Will requires a mystical experience.**

In connection with Myth #2, there is a tendency to believe that knowledge of the Will only comes with some kind of mystical experience, whether one believes in (or conceives of) it as Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, enlightenment, crossing the Abyss, or whatever else. While we might say that Knowledge and Conversation (or other mystic experiences) might help clarify the Will or get rid of some of its obstacles such as excessive egotism, the Will is both always present to some extent and can always be worked with to some extent. The notion of Will as only knowable through mystical experiences neglects the fact that there are very simple, straightforward, and even “mundane” ways in which we can work with ourselves to do our Wills better or more fully. For example, one could realize that a certain relationship is not working anymore: it causes constant turmoil, suffering,

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<sup>263</sup> *Liber AL*, II:32.

<sup>264</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:28.

bitterness, and resentment. One could then realize that, in order to do one's Will more fully, one needs to end the relationship. "O lover, if thou wilt, depart!"<sup>265</sup>

There are many things in our lives that we know, on some level, can be changed to more fully enact our Wills such as getting rid of certain habits that are already known to be troublesome. Whether this is as simple as "watching less television" or as concrete as "quitting opiates" or more subtle like "being less attached to expectations" or more general like "becoming more mindful and less emotionally reactive", there are many ways to work on ourselves that are available to everyone without the slightest experience of or inclination toward mystical experiences. Even more troubling, believing that only some mystical experience in the future can be used as an excuse or a "spiritual bypass" to avoid dealing with these more "mundane" issues such as unprocessed emotions or unwanted habits.

## 7) It is everyone's Will to attain.

A generally pervasive belief among Thelemites is that there is a certain kind of "true Thelemite" or "ideal Thelemite." Another essay more fully explains why this is a misconception<sup>266</sup> but, in short, it relies on having preconceptions as to what is "right" and "wrong" for others' Wills when the entire foundation of Thelema rests on the notion that each individual is unique.

One manifestation of this preconception about what is "right" is the notion that everyone should be striving to "attain," meaning achieve some kind of mystic gnosis or enlightenment. In fact, *The Book of the Law* says in the same line as its central maxim: "Who calls us Thelemites will do no wrong, if he look but close into the word. For there are therein Three Grades, the Hermit, and the Lover, and the man of Earth. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law."<sup>267</sup> This is further explained in *The Vision and the Voice* when it is said, "The man of earth is the adherent. The lover giveth his life unto the work among men. The hermit goeth

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265 *Liber AL*, I:41.

266 See chapter 3 of this book.

267 *Liber AL*, I:40.

solitary, and giveth only of his light unto men.”<sup>268</sup> It is not inherently everyone’s Will to become a hermit and attain the heights of spiritual illumination – it may very well be someone’s Will to live their lives without concern for these things. More clearly, it says in *The Book of the Law* that “the Law is for all.”<sup>269</sup> This insistence that everyone must “attain” can easily devolve into a form of spiritual self-superiority that is contrary to the spirit of Liberty that permeates the Law.

## 8) Your Will has nothing to do with other people.

It is typical to conceive of the Will as something inherent in the individual that has nothing to do with other people or their circumstances. I believe this is simply a fault of the language used to describe Will rather than a reality. We are all embedded in a complex interconnection of forces – we are all stars in the web of Infinite Space – and we both affect and are affected by everything around us: “his actions affect not only what he called himself, but also the whole universe.”<sup>270</sup> Seeing as how the Will is the dynamic aspect of our Nature, it must inherently adapt to the situation or circumstance in which it finds itself. Crowley speaks to this when he writes that the Will is “our true orbit, as marked out by the nature of our position, the law of our growth, the impulse of our past experiences.”<sup>271</sup>

Our “position” constantly changes and the Will is “marked out” in part by the nature of our position. Our “position” involves our environment and the people around us. Virtually any kind of articulation of the Will – however provisional or tentative – must include the environment or other people in some way. To say “It is my Will to eat less” involves the food in your environment; to say “It is my Will to be kind” involves your kindness toward other people; to say “It is my Will to promulgate the Law of Thelema” involves those to whom you are promulgating, *et cetera*. Even to say “It is my Will to attain Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel” necessarily requires that you create the properly conducive environment to attain that goal.

In fact, some of the best lessons come from being attuned to one’s

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268 *The Vision and the Voice*, 13<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

269 *Liber AL*, I:34.

270 *Liber Librae*.

271 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

environment and those around you as opposed to ignoring its import or impact. If you are getting constant messages in the form of unnecessary difficulties of whatever type, it is perhaps a lesson to alter the way you are adapting to your environment rather than insisting more strongly on going about your way and just bulldozing over others.

## 9) True Will means you'll be free from suffering.

The idea of True Will often leads to unrealistic utopian notions as to what Will looks like. The idea that doing one's Will frees one from suffering is unrealistic on multiple levels. Firstly, suffering is inherent in existence in some form or another insofar as we all get sick, suffer loss, get old, sustain injury, and die. We will always encounter some form of resistance or difficulty in our lives. This should not be seen as some kind of mark of failure on your attempt to do your Will; rather, these inevitable occurrences of suffering, resistance, and difficulty are the means by which we learn and grow. As it is said, "Thou then who hast trials and troubles, rejoice because of them, for in them is Strength, and by their means is a pathway opened unto that Light... the greater thy trial the greater thy Triumph."<sup>272</sup> This idea that "doing your Will = no suffering" also depends on the notion that Will is either "on" or "off" as mentioned in Myth #3: even if we are in the mode of "100% Will" for a while, we all inevitably make missteps, encounter unforeseen difficulties, or simply "slip" and don't do the best we can.

Further, the very desire to be free from suffering is, in a sense, an Old Aeon idea: Thelemites do not seek to transcend the material world, exempt ourselves from Samsara, or even avoid suffering. We acknowledge reality as it is without insisting it conform to our *a priori* ideals as to "how the world should be." We accept suffering and difficulty in life as "sharp Sauce to the Dish of Pleasure."<sup>273</sup>

I believe it is more accurate to say that doing one's Will means you'll be free from a great deal of *unnecessary* suffering. A great deal of our suffering is indeed not inherent or necessary but we, through our various poor habits and misconceptions, subject ourselves to difficulty that can be avoided largely or entirely if we become more aware of and tuned

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<sup>272</sup> *Liber Librae*.

<sup>273</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 59.



into our Wills.

## 10) True Will means you'll be free from conflict.

Connected to the previous myth is the notion that doing one's True Will means we will be free from all conflict. This is usually based on the fact that *The Book of the Law* says "thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay,"<sup>274</sup> and Crowley wrote that "[the Law] seems to imply a theory that if every man and every woman did his and her will – the true will – there would be no clashing."<sup>275</sup> Realistically, there will always be people who "say nay," regardless of the extent to which you are doing your Will, and there will always be "clashing." The real issue comes from an understanding of "clashing": If clashing means interpersonal conflict in the form of disagreement and argument, there will never be an end to this unless we all become unthinking, desire-less automatons which is certainly not the goal of the Law of Liberty.

Similar to the previous myth, I believe it is more accurate to say that doing one's Will means you will be free from a great deal of unnecessary conflict. Much of our conflict with others depends on our insistence on knowing what is "right" for others, our own expectations and standards placed upon others, insisting on maintaining a position based on our ego's self-esteem and identity being tied up with our position, and many other missteps that often naturally fall away to the extent that one focuses on Will rather than arguing. Perhaps that is one reason we are taught to "argue not; convert not; talk not overmuch!"<sup>276</sup>

Again, it is a somewhat Old Aeon fantasy for the world or one's life to be conflict-free. I believe the acceptance of and involvement with conflict is a distinguishing mark of one who has a New Aeon mentality rather than an Old Aeon one. As Crowley wrote, "Combat stimulates the virile or creative energy."<sup>277</sup> Even the most trivial and mundane forms of conflict such as opposing teams in sports or opposing viewpoints in a debate allow for the fun of the game to occur in the first place. Rather than seeking to be free of conflict, we might do better to examine the

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274 *Liber AL*, I:42-43.

275 *Liber II*.

276 *Liber AL*, III:42.

277 "Duty" available in *The Revival of Magick*.

conflicts in our lives and determine to what extent they are a result of our inability to fully actualize our Wills in order to live more fully and joyfully.

What all 10 of these myths imply is a view of Will as something always present to some extent, always dynamic and changing, always able to be worked with and worked on regardless of having mystical experiences or not, embedded within the context of our surroundings and other individuals, and accepting of suffering and conflict as things inherent in existence and things to be worked with rather than avoided. This list is not comprehensive in any way, and there are obviously many nuances to the idea of Will and many ways to approach understanding it. Nonetheless, my hope is that challenging some of these ideas as myths or misconceptions can help free our thinking up in order to become aware of the great potential in every moment to enact and rejoice in our Wills.

# CHAPTER 11

## THE RADICAL RE-ORIENTATION OF TRUE WILL

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*This article was written in mid 2012 e.v. with the intent of bringing the idea of Will “back to earth” in the sense of making it more grounded in day-to-day real life rather than high-flung metaphysical concepts. This is done in this essay by adapting the approach of existentialism and existential psychology to that of doing one's Will.*

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### Wanting versus Willing

To Will and to want. These are not simply two ideas. To Will and to want are two fundamental ways of existing in the world. Our Law as Thelemites is “Do what thou wilt”; it is our sole duty and right to find and do this Will.

Aleister Crowley often distinguished Will – often called True Will – from want. For example, he wrote that the purpose of each individual is:

*“...the discovery of his True Will (as opposed to his conscious ideals or wishes) by each individual.”<sup>278</sup>*

*“It should be clear that 'Do what thou wilt' does not mean 'Do what you like.' It is the apotheosis of Freedom; but it is also the strictest possible bond.”<sup>279</sup>*

*“Do what thou wilt does not mean Do as you please, although it implies this degree of emancipation, that it is no longer possible to say a priori that a given action is 'wrong.' Each man has the right–*

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<sup>278</sup> *The Constitution of the Order of Thelemites.*

<sup>279</sup> *Liber II.*

*and an absolute right—to accomplish his True Will.”*<sup>280</sup>

*“It will be seen that the formula – 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law' has nothing to do with 'Do as you please.' It is much more difficult to comply with the Law of Thelema than to follow out slavishly a set of dead regulations.”*<sup>281</sup>

To Will and to want are two modes of existence. They are paralleled in the contrast between “to Be” and “to have.”<sup>282</sup> In ordinary life, we are dominated by the mode of wanting or having at the expense of losing touch with Will or Being.

### **Wanting/Having**

This ordinary mode of existence, wanting and having, can be likened to a horizontal line: we are always trying to achieve our desires, to have more things. This is everyone’s natural, “un-initiated” state of constant striving after possessing more and more. Society bombards us from all directions with the message that fulfillment is found through possessing more. Our wants are endless – there is always more to amass. We see this most evidently in the frenzy over the accumulation of wealth and material objects; we want the latest gadgets, the fastest cars, and the fanciest clothes. It can also be seen in wanting social status or authority, so we seek to have labels and titles that reflect our authority... “I am a CEO,” “I have a PhD,” “I am a 7th degree,” or “I am a High Priest.” The attitude of wanting extends into relationships: the more friends on Facebook, the better! Our possessiveness shows itself in our intimate relationships – it is even embedded in the language we use such as, “I have a boyfriend” or “I have a wife.” Wanting/having can be seen more subtly in the accumulation of knowledge. We want to have wisdom, so we accumulate facts – the person who can list the most correspondences of the Tree of Life is surely the wisest! Even our spirituality is not protected from this nefarious mode of existence. We amass (and occasionally read) shelves of books that could easily crush us under their combined weights, we strive to get the most ornate and beautiful ritual implements for our temples, we

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280 “The Method of Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

281 *Eight Lectures on Yoga*.

282 See Erich Fromm's *To Have or to Be?*

accumulate a giant encyclopedia of knowledge of rituals and spiritual dogmas... we even speak of the goal of religion as a possession! They are the ultimate “wants”: We seek to obtain the Holy Grail or to find the Philosopher’s Stone, and we say that we “have” a True Will. Our absorption in this horizontal dimension of existence knows no bounds in terms of the unfathomable plethora of “wants.”

The modern age of technology has provided us the means to get more and more of what we want – friends through social networking sites, information through search engines, and all the food we could ever want at a supermarket (*et cetera, ad infinitum*). In spite of this, a fundamental characteristic of our modern era is widespread dissatisfaction and disenchantment. We have houses with heating and plumbing that kings could only wish for in past epochs, yet we are not content. We have 500 friends on Facebook, yet we are lonely. We sail through the air in metal contraptions at unfathomable speeds, yet we are impatient. When we get down to it, what do we all hope to gain from this relentless pursuit of wants and accumulation of possessions? It stems from this deep, underlying sense that there is something lacking in our lives despite all the things we have. There is a hole and this hole is filled with stuff, whether material objects or knowledge or whatever else. We are looking for a sense of true fulfillment but the pursuit of our wants has left us no closer to our goal. In fact, all of our striving towards “having” makes us more dissatisfied: for everything we have, we also gain a fear of losing it.

We have everything backwards: our very preoccupation with wanting is the source of our lack. It is the source of our anxiety, our loneliness, our emptiness, our meaninglessness, and our sense of inauthenticity that we strove to extinguish by obtaining the objects of our desires. We want to be truly and authentically alive, yet – paradoxically – we have our hands so full with our “wants” and “haves” that we are left completely empty-handed.

### **Willing/Being**

In the face of this delirious engrossment in the mode of wanting, it may seem that there is no other possible way of existing in the world. In contrast to this horizontal mode of preoccupation with wants, there is the vertical dimension of True Will, of Being. It is of note that the word “being” in Greek is “to on,” giving us the word “ontology” (the study of

being), and an ancient name of the sun was “On,” as is mentioned in the Gnostic Mass.<sup>283</sup> The effulgent glory of Solar light is an apt symbol of the way of Being or True Will in contrast to the confused groping-in-the-darkness of the way of wanting.

To find a sense of self that is not empty and inauthentic, we do not need more desires and more possessions nor do we need more beliefs or knowledge. We need a radical re-orientation of our way of being in the world, one where we become who we are. This is what we of Thelema call the True Will. It is also of note, at least to occultists and Masons, that the word “reorient” means to get one’s bearings and etymologically means “to face the East,” i.e. to re-orient. We reorient ourselves to the East, the place of the rising Sun, which is a symbolic way of saying we reorient ourselves towards the way of Being or of True Will, remembering our starry nature, so to speak.

This vertical mode of being shows us symbolically that we are not simply striving towards more and more as in the horizontal mode of wanting. Instead, we extend upwards towards a loftier expression of ourselves and downwards towards a deeper understanding of ourselves. In our Holy Books it is written, “My adepts stand upright; their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells.”<sup>284</sup> Instead of seeking after abundance through wanting and having things, we seek abundance in Being ourselves more fully, our True Selves. When we operate in this vertical dimension of True Will, religion is not something we adopt or “have,” our entire Being is religious. To be present in the vertical dimension of True Will is to be authentically religious.

### **The futility of Wanting**

The fatuousness of our attempts to gain satisfaction through the pursuit of our conscious desires is illustrated by the Freudian model of the psyche as an iceberg. Above the water there is the tip of the iceberg: our sense of self or ego and our conscious desires. Beneath the water lies the immensity of the rest of our psyches, the unconscious. In our engrossment with our conscious wants, we let the mere tip of ourselves dictate our direction. The majority of the self that lies underwater, the unconscious, is left unheeded and unsatisfied. To reorient ourselves to Will instead of

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283 “...our Lord and Father the Sun that travelleth over the Heavens in his name ON.”

284 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 40.

want, Being instead of having, is to seek to encompass and express the totality of the self. It is to actualize the vast power and potential that lies dormant and untapped as long as we remain on the horizontal dimension of want and have. In fact, Crowley himself likened the Holy Guardian Angel<sup>285</sup> and the True Will<sup>286</sup> to the unconscious. He wrote, “Good sense is in reality common to all men: it is the property of the Unconscious whose Omniscience matches its Omnipotence. The trouble is that in practically every particular case the Intellect insists on interfering... Remember that the Ego is not really the centre and crown of the individual; indeed the whole trouble arises from its false claim to be so.”<sup>287</sup>

It might be said that, psychologically, the mode of wanting or having keeps us in a perpetual state of conflict between the ego/conscious and the unconscious. The mode of Willing or Being involves a harmonious alignment between conscious and unconscious. Crowley writes, “A Man whose conscious will is at odds with his True Will is wasting his strength. He cannot hope to influence his environment efficiently. A Man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him.”<sup>288</sup>

### **Crowley's life as archetypal**

Aleister Crowley's own life serves as an archetypal template of this radical reorientation from a mode of wanting and having to that of Willing and Being. This occurred in his “Vision of Sorrow” in 1897 of which he writes in his *Confessions*,

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285 *Liber Samekh*: “The Holy Guardian Angel is the Unconscious Creature Self – the Spiritual Phallus.”

286 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:22: “The Kingdom of Malkuth, the Virgin Bride, and the Child is the Dwarf-Self, the Phallic consciousness, which is the true life of Man, beyond his 'veils' of incarnation. We have to thank Freud – and especially Jung – for stating this part of the Magical Doctrine so plainly, as also for their development of the connexion of the Will of this 'child' with the True or Unconscious Will, and so for clarifying our doctrine of the 'Silent Self' or 'Holy Guardian Angel'. They are of course totally ignorant of magical phenomena, and could hardly explain even such terms as 'Augeoides'; and they are seriously to blame for not stating more openly that this True Will is not to be daunted or suppressed; but within their limits they have done excellent work.”

287 Commentary to *Liber LXV*, I:60.

288 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, “Introduction.”

*“The occasion was an attack of illness. It was nothing very serious and I had long been accustomed to expect to die before I came of age. But for some reason or other I found myself forced to meditate upon the fact of mortality. It was impressed upon me that I hadn’t a moment to lose. There was no fear of death or of a possible ‘hereafter’; but I was appalled by the idea of the futility of all human endeavour. Suppose, I said to myself, that I make a great success in diplomacy and become ambassador to Paris. There was no good in that – I could not so much as remember the name of the ambassador a hundred years ago. Again, I wanted to be a great poet. Well, here I was in one of the two places in England that made a specialty of poets, yet only an insignificant fraction of the three thousand men in residence knew anything about so great a man as Aeschylus. I was not sufficiently enlightened to understand that the fame of the man had little or nothing to do with his real success, that the proof of his prowess lay in the invisible influence with he had had upon generations of men. My imagination went a step further. Suppose I did more than Caesar or Napoleon in one line, or than Homer and Shakespeare in the other – my work would be automatically cancelled when the globe became uninhabitable for man. I did not go into a definite trance in this meditations; but a spiritual consciousness was born in me corresponding to that which characterizes the Vision of the Universal Sorrow, as I learnt to call it later on. In Buddhist phraesology, I perceived the First Noble Truth – Sabbé Pi Dukkham – everything is sorrow. But this perception was confined to the planes familiar to the normal human consciousness. The fatuity of any work based upon physical continuity was evident. But I had at this time no reason for supposing that the same criticism applied to any transcendental universe. I formulated my will somewhat as follows: ‘I must find a material in which to work which is immune from the forces of change.’ I suppose that I still accepted Christian metaphysics in some sense or another. I had been satisfied to escape from religion to the world. I now found that there was no satisfaction here. I was not content to be annihilated. Spiritual facts were the only things worth while. Brain and body were valueless except as the instruments of the soul.”*



We see that Crowley wanted to become a great poet, a great diplomat, a great chess master... yet all of these things were found wanting, so to speak. He turned his eyes away from the possession of these titles and towards spiritual attainment, and the rest is history. In embarking upon the vertical path, he was led to the discovery of his True Will.

A parallel can be found in the life of Siddhartha Gautama who – upon seeing an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and then a yogi – renounced the possibility of being a king and having all the material comforts of the world and turned his attention toward becoming awakened. He found the answer to his gnawing dissatisfaction with the suffering of the world in enlightenment, in the vertical dimension of becoming who he really was, an awakened one, a Buddha. These two particularly good examples because they were men – not transcendent gods or demi-gods or mythical heroes – who represent the possibilities the actualization of potential that is available to all of us as men and women. William Blake described this attitude concisely when he wrote, “All deities reside in the human breast,”<sup>289</sup> and, as it says at the top of our declaration of the rights of man, “There is no god but man.”<sup>290</sup>

To summarize, there is a horizontal dimension of being of “want” that is characterized by preoccupation with “having” or possessing, whether material objects, knowledge, or other people. We strive to assuage our anxiety about our sense of emptiness through pursuing our “wants,” which ironically leaves us feeling more empty and inauthentic. To transcend this condition, we do not need more “wants” or a new and specific “want,” but instead we need a radical reorientation of our very being towards the vertical dimension of “Will” (or True Will) that is characterized by a focus on “Being” rather than having. The process of shifting from want to Will, having to Being, horizontal to vertical, is shown symbolically or archetypally in the life of Aleister Crowley, specifically his experience of the “Vision of Sorrow.”

*“It all depends on your own acceptance of this new law, and you are not asked to believe anything, to accept a string of foolish fables beneath the intellectual level of a Bushman and the moral*

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289 *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.*

290 *Liber OZ.*

*level of a drug-fiend. All you have to do is to be yourself, to do your will, and to rejoice.”*<sup>291</sup>

## **The Paradox of Human Existence: Our Simultaneous Independence and Interdependence**

It has already been stated that there are two fundamental modes of existing in the world, (1) wanting, characterized by an attitude of “having” and (2) Willing, characterized by an attitude of “Being.” Wanting and having is inauthentic and the source and cause of perpetuation of anxiety. Willing and Being is authentic and the source of fulfillment. By “authentic” I mean that being in the mode of Willing is a state or process that is true to the totality one’s self, the actualization of one’s full potential. Conversely, “inauthentic” means we are limited in some way, as illustrated in the iceberg metaphor of the psyche mentioned previously where the the conscious ego is split from the unconscious potencies. To be inauthentic is therefore to avoid or limit the actualization of the full range of one’s possibilities; as it is written, “The word of Sin is Restriction.”<sup>292</sup>

These are two modes of existing in the world, but I want to turn our attention to the nature of our existence in the world. It is here that we encounter the paradox of human existence: we are always alone in the world and we are always with others in the world. There is a both an “Alone-ness” and “With-ness” that simultaneously characterize our existence in the world.

We are simultaneously Independent beings and Interdependent beings; we are immersed in Alone-ness and With-ness at the same time. Though they are opposite in a way, they represent the two sides of the coin of life and are the two strands weaved together seamlessly in an inseparable unity; they are separated for convenience of explanation. Each of us is currently both isolated in Alone-ness and immersed in With-ness. I will use Independence and Alone-ness interchangeably as well as Interdependence and With-ness interchangeably; the terms Alone-ness and With-ness emphasize that these are facts of our Being and not simply abstract or impersonal principles. Crowley speaks to the paradoxicality

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291 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty.*

292 *Liber AL, I:41.*

and inseparability of our simultaneous Independence and Interdependence when he writes, “It is not true to say either that we are separate Stars, or One Star. Each Star is individual, yet each is bound to the others by Law.”<sup>293</sup>

This dualistic unity is paralleled in the first two chapters of *The Book of the Law* and, by extension, in the symbols of Hadit and Nuit. Hadit characterizes the quintessence of Alone-ness and even states “I am alone.”<sup>294</sup> Nuit characterizes the quintessence of With-ness. She discloses that we are all stars in “the company of heaven”<sup>295</sup> and counsels us to “Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt.”<sup>296</sup> The ultimate unity between Alone-ness and With-ness is paralleled by the identification of Nuit with Hadit.<sup>297</sup>

The Independence / Interdependence duality can also be seen reflected in the two primary statements of our Law. “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” is a statement of Alone-ness or Independence, i.e. that we each have an individual Will that is unique from all others. “Love is the law, love under will” is a statement of With-ness or Interdependence, i.e. that in every thought, word, and act we establish some kind of relation or union with the world. The ultimate unity between Alone-ness and With-ness is also paralleled by the identification of Will and Love.<sup>298</sup>

Finally, Alone-ness and With-ness are reflected into the two main categories of practices in which we engage as Thelemites, Yoga and Magick. Once more, they are ultimately two facets of the same method.<sup>299</sup>

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293 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:52.

294 *Liber AL*, II:23.

295 *Liber AL*, I:2.

296 *Liber AL*, I:22.

297 As in *Liber AL*, I:45: “The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none!”

298 Will = Thelema = Θελημα = 93; Love = Agape = Αγαπη = 93. Therefore, we see that Will = Love in the number of 93.

299 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 83: “My system can be divided into two parts. Apparently diametrically opposed, but at the end converging, the one helping the other until the final method of progress partakes equally of both elements. For convenience I shall call the first method Magick, and the second method Yoga. The opposition between these is very plain for the direction of Magick is wholly outward, that of Yoga wholly inward.”

<u>2 Elements of Existence</u>	<u>Hadit and Nuit</u>	<u>Liber AL</u>	<u>Will and Love</u>	<u>Magick and Yoga</u>
<b>Alone-ness, Independence</b>	Hadit, chapter 2	“I am alone”	Thelema, Will	Yoga
<b>With-ness, Interdependence</b>	Nuit, chapter 1	“Bind nothing!”	Agape, Love	Magick

Since we are constantly immersed in simultaneous Alone-ness and With-ness, we bring to these facts of existence our mode of being. That is, in both Alone-ness and With-ness, we act either in a mode of “want” characterized by having or we act in a mode of “Will” characterized by Being. Now we will examine Alone-ness and With-ness in turn to understand their nature, how an inauthentic approach of wanting looks in each case, and how an authentic approach of Willing looks in each case.

*“Contemplate your own Nature. Consider every element thereof both separately and in relation to all the rest as to judge accurately the true purpose of the totality of your Being.”<sup>300</sup>*

## **Alone-ness / Independence**

Our essential Alone-ness is disclosed to us by that fact that we are born into this world alone and we die alone. As we live, our awareness – our very consciousness – is always only our own. We never will totally or completely be in another’s perspective; the closest we can get is sympathy and empathy. This is nicely described by Irvin Yalom, an existential psychologist, when he writes that, beyond interpersonal isolation (isolation from others) and intrapersonal isolation (isolation from parts of oneself), “[there is] a fundamental isolation – an isolation both from creatures and the world – which cuts beneath other isolation. No matter how close each us becomes to another, there remains a final, unbridgeable gap; each of us enters existence alone and must depart from it alone.”<sup>301</sup> This Alone-ness is a fundamental and inescapable existential fact of being in the world.

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300 “Duty” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

301 Yalom, Irvin. *Existential Psychotherapy*.

Anxiety arises in the face of our mortality, our isolation, and the apparent meaninglessness of having been thrown into a world over whose conditions we seem to have little control. We typically seek to avoid or console ourselves about this fact through wanting things. We think that, by possessing things, especially other people, we can transcend our essential Alone-ness. We seek outside of ourselves for something to have that will squelch this underlying anxiety. In our inauthentic striving to cope with our Alone-ness we unfortunately perpetuate the same discontent and misery that led us to seek distractions and coping mechanisms in the first place. For example, in having a significant other we are necessarily vigilant against any and all signs that we will be left to our Alone-ness by them, and then we consequently act out of inauthentic anxiety rather than authentic relationship based in the mode of Being. Even in “having” a significant other, we seek to possess someone as a symbolic statement that we are in fact not alone. We cannot truly feel authentic in our Alone-ness until we understand, come to terms, and accept our Alone-ness; we consequently cannot truly be with others in an authentic way until we eliminate the anxiety that naturally results from being in the mode of “wanting” and “having” and that inevitably leads to inauthentic relationships with others.

At the core of each of us, the gnawing sense of discontent produces a question in ourselves. The question is not a mental, rational, verbal question, but it arises from the ground of our being – that is, the question arises before any articulation. Our very being poses this question and articulation comes only after the fact. When the question is articulated, it takes form such as “What is the meaning of my existence?” or “What is the purpose of life?” or “To what end?” The question will never be answered by a verbal, rational utterance in the form of “the meaning of life is this or that.” The question sprung from the depths of our being and the answer must come from the same level as the question. The answer is not stated, it is lived. The answer is True Will – but those are just words. Hearing and comprehending these words doesn’t give the answer, it merely points to it. The answer is a profound reorientation of our existence from want to Will, from the mode of having to the mode of Being, from inauthentic and limited actualization of our potential to the authentic and full actualization of our potential. The answer to our question is in our Will; that is, you must, as Crowley wrote, “know Thyself

through Thy Way.”<sup>302</sup> What we need is not something else to have, some other possession whether internal (such as knowledge) or external (such as wealth or other people). We need a radical reorientation of our very way of being in the world towards the authentic actualization of our own potential, from wanting to Willing.

Conversely, no amount of knowledge in itself can ever bring us to this Will. Knowledge is simply the accumulation or “having” of more and more facts unless the knowledge is itself understood as a pointer towards the mode of Willing, of Being authentically. Being a Thelemite doesn’t mean constructing a vast super-structure of static knowledge and data. Rather, being a Thelemite involves the transformation of life itself from a state of discontent and limit – i.e. confusion, disorder, and anxiety – into a state of wholeness and purposefulness – i.e. harmony, strength, and joy – that is understood to be the process of coming to know and do your True Will. Our knowledge should, ideally, be pointers toward this end of transformation and reminders of it. In response to the profound need or question of our being, the objects of our endeavors must be optimal reflections of that need or question. As Crowley writes, “What is necessary is not to seek after some fantastic ideal, utterly unsuited to our real needs, but to discover the true nature of those needs, to fulfill them, and rejoice therein.”<sup>303</sup> To lose sight of this, to aim at something other than the actualization of our full potential, the fulfillment of the totality of our being, is to cut ourselves off from the vital impulse that drove us to this path in the first place. This is what Crowley speaks to when he writes, “The whole and sole object of all true Magical and Mystical training is to become free from every kind of limitation.”<sup>304</sup>

Insofar as we forget the profound existential question at the heart of our endeavor of our meaning and purpose, we are liable to fall into a mode of absorption in the dogmas and intellectual structures for their own sakes. That is, we are liable to seek knowledge to be knowledgeable rather than seeking knowledge a means to the end of knowing and Being ourselves. We become stagnant and dogmatic because we seek knowledge for knowledge’s sake rather than as a means to our coming to the fullest and most authentic actualization of the potential of our being. This is what

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302 *The Heart of the Master*.

303 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 8.

304 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, “Trance”.

is spoken to in the Qabalistic notion of “knowledge” being a “false Sephirah” on the Tree of Life, i.e. knowledge is the crown of the *Ruach* or mind that cannot reach above the Abyss to the Supernals wherein reside the Understanding, *Neshamah*, and the Will, *Chiah*.

We become so overwhelmed with our sense of isolation and dissatisfaction, as well as with the complexity of the world, that we retreat into the illusory security in “having” something that we think will assuage our gnawing discontent. Whether we are seeking security externally in owning material possessions, having fame or titles of authority, or in having a significant other or whether we are seeking security internally in a structure of knowledge, the same principle is at work. This is the basic characteristic of inauthentic Alone-ness. So long as we look outside of ourselves for the solution to the problem of isolation and anxiety, we will remain in perpetual bondage to this cycle of feeling lack, seeking to rectify this lack by having something we want, and being dissatisfied with our possessions’ inability to address the real issue. The Question sprang from within; so, too, must the Answer. Again, the answer is not given to us, it is lived by us – it is the reorientation of our way of being in the world from that of want to that of True Will.

<b><i>Two ways of actualizing the potential of our Alone-ness</i></b>	wanting / having →	Inauthentic →	The actualization of limited potential in striving to possess material objects, social standing, relationships, or knowledge
	Willing / Being →	Authentic →	The actualization of our full potential in the discovery and expression of the True Will

In our reorientation from wanting to Willing, from having to Being, we need to be constantly on guard against tendencies to slip back into the attitudes of having. We must find the island of Being within ourselves – the island of authentic Alone-ness – and, as it is written in *The Book of the*

*Law*, “Fortify it!”<sup>305</sup> How might we fortify ourselves against these tendencies? It is useful to bring in a concept from Buddhism, though it will be reinterpreted in light of the New Aeon. This concept is that of the Three Jewels of refuge, or the Three Refuges.

It is necessary to understand that the concept of “taking refuge” in no way implies an act of retreat or hiding. To take refuge is to remind oneself, to reorient oneself from what is truly unimportant to what is truly important – one could easily call them the Three Reorientations or Three Reminders if you will. In Buddhism, one would take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. These can be literally interpreted as Buddha as the person who became enlightened and promulgated Buddhism, Dharma as the teachings of Buddha, and the Sangha as the monastic community of Buddhists committed to Dharma. Buddha is, more generally, the state of being enlightened, an awakened one. Dharma is, more generally, the path taken to achieve Buddhahood. Sangha is, more generally, the community who agrees upon Buddhahood as the goal and Dharma as the path to get there. We may therefore see that in taking the Three Refuges, we are reorienting our attention towards the Goal, the Path, and the Community. In Thelema, the Goal is the authentic actualization of our full potential, the totality of our being; the Path has been called Initiation and the Great Work, the progressive shift to a mode of Being; the Community is the “company of heaven”<sup>306</sup> of Thelemites, or one’s particular community such as O.T.O., composed of those who are committed to the Goal of True Will through the Path of Initiation. The three refuges are to help remind us to reorient the focus of our Alone-ness from an inauthentic obsession over “having” to an authentic focus on the Goal of Being through the Path we tread with our Community. I will go through each of these in further detail and explain how they can be understood in light of the New Aeon.

**The Goal of True Will** – In Thelema, our Goal is the achievement of an authentic actualization of the totality of the self. The attainment of the optimum mode of being that is the deepest and most complete expression of our potential is the authentic actualization of our Independence and our Interdependence. We call this Goal the True Will.

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305 *Liber AL*, III:5.

306 *Liber AL*, I:2.



This is interesting to compare to the goal of Buddhahood. It might be said that the two are identical goals when the veil of language conditioned by temporal and cultural conditions is lifted, yet there are important differences. Firstly, we understand that the expression of the True Will is unique to each person – that is, the Will won't look the same as expressed in different people. We hold no absolute standards as to how we might expect someone to behave when doing their True Will; some may be harsh and exuberant whereas others may be gentle and introverted, and some may both at different times. The unique and individual nature of the True Will further shows our Alone-ness; the Goal of True Will and the expression thereof can only be our own. No one can truly know or find this Goal except ourselves. Secondly, Buddhahood is a state and we may be liable to see it as a static object or goal. True Will, on the other hand, is dynamic; it is a process rather than an object, a verb rather than a noun. Crowley writes that the Thelemite understands herself “not as a fixed being of wrath but as the 'the flying spark of light' – a pure dynamic vibration. This conception, first formulated in *Liber CCXX*, and explained already in this Comment, is in fact the first condition of what the Buddhists call *Samma Dithi* – right views. So long as a man thinks of himself as a being rather than as an energy he attributes to himself not, as the profane suppose, stability, but stagnation, which is death.”<sup>307</sup> He also writes, “This True Self thus ultimately includes all things soever: its discovery is Initiation (the travelling inwards) and as its Nature is to move continually, it must be understood not as static, but as dynamic, not as a Noun but as a Verb.”<sup>308</sup> The nature of True Will is a continual state of the authentic actualization of potential; the nature of Being is perpetual becoming.

This Goal is not something to be obtained, yet another thing to “have” and possess. It is also not some distant, elusive, or beyond-human goal. The Goal is an authentic sense of being, the deepest and fullest expression of who we truly are. The Path is therefore the path inward towards that optimum mode of Being that we call True Will, or as Crowley writes “the true Motion of thine inmost Being”<sup>309</sup> and “the true purpose of the totality

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307 Commentary to *Liber LXV*, V:2.

308 “Duty” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

309 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 9.

of your Being.”<sup>310</sup> We seek nothing other than our True Selves, the most complete expression of our nature. Crowley confirms this when he writes, “What is the meaning of Initiation? It is the Path to the realisation of your Self as the sole, the supreme, the absolute of all Truth, Beauty, Purity, Perfection!”<sup>311</sup> and also when he writes, “Initiation means the Journey Inwards: nothing is changed or can be changed; but all is trulier understood with every step.”<sup>312</sup> True Will is, in this sense, the most near and most human Goal of all.

**The Path of Initiation** – The Path is called Initiation and simply refers to the process of finding and actualizing our potential in the most authentic and complete way; it is the process of approaching the Goal. On this Crowley writes, “In all systems of religion is to be found a system of Initiation, which may be defined as the process by which a man comes to learn that unknown Crown. Though none can communicate either the knowledge or the power to achieve this, which we may call the Great Work, it is yet possible for initiates to guide others. Every man must overcome his own obstacles, expose his own illusions.”<sup>313</sup> This does not mean the progressive initiation into the ascending grades of some temporal organization. These “outer” initiations can only, even in their ideal state, be mere reflections of that inner process of moving from a mode of wanting to a mode of Willing.

This Path is called the Great Work because embarking upon and treading it involves coming to face our deepest anxieties, doubts, and fears as well as those parts of ourselves that we neglect, distort, or deny completely. This is no easy task, and as a fact of our Alone-ness, “every man must overcome his own obstacles [and] expose his own illusions.” Though others can point the way, no one can do it for you. As Morpheus says to Neo in *The Matrix*, “I can only show you the door. You’re the one that has to walk through it.” Our “shadow,” as Carl Jung would call it, encompasses all those parts of ourselves that we do not want to face, so our exposure and integration of them is necessarily a very Great Work. Our primary tools for treading this Path have been grouped under the two

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310 “Duty” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

311 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 71.

312 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, “Mastery”.

313 *Liber LXI vel Causae*.

main categories of Magick and Yoga.

**The Community of Thelemites** – The Community involves all those who have accepted the Goal of True Will as the only satisfactory solution to human existence, a reoriented mode of being rather than constantly and frustratingly striving after the manifold and often contradictory objects of our conscious wishes, desires, and ideals. This Community includes all Thelemites in the sense that they have accepted the Goal and the Path to that Goal. They all are gathered into one fold in order to “bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men.”<sup>314</sup> It is also useful to think of one’s actual local community, perhaps that of O.T.O. for some readers, in this light. Those members are all bound together and united in their acceptance of the Law of Thelema, the Goal of True Will, and the Path of Initiation. Remembering this helps keep our perspective, not letting us fall so easily into the petty interpersonal drama and organizational politics that inevitably arise; instead, we reorient ourselves to remember our real Goal and the Path thereto, embracing and rejoicing in the fact that we have a Community of individuals devoted to this very ideal.

<b>The Three Jewels or Refuges of the New Aeon</b>	1) The Goal	True Will
	2) The Path	Initiation, the Great Work
	3) The Community	Thelemites

We can now see that, in the New Aeon, we may take refuge in the Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, but these are understood as True Will, Initiation, and the Community of Thelemites. We take refuge in the Will, the Way, and the Brotherhood of Stars. To take these three refuges is to reorient one’s attitude and focus, shifting away from the inauthentic actualization of our Alone-ness in the mode of wanting characterized by striving after possessing and towards the authentic actualization of our Alone-ness in the mode of Willing characterized by the personal growth towards the fullest expression of Being, the actualization of the totality of one’s potential. Again, to take refuge is not to run away or hide from anything; on the contrary, we are reorienting ourselves to very directly

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314 *Liber AL*, I:15.

confront the reality of our situations. To take refuge is nothing other than reminding oneself of and reorienting oneself to hopeful process of actualizing an the authentic mode of Being, of True Will. In this way, the Three Jewels help fortify us in our Alone-ness against the ever-present possibility of slipping back into the inauthentic mode of wanting and having.

Buddhists often take refuge in the form of a short prayer such as, “I take refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha.” As Thelemites, we may recite a short prayer of “I take refuge in the True Will, in the Great Work, and the Community of Thelemites” or “I guide myself in remembering the Goal of Will, the Path of Initiation thereto, and the Community dedicated to walking this Path with me” or any other form that speaks to you in a way that feels genuine for yourself. This can be repeated as a meditation in itself, as a prayer before and after a regimen of Yoga and/or Magick, or done at certain times of day.

The important point is not to form a rigid sense of exactly when this should be done or exactly how it should be said. The underlying meaning needs to be firmly in mind, that of a radical reorientation from a mode of wanting/having to a mode of Willing/Being so that we may authentically and fully actualize our potential. With freedom comes responsibility, and the responsibility falls on you to find a way that this works most effectively. No one can truly force you to do this nor can anyone do it for you. Only you can move from an inauthentic to an authentic expression of the fact of your Alone-ness. It is only through the radical reorientation of ourselves to accept what we are and the commitment to the Path that leads to the expression of the totality of our Being that we may transcend and finally overcome the anxiety that has resulted from being absorbed in the “wants” or desires that have provided no true solace or joy.

*“Keep pure your highest ideal; strive ever toward it without allowing aught to stop you or turn you aside, even as a star sweeps upon its incalculable and infinite course of glory, and all is Love. The Law of your being becomes Light, Life, Love and Liberty. All is peace, all is harmony and beauty, all is joy.”*<sup>315</sup>

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315 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty.*

## With-ness / Interdependence

Just as Alone-ness is an inextricable fact of our existence, so too is the inescapable fact of our being constantly with other people – the other side of the coin of our Alone-ness is our With-ness. This is not something of which we can simply opt in or opt out because it is a necessary and fundamental fact of our existing in the world. If With-ness / Interdependence is an inescapable fact, we might as well do it well, i.e. authentically rather than inauthentically. The fact of our Interdependence is, I believe, one of the most overlooked aspects of the development of the True Will and of Thelema as a whole. We can no longer take a view of the development of the individual as complete that does not take into account the fact that we are embedded, interwoven, and interacting with others.

The fact of our With-ness is actually exemplified throughout the literary corpus of Thelema. Nuit declares “the unveiling of the company of heaven”<sup>316</sup> and that “every man and every woman is a star.”<sup>317</sup> Crowley writes, “The 'company of heaven' is Mankind, and its 'unveiling' is the assertion of the independent godhead of every man and every woman!”<sup>318</sup> Each of us is a star inherent in the “Heaven”<sup>319</sup> of “Infinite Space.”<sup>320</sup> This is the unavoidable reality of our Interdependence that co-exists simultaneously with our Independence. We are “one Star in the Company of Stars”<sup>321</sup> and every thought we have, word we speak, and deed we do establishes us in relation to other stars and the world as a whole. Just as we are independent beings in our Alone-ness, we are interdependent beings in our With-ness. Crowley writes, “Every individual is essentially sufficient to himself. But he is unsatisfactory to himself until he has established himself in his right relation with the universe”<sup>322</sup> and “It is surely obvious, even intellectually, that all phenomena are interdependent, and therefore involve each other.”<sup>323</sup>

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316 *Liber AL*, I:2.

317 *Liber AL*, I:3.

318 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:2.

319 *Liber AL*, I:21.

320 *Liber AL*, I:22.

321 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

322 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, Introduction.

323 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:22.

Just as there is an authentic and inauthentic way to actualize one's Independence or Alone-ness, so too is there an authentic and inauthentic way to actualize one's Interdependence or With-ness. We saw that inauthentic Alone-ness expresses itself in the constant but fruitless searching outside of oneself to assuage one's discontent, emptiness, and suffering. Conversely, inauthentic With-ness expresses itself in the obsessional absorption in an attitude of selfishness. Authentic Alone-ness is thwarted by misguided extroversion and authentic With-ness is thwarted by misguided introversion. Calling selfishness inauthentic may at first seem to contradict the Thelemic doctrine that enjoins us that pursuit of our own Will is the sole duty, right, and Law. That is, one might think that our one right and duty being to find and do our individual and unique True Wills is inherently selfish, yet this is not so as it neglects the fundamental With-ness or Interdependence of our existence. I believe this is precisely the reason that our With-ness is such an overlooked aspect of the development of our True Wills. The fact of our With-ness therefore deserves special attention and clarification.

As already stated, inauthentic With-ness expresses itself in the absorption in an attitude of selfishness. In doing this, we become overly introverted and concerned only for ourselves (or what we perceive to be our "selves"), and the end result is the objectification of other people. That is, when we are in a state of inauthentic With-ness, our interpersonal relations are reduced to objects, and their only value and meaning are in using them for our own concern and welfare. Once again we are immersed in the mode of want characterized by "having" – other people are simply "it's" or objects to be used and possessed. In an inauthentic actualization of our With-ness, our Interpersonal mode becomes I-It. In reducing the other to an object, a mere "it," we are failing to see that "every man and every woman is a star."<sup>324</sup> We deny that they are conscious beings of suffering and joy, confusion and clarity, just like we are; we deny that they, too, have a True Will that has an equal right and duty to be expressed as our own. In this way our mode is "having" in the form of manipulation, just as we would do with lifeless objects. We no longer authentically and genuinely encounter another living being but instead a mere role in our own drama, a piece of our world rather than a star that is sovereign in his or her own universe.

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<sup>324</sup> *Liber AL*, I:3.

In contrast to the inauthentic I-It, an authentic actualization of our With-ness expresses itself in a Interpersonal mode of I-Thou.<sup>325</sup> To see the other as a “Thou” and not an “it” is a distinguishing characteristic of the authentic actualization of our Interdependence. When we see others as a “Thou,” we acknowledge they are stars, co-equal with ourselves. This genuine encounter is acknowledged when we greet others with the Law – that is, we say, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.” It is stated in a second-person affirmation of the True Will of the individual to which we are speaking. This fact is sometimes lost when we reduce our greeting to “93,” but the same meaning can be lost in saying the whole phrase. Whether saying the whole phrase or the simple 93, what is required is a conscious, intentional act of acknowledging the other as a Thou, a star like ourselves, not a mere object. This attitude is what we as Thelemites call “Agape” or “Love.”

We know that “Love is the law, love under will”<sup>326</sup> and that “There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse.”<sup>327</sup> This Love is often identified with the Greek word *Agape*, which in contrast to the erotic love of *Eros* and the brotherly love of *Philia*, refers to Divine Love or Unconditional Love. In the Old Aeon, this word meant the Love of God, and this is still true in the New Aeon except that we assert, “There is no god but man.”<sup>328</sup> Our Love of God is therefore the Love of one another unconditionally. This is a Love that strikes at the heart of Being, both of oneself and the other, because it is an acceptance of the other as they are; it is the acknowledgment of the other as a Thou, as a star, as a God engaged in the process of knowing and enacting his or her True Will just as you are. Crowley writes, “We are all inevitably allies, even identical in our variety; to 'love one another with burning hearts' is one of our essential qualities”<sup>329</sup> and we are to “respect the equal kingship of others. We are to love our brother kings with eager passion.”<sup>330</sup>

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325 See Martin Buber's *I and Thou* for a deeper discussion of I-It versus I-Thou.

326 *Liber AL*, I:57.

327 *Liber AL*, I:41.

328 *Liber OZ*.

329 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:24.

330 *Djeridensis Working*, II:24.

<b>Two modes of actualizing With-ness</b>	1) want / having →	Inauthentic →	I-It →	<u>Manipulation</u> : seeing others as objects or “it's” that are to be used/possessed
	2) Will / Being →	Authentic →	I-Thou →	<u>Love</u> : Seeing and accepting others as they are

What gets in the way of having an authentic and genuine encounter with the other as a Thou rather than an “it”? How do we move from a mode of want, dominated by our own selfishness and characterized by seeing and treating others as objects, to a mode of Will, characterized by a genuine encounter and appreciation of the other as another Being with a Will? First, we need to clear away notions of the other that thwart our genuine acknowledgment of the other and then we need to foster an attitude of authentic Love for the other – that is, we need a purification and a consecration.

In order to purify ourselves of conceptions that get in the way of the authentic actualization of our With-ness, we must take into account the ways in which we perceive people in accordance with our likes, dislikes, and indifference. We each habitually react to others in a way conditioned by our like, dislike, or indifference to the other. In our like of the other we are drawn toward them, in our dislike of the other we are pushed away, and in our indifference we remain apathetic to them. Each of these represent an imbalance that must be purified, so to speak, before we can authentically encounter the other. At the bottom of these three imbalances – like, dislike, and indifference – is the fact that we act towards people and expect others to act in accordance with our preconceptions of them. Even before we actually meet people we start forming opinions as to their characteristics, whether we will like or dislike them, and how they might act toward us. As we get to know people, the tendency to form conceptions of the other becomes even more pronounced. These preconceptions of the other are a limitation, both of them and of oneself. To have a conception or an image of the other is to see our own distorted version of them and not the other as they are. These conceptions are a



form of “lust of result” from which we must be “delivered.”<sup>331</sup> Crowley comments that being delivered from the lust of result “Recommends 'non-attachment.'”<sup>332</sup> We must not become attached to our notions of how people might be or are. In this way, we make a limit around the person, a box, that is static and unfair to both people involved. In being attached to a notion of how people are (or should be), we become upset and agitated when they do not conform to our pre-held beliefs of them.

Also, in being attached to a notion of the other, we do not allow them the freedom to be the dynamic being that they are – we do not allow them to change, and we know that “The Universe is Change.”<sup>333</sup> To not acknowledge this fundamental characteristic of the universe and everything and everyone within it is to live in a distorted fantasy that will bring consistent annoyance and suffering. As Crowley writes, “To resist change is to ask for pain.”<sup>334</sup> To resist change is to ask for suffering because we find that things do not match up to how we expected them to be, and it is also to thwart the Will of the other in the dynamic expression of their Being. Conversely, to accept change is to accept Love – Crowley writes, “The Universe is Change; every Change is the effect of an Act of Love; all Acts of Love contain Pure Joy.”<sup>335</sup> Further, he writes, “We have accepted Love as the meaning of Change, Change being the Life of all Matter soever in the Universe. And we have accepted Love as the mode of Motion of the Will to Change. To us every act, as implying Change, is an act of Love. Life is a dance of delight, its rhythm an infinite rapture that never can weary or stale.”<sup>336</sup> This is an intimation into the nature of authentic With-ness, of the expression of Love rather than selfishness.

In recognizing the fundamental equality of the self and other, we purify ourselves of the distorted conceptions that thwart us from a genuine actualization of our With-ness. This clears away misconceptions and lays the groundwork for the counterpart to purification – that is, we have wiped away what is preventing our authentic With-ness and now we must consecrate ourselves in the strengthening of those qualities that encourage

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331 *Liber AL*, I:44.

332 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:44.

333 *The Heart of the Master*.

334 *The Magical Record of the Beast 666*, 2 June 1920.

335 *The Heart of the Master*.

336 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:52.

and facilitate an authentic With-ness. If the inauthentic actualization of our With-ness is characterized by an absorption in self-concern, the authentic actualization of our With-ness is characterized by concern for others. This has been called many things such as “compassion” and “charity,” but – as Thelemites – we call this quality Love. It is not something that must be carefully cultivated against all odds, but it is the fundamental nature of our authentic With-ness. We need only to purify ourselves from that which prevents this and cultivate that which facilitates this, and then Love will spring naturally, spontaneously, and joyfully from the depths of our Being. That is, we come to know Love not as an option or as a good idea but as the inherent nature of our True Will.

We have seen the first step toward the authentic actualization of our Interdependence is to see people as they are, not as we wish or think them to be in conformity with our like, dislike, or indifference of them. We have purified our Love, now we must consecrate it. One very practical way to begin this process is to see the equality of oneself and the other. This is done through the act of “putting yourself in the other’s shoes,” as it is often called. This method is spoken to in *Liber Librae* where it is written, “Be not hasty to condemn others; how knowest thou that in their place, thou couldest have resisted the temptation? And even were it so, why shouldst thou despise one who is weaker than thyself?”<sup>337</sup> At the bottom of this is the recognition that the other is a Being just like yourself: loving and hating, crying and rejoicing, frustrated and excited, struggling and succeeding. The other, like you, is a star trying to fulfill his or her Will and you are both engaged in the same struggle, the same Great Work. When we pierce the veils that we habitually construct around the other, purifying the dross that covers the gold, we may begin to approach a genuine, authentic encounter with the other as a Thou and not an “it.”

This attitude is reinforced every time we greet another by saying, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.” We acknowledge the star within them, the Being that is striving to become itself fully. We must treat our fellow beings as stars, as royalty would greet royalty (i.e. with great respect and admiration) and as children would greet children (i.e. with great openness and vitality). This is the authentic expression of With-ness, the formula of the Crowned and Conquering Child on the Interpersonal plane, so to speak. This is what Crowley is speaking to when

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337 *Liber Librae*.

he writes, “Find thou thyself in every Star.”<sup>338</sup> We must acknowledge the other as a Thou, not an “it” conditioned by our preconceptions of them in line with our like, dislike, or indifference; we must open ourselves to the unique and powerful presence of the other, not as an object but as a Being equal to our ourselves, i.e. as a “you” or a “Thou” and not simply a “he,” “she,” or “it.” In this way, we come to a fundamental existential insight into the nature of our Being, that we are in “the company of heaven” – we are with other people. Though the authentic expression of Love is spontaneous and natural, it is constantly threatened with relapses into the inauthentic distortion of selfishness. We must be ever-vigilant and gird ourselves with the method of seeing ourselves in every star, in the recognition of the other as a “Thou” and not an “it,” in the appreciation of the other as a Being equal to ourselves.

This experiential encounter, not some piece of knowledge, is what fuels the joy of participating in the world as a star among stars; it is the true foundation of Universal Brother-and-Sisterhood wherein we acknowledge the true Divinity of the other and cultivate our Love for them. When we truly are able to see and acknowledge in the depths of our being that “every man and every woman is a star, and that every one’s will is the will of God,”<sup>339</sup> then we have begun the authentic actualization of our With-ness. With this, we may also find that we aspire not only to the optimum and authentic actualization of our own potential but also to see other people actualize their own potential. We want them to come to the knowledge and expression of their True Wills. The genuine welfare of humanity as a whole is achieved through the authentic actualization of the potential of every Being. True Love is expressed in acknowledging the Being of the other and in the hopeful realization of their True Will.

We can now see that True Will as the Goal of our Path encompasses both our authentic Alone-ness and our authentic With-ness. We seek both our own True Will as well as to move beyond our distorted self-concern to a Love of others expressed in an encouragement of the authentic fulfillment of their potential, i.e. the accomplishment of their True Wills. Only in an authentic expression of both our Alone-ness and our With-ness can we come to a complete, total actualization of the totality of our Being, our True Wills, “the Great Work, the Summum Bonum,

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338 *The Heart of the Master*.

339 *The Equinox III:1*, “The Tank”.

True Wisdom and Perfect Happiness.”<sup>340</sup>

*“Love and let love. Rejoice in every shape of love, and get thy rapture and thy nourishment thereof.”*<sup>341</sup>

## Conclusion

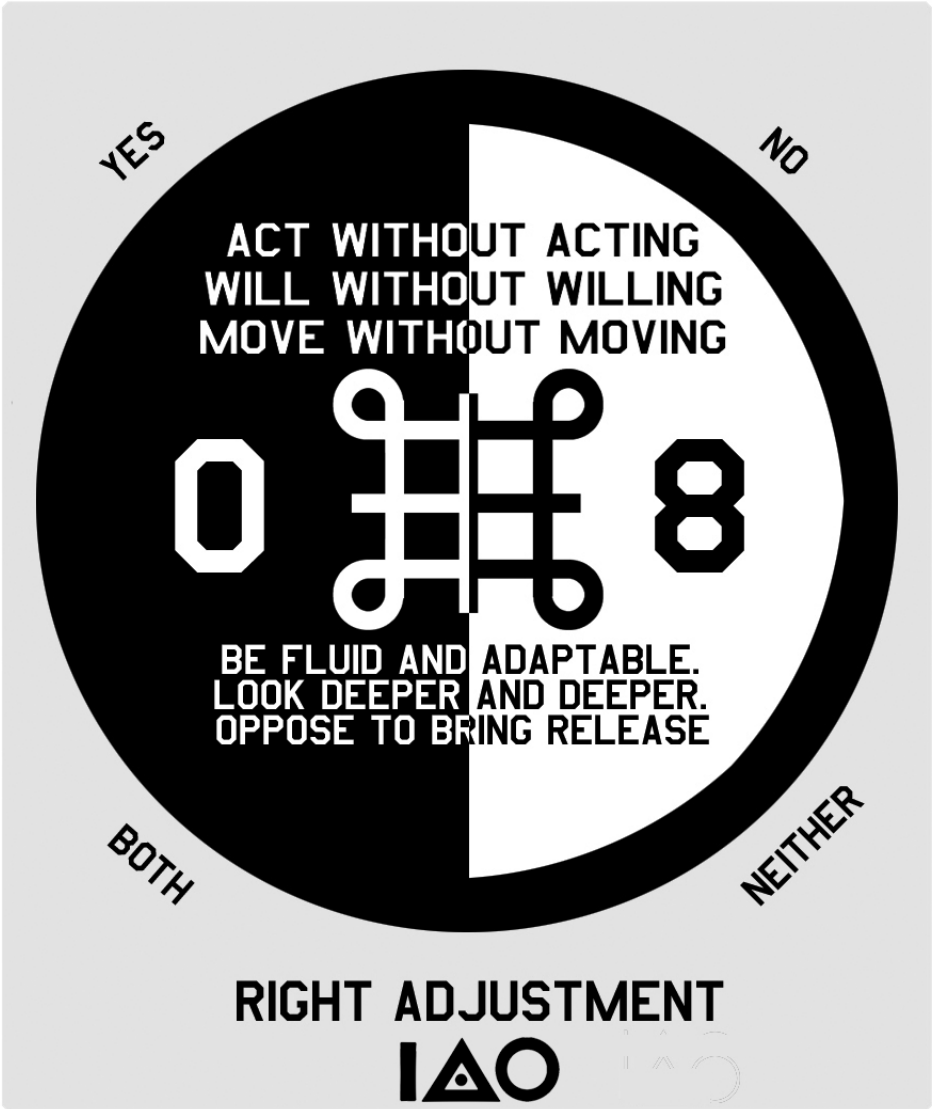
It should be apparent that this entire framework requires neither supernatural doctrines nor speculative metaphysics. We were driven by the Question arising from our own being and the Answer comes therefrom. Thelema represents not only a scientific religion but a humanized religion. In the Aeon of Isis the focus was Nature, in the Aeon of Osiris the focus was God, and now in the Aeon of Horus the focus is Man, the individual. Our Goal is the fullest expression of ourselves in the True Will, our Path is towards the deepest totality of our selves, and our Community are neither in a “here-after” of Heaven nor gods or demi-gods in some plane “beyond” the world but rather the men and women here on Earth. Our authentic Alone-ness is expressed in our True Will and our authentic With-ness is expressed in our Love, or Agape, wherein we see the other as a “Thou” and not an “it,” an object to be possessed or used – we experience and unite the two complementary facts of existence in every instant. Only thereby can we truly undergo a radical re-orientation from a mode of want to a mode of Will. I hope you will take to heart, remember, and truly engage with what has been described throughout this text and when we say to one another:

*Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Love is the law, love under will.*

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<sup>340</sup> *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass.*

<sup>341</sup> *The Heart of the Master.*



*Right Adjustment*  
is based on a Vision from a  
Working of the Element of Air

## CHAPTER 12

# THELEMIC VALUES: A NEW VIEW OF MORALITY

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*This article was written in in 2007 e.v., and its intention was to try to get a more complete idea of values, ethics, and morality in Thelema beyond simply “Do what thou wilt.” Ideas from the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche and the psychologist Carl Rogers are adopted to help explain the process of coming to find one's own self-created values.*

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### Ye Olde Morality

Nearly every human alive has heard of the Ten Commandments that Moses brought down from Mount Sinai – the ten “thou shalt not”s. This system of ethics as set forth literally in stone by God and delivered through Moses is practically the perfect symbol of what I propose to call “old morality.” Old morality consists essentially in the belief that there is an absolute law of conduct, often rewarded with promises of heaven or some kind of pleasure and punished with verdicts of various types of suffering, even eternal suffering in a fiery “Hell.” This notion of absolute morality is most apparent in the Jewish religion, with its ten commandments (Judaism actually has 613 commandments in total), but it also appears in both Christianity and Islam (the “five pillars of Islam”). Both of these religions are characterized by their insistence on sin and the punishment of hell following sinful actions. These types of absolute morality are also apparent in many forms of Buddhism where they have “*sila*,” which consists usually of five “thou shalt not”s. In some forms of yoga, there are what is called “*yama*” and “*niyama*” which are essentially five “thou shalt”s and five “thou shalt not”s.

Now, this old morality being by definition founded on a notion of “absolute moral conduct,” is also necessarily quite inflexible. Not only did

Moses invoke God as the source and authority of his commandments, but they were set in two gigantic tablets of stone.

In the course of history, one might say that these commandments, Jewish and otherwise, were necessary for that particular time. It can be agreed that many of these guidelines were (and still can be) effective if employed in the right circumstances, in the right cultures. For example, “keeping kosher,” a practice in Judaism, might be a highly effective way of being healthy in a certain part of a world, in a certain time-period. The fact is that these old moralities, as discussed above, emphasize the absoluteness of their rules and are therefore inflexible in their adaptation to individual circumstances. Nietzsche described this old morality, cognate with the Freudian “superego,” as “the great dragon” that plagues each person in their development:

*“What is the great dragon which the spirit is no longer inclined to call Lord and God? ‘Thou-shalt,’ is the great dragon called. But the spirit of the lion saith, ‘I will.’*

*‘Thou-shalt,’ lieth in its path, sparkling with gold—a scale-covered beast; and on every scale glittereth golden, ‘Thou shalt!’ The values of a thousand years glitter on those scales, and thus speaketh the mightiest of all dragons: All the values of things glitter on me. All values have already been created, and all created values do I represent. Verily, there shall be no ‘I will’ any more. Thus speaketh the dragon.”*<sup>342</sup>

This dragon is contrasted with the lion, a symbol of a certain stage of the “metamorphosis of one's spirit,” which corresponds with the discarding of this old morality.

## **Discarding of Old Morality**

*“Anthropologists, archæologists, physicists and other men of science, risking thumbscrews, stake, infamy and ostracism, have torn the spider-snare of superstition to shreds and broken in pieces*

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342 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

*the monstrous idol of Morality, the murderous Moloch which has made mankind its meat throughout history... Moral philosophy, psychology, sociology, anthropology, mental pathology, physiology, and many another of the children of Wisdom, of whom she is justified, well know that the laws of Ethics are a chaos of confused conventions, based at best on customs convenient in certain conditions, more often on the craft or caprice of the biggest, the most savage, heartless, cunning and blood-thirsty brutes of the pack, to secure their power or pander to their pleasure in cruelty.”*<sup>343</sup>

The 18th and 19th centuries signaled the slow demise of the conventional views of an Absolute Law of morals. This is epitomized in Nietzsche's proclamation that “God is dead.” The essential realization that had crept in was that moral judgment of things is entirely relative. Amazingly, Einstein announced the relativity of space-time itself less than half a century later. Nietzsche also summarized this relativization of morals in one aphorism: “There is no such thing as moral phenomena, but only a moral interpretation of phenomena.”<sup>344</sup> In this, we come to see that morality as we know it lies entirely in our particular interpretation of phenomena, it does not reside in the phenomena themselves.

Thelema was surely the first religious philosophy to adopt – or rather incorporate – this new notion of the relativity of morality. This idea is more fully expanded in various other essays.<sup>345</sup>

It is proclaimed in *Liber AL vel Legis*, the central text of Thelema:

*“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”*

*“There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”*<sup>346</sup>

The will being unique to each individual, their different Laws are essentially not going to be identical. This most definitely states that each person is to do their own Will and not follow out the various laws and mandates of others. Naturally, moral sanctions imposed from without are

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343 *Liber V vel Reguli*.

344 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*.

345 See, for example, chapter 5 of this book.

346 *Liber AL*, I:40, III:60.



discarded. The discarding of old morality during the last two centuries is also reflected into the microcosm of each human individual. Each man and woman must go through the various stages of human development, and a large part of this development is one's continually changing approach to values. In the process of all of our lives, we have each adopted values and many of us, especially during adolescence, begin to question our adopted values that we took initially to be true.

This questioning of values is what Nietzsche discusses in his classic *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He declared there were three metamorphoses of the spirit, the first of which is the camel that essentially takes on the values of the society it was born into. Next, through necessity, the lion emerges, symbolic of the discarding of introjected values. On this symbolic lion of the spirit Nietzsche writes:

*“My brethren, wherefore is there need of the lion in the spirit? Why sufficeth not the beast of burden [the camel], which renounceth and is reverent?”*

*To create new values – that, even the lion cannot yet accomplish: but to create itself freedom for new creating – that can the might of the lion do. To create itself freedom, and give a holy Nay even unto duty: for that, my brethren, there is need of the lion.*

*To assume the right to new values – that is the most formidable assumption for a load-bearing and reverent spirit. Verily, unto such a spirit it is preying, and the work of a beast of prey. As its holiest, it once loved 'Thou-shalt': now is it forced to find illusion and arbitrariness even in the holiest things, that it may capture freedom from its love: the lion is needed for this capture.”*<sup>347</sup>

The prime characteristic of this lion-like attitude is “to create itself freedom” by rejecting the “Thou-shalts” of values imposed from without. Modernly, the old morality is represented to the modern individual in the form of “society” or “the State,” which are imposed from without. This lion symbol Nietzsche speaks of is essentially the breaking free of old perspectives of value. These include any imposed values acquired

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<sup>347</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

throughout one's development in modern society, especially those of old morality.

In the field of psychology, Carl Ransom Rogers – an influential psychologist who founded the client-centered form of therapy and was president of the American Psychological Association – delineated the progress of our approach to values throughout our individual development. To understand the transition to what Rogers terms a “psychologically mature” outlook on values we must first understand completely his model of the development of values. He first of all distinguishes between “operative values” which refers to “the tendency of any living beings to show preference, in their actions, for one kind of object or objective rather than another... [which] need not involve any cognitive or conceptual thinking,”<sup>348</sup> and what he calls “conceived values,” which are “the preference of the individual for a symbolized object... [where] usually in such a preference there is anticipation or foresight of the outcome of behavior directed toward such a symbolized object.”<sup>349</sup> For operative values, Rogers gives the example of a worm navigating a maze by choosing the directions through it; for conceived values, he gives the example of the value-statement “honesty is the best policy.” With this subtle distinction in values we may return to the subject of becoming a psychologically mature adult.

Rogers suggested that there are three distinct perspectives or stages of value: the infant, the psychologically immature, and the psychologically mature adult. The infant's view of values is inborn - it has “at the outset, a clear approach to values. He prefers some things and experiences, and rejects others. We can infer from studying his behavior that he prefers those experiences which maintain, enhance, or actualize his organism, and rejects those which do not serve this end.”<sup>350</sup> This infant stage of values is entirely composed of operative values, for conceived values require symbolic thought of which infants are not even capable. The fact that is asserted is that infants are inborn with a sense of valuing things, which corresponds to what Rogers calls elsewhere the “actualizing tendency,”

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348 Rogers, Carl R. “Toward a Modern Approach to Values: The Valuing Process in the Mature Person” from *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, Vol.68, No.2, pg. 160-167.

349 Ibid.

350 Ibid.

which is that tendency of all humans (not just infants) to inherently move towards “those experiences which maintain, enhance, or actualize his organism,” as previously mentioned. Rogers continues, explaining that the infant's approach to values “is first of all a flexible, changing, valuing process, not a fixed system... What is going on seems best described as an organismic valuing process, in which each element, each moment of what he is experiencing is somehow weighed, and selected or rejected, depending on whether, at this moment, it tends to actualize the organism or not. This complicated weighing of experience is clearly an organismic, not a conscious or symbolic function. These are operative, not conceived values.”<sup>351</sup> The last aspect of the infant's approach to values is that “the source or locus of the evaluating process is clearly within himself. Unlike many of us, he knows what he likes and dislikes, and the origin of these value choices lies strictly within himself. He is the center of the valuing process, the evidence for his choices being supplied by his own senses.”<sup>352</sup> Essentially, the infant's approach to values is what Rogers terms the “organismic valuing process,” wherein each phenomenon is weighed and rejected depending on its potential for actualizing the individual in question, and the source of the evaluating process is clearly within the individual.

One would think that this soundly based and highly efficient valuing process would not be worth giving up. The fact is that all of us exchange this apparent effective valuing process for a more “rigid, uncertain, inefficient approach to values which characterizes most of us adults.”<sup>353</sup> The reason for this, Rogers posits, is essentially the need for love from others, especially the parents. “The infant needs love, wants it, tends to behave in ways which will bring a repetition of this wanted experience. But this brings complications.”<sup>354</sup> Each child is scolded for doing things the parent sees as unacceptable and rewarded for things viewed as acceptable. These various value judgments become adopted by the infant as if they were his own, which is called the “introjection of values.” Rogers explains, “He has deserted the wisdom of his organism, giving up the locus of evaluation, and is trying to behave in terms of values set by another, in

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351 Ibid.

352 Ibid.

353 Ibid.

354 Ibid.

order to hold love.”<sup>355</sup> It this new stage, when the infant begins to start introjecting values from outside as if they were his own, which corresponds with Nietzsche's notion of the camel. The camel is that which delights in bearing heavy loads, in this case the burden of introjected values. On this Nietzsche writes:

*“What is heavy? so asketh the load-bearing spirit; then kneeleth it down like the camel, and wanteth to be well laden. What is the heaviest thing, ye heroes? asketh the load-bearing spirit, that I may take it upon me and rejoice in my strength... All these heaviest things the load-bearing spirit taketh upon itself.”*<sup>356</sup>

These introjected values in the individual corresponds as a microcosm to the old morality, discussed earlier, that has appeared in the course of human history. Rogers writes that “because these [introjected] concepts are not based on his own valuing, they tend to be fixed and rigid, rather than fluid and changing.”<sup>357</sup> Like introjected value concepts, the old morality is inherently fixed and rigid. Our lives as children, through when we are adolescents, up until we become adults, we are constantly introjecting values from around us. Rogers notes that, “in this fantastically complex culture of today, the patterns we introject as desirable or undesirable come from a variety of sources and are often highly contradictory in their meanings.”<sup>358</sup> This assimilation into society with its values creates this “highly contradictory” feeling within each person. Most adults are at this stage of tension between their various conceived values that they have introjected, and more importantly Rogers describes the “wide and unrecognized discrepancy between the evidence supplied by his own experience and these conceived values.”<sup>359</sup> This is because his experience no longer dictates his values as they did as an infant when his locus of evaluation was still within himself. Now, this source of evaluation lies outside of himself in most matters because of these fixed introjected values that he has adopted. One consequence of

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355 Ibid.

356 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

357 Rogers, Carl. “Toward a Modern Approach to Values.”

358 Ibid.

359 Ibid.

these introjected values being fixed is that “he must hold [these conceptions] in a rigid and unchanging fashion. The alternative would be a collapse of his values.”<sup>360</sup> Rogers believed that this picture of the individual, that of one with a large discrepancy between their experience and their introjected, conceived values, “is the picture of most of us.”<sup>361</sup> On this fundamental discrepancy Rogers wrote:

*“By taking over the conceptions of others as our own we lose contact with the potential wisdom of our own functioning, and lose confidence in ourselves. Since these value constructs are often sharply at variance with what is going on in our own experiencing, we have in a very basic way divorced ourselves from ourselves, and this accounts for much of modern strain and insecurity. This fundamental discrepancy between the individual's concepts and what he is actually experiencing, between the intellectual structure of his values and the valuing process going on unrecognized within him - this is a part of the fundamental estrangement of modern man from himself.”*<sup>362</sup>

It is at this point in development, where there is a fundamental discrepancy and dissonance in ourselves, that Nietzsche's lion is needed “create itself freedom” by discarding the old values of “the great dragon” of “Thou shalt not”s. Before, as a camel, the individual takes on and introjects the values of his society at large, moving his source of evaluation from a fluid center within himself to a fixed set of values outside of himself. This process is most likely necessary for all humans to go through, even though it has “divorced ourselves from ourselves.” It is at this point that the lion is needed, which is essentially symbolic of the discarding of old values. This lion in its rejecting of introjected values is a symbol of the transition from this psychologically immature outlook of values to becoming what Rogers called a psychologically mature adult. Rogers said that “some individuals are fortunate in... developing further in the direction of psychological maturity.”<sup>363</sup> Being a therapist he naturally

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360 Ibid.

361 Ibid.

362 Ibid.

363 Ibid.

recommends the therapeutic climate for this further development but also admitted that this development can also happen in life where various conditions are similar to therapy.

## The Birth of a New System of Values

If we discard our own introjected values, what do we have left? This dimension is what many other essays on Thelemic morals have neglected. Once the lion has found the old set of values ineffective and useless, what takes the place of this new void? Is “Do what thou wilt” simply just a call to complete chaos and anarchy?

As we begin to discard these introjected values, we come again to an approach to values that is similar to the infant's perspective treated earlier. In this sense, “it is fluid, flexible, based on this particular moment, and the degree to which this moment is experienced as enhancing and actualizing. Values are not held rigidly, but are continually changing.”<sup>364</sup> This return to a fluid and flexible approach to values can only happen when we relinquish our attachment to various conceived values that have been introjected. The experience of our organism, which is constantly changing, becomes more important to the evaluation process than the thought structure of our values. Also in similarity with the infant's perspective, this new mature approach establishes, “the locus of evaluation... firmly within the person. It is his own experience which provides the value information or feedback. This does not mean that he is not open to all the evidence he can obtain from other sources. But it means that this is taken for what it is - outside evidence - and is not as significant as his own reactions.”<sup>365</sup> Further, “there is also involved in this valuing process a letting oneself down into the immediacy of what one is experiencing, endeavoring to sense and to clarify all its complex meanings”<sup>366</sup> just like in infancy. Essentially, one returns largely to the infant's point-of-view insofar as one's values are more fluid & flexible, the locus of evaluation is re-established within oneself, experiential evidence trumps outside evidence, and a sort of letting go to be “in the moment.”

Amazingly enough, as Carl Rogers says this new psychologically

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364 Ibid.

365 Ibid.

366 Ibid.

mature look has much in common with the infant's perspective, Nietzsche designates the stage after the discarding of values by the lion as that of the child. He writes:

*“But tell me, my brethren, what the child can do, which even the lion could not do? Why hath the preying lion still to become a child?”*

*Innocence is the child, and forgetfulness, a new beginning, a game, a self-rolling wheel, a first movement, a holy Yea. Aye, for the game of creating, my brethren, there is needed a holy Yea unto life: ITS OWN will, willeth now the spirit; HIS OWN world winneth the world's outcast.”*<sup>367</sup>

The child is “innocence” because he does not reference his own actions against the values of others (whereby one feels guilt, shame, *et cetera*, for not complying) but of his own, he is “forgetfulness” because his values are not a fixed system but a fluid, ever-changing process, and he is “a new beginning” and “a first movement” because his values are always renewed in each moment, each calling a new judgment from his being. The child is “a game” because he does not take the following of introjected values so seriously anymore – in fact, finds those following them quite ignorant (Rogers writes that, “[the infant] would laugh at our concern over values, if he could understand it”<sup>368</sup>), he is “a self-rolling wheel” because his locus of evaluation has been relocated to within himself, and he is “a holy Yea” because in this bringing of valuing into the locus of oneself naturally brings one into being more accepting of experience in general.

This image of the mature child appears in an injunction by Christ to “become as little children,”<sup>369</sup> and also Blavatsky's injunction, “The Pupil must regain the child-state he has lost,”<sup>370</sup> and finally Nietzsche's own injunction “Maturity in a man: that means having found once again that

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367 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

368 Rogers, Carl R. “Toward a Modern Approach to Values.”

369 Matthew 18:3.

370 Blavatsky, Helena P. *The Voice of Silence*.

seriousness which man had as a child, in play.”<sup>371</sup>

<b>Nietzsche: 3 Metamorphoses of the Spirit</b>	<b>Rogers: Stages of Valuation</b>
	<b>Infant:</b> flexible/fluid, all operative values, locus is within.
<b>Camel:</b> takes on values of society; <b>Great dragon:</b> “Thou shalt (not)'s” of world/society.	<b>Psychologically immature (Youth):</b> Introjection of values out of desire for love/care: fixed, external locus, required to defend rigid values/structure.
<b>Lion:</b> says “No” to the “Thou shalt (not)'s.”	<b>Immature → Mature (Adolescence):</b> Discarding of introjected values.
<b>Child:</b> says “Yes” to itself and its own experience/ values.	<b>Psychologically Mature (Adult):</b> locus re-located within, primacy of one's experience, fluid, trust in wisdom of the organism.

Rogers emphasizes that similar to the infant, “the psychologically mature adult trusts and uses the wisdom of his organism, with the difference that he is able to do so knowingly. He realizes that if he can trust all of himself, his feelings and his intuitions may be wiser than his mind, that as a total person he can be more sensitive and accurate than his thoughts alone.”<sup>372</sup> As emphasized in *Thelema*,<sup>373</sup> reason cannot adequately be the guide of the Will. Rogers offers this “organismic valuing process” as a solution to not only what may guide our actions when we discard reason as the sole arbiter, but also it fills the vacuum created by our questioning and discarding of values. The “child” of Nietzsche who creates his own values is one who has adopted this psychologically mature “organismic valuing process.” Like Rogers, we assert that “there is an organismic base for an organized valuing process within the human individual... It is part of the functioning life process of any healthy

371 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil*.

372 Rogers, Carl R. “Toward a Modern Approach to Values.”

373 See, for example, the section on “Epistemology” in chapter 8 of this book.



organism. It is the capacity for receiving feedback information which enables the organism continually to adjust its behavior and reactions so as to achieve the maximum possible self-enhancement.”<sup>374</sup> This natural inclination is with us since birth and consequently covered over with our adopted of various conceived values in our need for love and esteem. Now as we being to question and discard our various conceived values that have been imposed from without, we are re-adopting many facets of this natural organismic valuing process yet with the psychological maturity and insight of the adult.

Finally, some often question whether relocating our valuing process within ourselves will result in widespread anarchy. Carl Rogers assures that although this process of organismic valuing is entirely individual, the values that are created share a large degree of commonality across humanity. He asserted that “where individuals are valued, where there is greater freedom to feel and to be, certain value directions seem to emerge. These are not chaotic directions but instead have a surprising commonality... this commonality does not seem to be due to the influences of any one culture... I like to think that this commonality of value directions is due to the fact that we all belong to the same species... As a species there may be certain elements of experience which tend to make for inner development and which would be chosen by all individuals if they were genuinely free to choose.”<sup>375</sup> In fact, Rogers was able to identify various common themes, or “value directions,” that arise when individuals are accepted and left free to choose their own values:

*“They tend to move away from facades... pretense, defensiveness, putting up a front... they tend to move away from 'oughts'... they tend to move away from meeting the expectations of others... being real is positively valued... self-direction is positively valued...one's self, one's own feelings, come to be positively valued... being a process [as opposed to being fixed] is positively valued... sensitivity to others and acceptance of others is positively valued... deep relationships are positively valued... perhaps more than all else, the [individual] comes to value an openness to all of*

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374 Ibid.

375 Ibid.

*his inner and outer experience.”*<sup>376</sup>

Although these may be general trends of “value directions,” in Thelema it is recognized quite firmly that “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.” Instead of dogmatically imitating these apparently common stances on values, we may recognize that the very fact of a commonality of value directions among all humans who are relatively free and esteemed shows us that this process of understanding values that we all go through does not end in complete anarchy as some criticize. Essentially, “a new kind of emergent universality of value directions becomes possible when individuals move in the direction of psychological maturity, or more accurately, move in the direction of becoming open to their experiencing.”<sup>377</sup>

## Summary

The essential endeavor of this essay is to understand values in a Thelemic context. First, the historical appearance and dissolution of old morality, symbolized both as Moses' stone tablets of the Laws and the “great dragon” of Nietzsche, was defined as a system with a fixed and absolute rule of conduct. It was discussed how our approach to values changes continually throughout our individual development, and Carl Rogers' model for understanding values was adopted as a framework to understand this more deeply.

According to Carl Rogers, there are three distinct stages of development where we have different approaches to what we value. Initially, we all begin in the infant stage with an inborn organismic valuing process. This process is based on what will actualize the infant the most in the moment (called by Rogers “the actualizing tendency”), and consequently it is a constantly changing process in contrast to fixed, unchangeable principles. Slowly, largely through the desire for love and esteem from others, we relinquish this locus of values from within ourselves to various introjected values that are imposed from without. This stage of “introjecting values” from our parents and society as a whole was shown to correspond with Nietzsche's notion of the camel which “bears

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376 Ibid.

377 Ibid.

the burden” of its society's values.

This introjection of values creates a dissonance in ourselves because of the gap between our experience and the thought-structure of conceived values that we have introjected. This is what Rogers distinguishes as the “psychologically immature” approach to values. It is at this point that we begin to question our values, and many of them are seen to be irrelevant, arbitrary, and useless. These imposed values were seen to correspond both to Freud's superego and Nietzsche's “great dragon,” which assails each individual. When we begin to question our values and discard them, we become Nietzsche's “lion” who creates freedom by giving “a holy Nay even unto duty” and the many conceived values that we have introjected.

It is by the questioning and discarding of values that it is possible to move beyond psychologically immaturity into the final stage which Carl Rogers calls the “psychologically mature adult.” In this final approach to values, we once again bring our locus of evaluation within ourselves, relying on experiential evidence. We “become as little children” also insofar as we start to become more open to all kinds of experience when we relinquish attachment to our old, static, conceived values; also, we regain a more intimate immersion in the moment, although now as adults we have accumulated the wisdom of many years of experience. It is an interesting paradox that both in Carl Rogers' model of the developmental approach to values and Nietzsche's understanding of the “metamorphoses of the spirit” that the most mature manifestation retains markedly the relation to the “Child” or “infant.” It is a delicate balance to strike between the knowledge of adult experience and the innocent candor of the child-like attitude, but it certainly can and has been done.

Since we relocate our valuing process to within ourselves, it becomes entirely individual and relative. Some may argue that this approach to values, as many have often argued against the Thelemic maxim “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law,” leads to complete anarchy. This situation of relying on the individual “organismic valuing process” may appear to be anarchy to one still situated in their fixed approach to values, consisting almost entirely of introjected values from the duration of one's life, but it is much different in practice. Carl Rogers assures that, amazingly, universal “value directions” emerge when people across all cultures are allowed freedom to develop fully

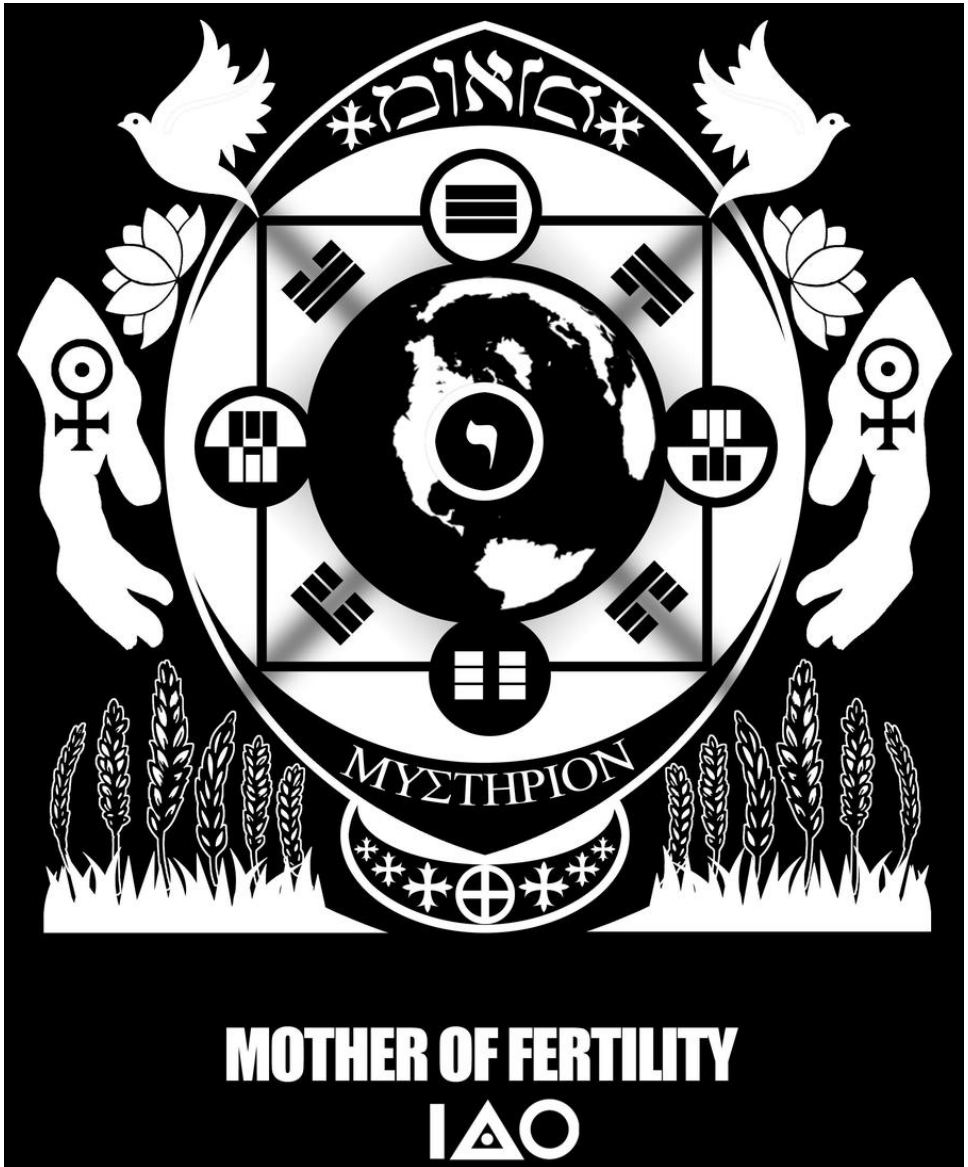
psychologically. The very fact that universal value directions emerge may show that although there is much more diversity, there is certainly still a certain commonality of values that arises.

With this knowledge, we may all arise as lions to question, re-examine, and discard our old notions of values. In this discarding we make way for the child within us, who brings forth his or her individual approach to values - that particular person's Will. This “child”-approach is really only the “organismic valuing process” that we have had inherently within us since our birth; it has only become clouded over by the complex of introjected conceived values. Just as the blazing sunlight is diffused and darkened by the clouds, every individual's Will is obscured by this process of introjecting values. Any star who wishes to burn as brilliantly as possible would surely wish to disperse these clouds. That is, any man or woman who truly wishes to actualize their full potential can and must engage in this process of the re-examination of values.

*“Instead of universal values 'out there,' or a universal value system imposed by some group – philosophers, rulers, or priests – we have the possibility of universal human value directions emerging from the experiencing of the human organism. Evidence from therapy indicates that both personal and social values emerge as natural, and experienced, when the individual is close to his own organismic valuing process. The suggestion is that though modern man no longer trusts religion or science or philosophy or any system of beliefs to give him his values, he may find an organismic valuing base within himself which, if he can learn again to be in touch with it, will prove to be an organized, adaptive, and social approach to the perplexing value issues which face all of us.”*<sup>378</sup>

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378 Ibid.



*Mother of Fertility*  
*is an interpretation of Atu III: The Empress*

# CHAPTER 13

## THE POLITICS OF THELEMA

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*This article was written in late 2010 e.v., in response to repeatedly seeing various individuals claiming that Thelema supported their particular political views, whether “left-wing” or “right-wing.” The basic idea is that Thelema is not limited to any particular political ideology but, instead, takes elements of each in a unique way. Ultimately, necessity, adaptability, and the Law of “Do what thou wilt” will guide the way.*

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### Introduction

The politics of Thelema is a mirror. One looks into it to find insight and only finds one’s ideals reflected back. One might say that in approaching Thelema with a democratic spirit, one will see a justification of democracy; in approaching Thelema with an aristocratic spirit, one will see a justification of aristocracy. What does Thelema really say about politics? It is a complex issue with many facets; to understand what Thelema does say, one has to separate away what Thelema doesn’t approve of politically.

### Anarchy

Let’s first look at anarchy.<sup>379</sup> People claim that if every person is doing their own Will there would be no order and it would be complete chaos. Against this, Crowley explains the nature of Will, “It has naturally been objected by economists that our Law, in declaring every man and every woman to be a star, reduces society to its elements, and makes hierarchy or even democracy impossible. The view is superficial. Each star

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<sup>379</sup> In this essay, “anarchy” is meant in the simplest sense of “no government” or political order, i.e. it is not meant in any of its more technical senses.

has a function in its galaxy proper to its own nature. Much mischief has come from our ignorance in insisting, on the contrary, that each citizen is fit for any and every social duty.”<sup>380</sup> There is a general idea in Thelema that each star as a particular orbit or course. Thelema implies the freedom to do one’s Will but also the severe restriction of only doing one’s Will; “It is the apotheosis of Freedom; but it is also the strictest possible bond,”<sup>381</sup> for “Thou hast no right but to do thy will.”<sup>382</sup>

Crowley often makes the analogy that a person’s relationship to the state is like a muscle’s relationship to the body. It must perform the function it is effective at, not attempt to perform a function it is not fit for, and not concern itself with the functioning of the other parts. “For every Individual in the State must be perfect in his own Function, with Contentment, respecting his own Task as necessary and holy, not envious of another’s. For so only mayst thou build up a free state, whose directing Will shall be singly directed to the Welfare of all.”<sup>383</sup> Therefore Thelema does not justify anarchy as a political system because each star as certain qualities, abilities, proclivities, *et cetera*, which make it fit for a certain function; each star must go its particular course, concentrate on its particular functioning, and essentially mind its own business. Just as the different organs perform different functions yet work together to produce a working body, so also does the concentration of each star on following its particular course allow for a functioning State – or even Mankind. As Crowley says, “It is generally understood by all men of education that the general welfare is necessary to the highest development of the particular.”<sup>384</sup> Thelema does encourage the autonomy of every individual and the diversity of expressions, yet that does not exclude the possibility of people voluntarily being a part of various organizations (educational, recreational, governmental, *et cetera*).

## Democracy

Let’s now look at democracy. The equality of all people, the

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380 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:58.

381 *Liber II*.

382 *Liber AL*, I:42.

383 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 38.

384 “An Epistle Concerning the Law of Thelema” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

problem of elected officials, and the similarity of all people are all things which Thelema does not accept. Firstly, many people quote “Every man and every woman is a star”<sup>385</sup> as a justification of democracy. Since every man and every woman is a star, we are all equal. Thelema asserts that everyone is equal in their Essence; the quintessence of every Star is Godhead. Thelema does not assert that everyone is equal functionally: different people have different abilities, detriments, and possibilities. As Crowley puts succinctly, “It is useless to pretend that men are equal; facts are against it. And we are not going to stay, dull and contented as oxen, in the ruck of humanity.”<sup>386</sup> Although people are not equal in the sense of their abilities, Thelema does assert that every person has a right to live, die, eat, drink, move, think, create, and love as they will – every person has the absolute and equal right to accomplish their Wills. “The Law is for all,”<sup>387</sup> after all. Further, Thelema agrees with democracy in treating each individual as sovereign and responsible.

One reason that Crowley understands democracy to be ineffective is that it requires the mass, the mob, to elect representatives. Thelema is against mob-mentality and mob-morality. In *Liber AL* it plainly says, “Ye are against the people, O my chosen!”<sup>388</sup> On this Crowley writes:

*“The average voter is a moron. He believes what he reads in newspapers, feeds his imagination and lulls his repressions on the cinema, and hopes to break away from his slavery by football pools, cross-word prizes, or spotting the winner of the 3:30. He is ignorant as no illiterate peasant is ignorant: he has no power of independent thought. He is the prey of panic. But he has the vote.*

*The men in power can only govern by stampeding him into wars, playing on his fears and prejudices until he acquiesces in repressive legislation against his obvious interests, playing on his vanity until he is totally blind to his own misery and serfdom. The alternative method is undisguised dragooning. In brief, we govern*

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385 *Liber AL*, I:3.

386 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:25.

387 *Liber AL*, I:34.

388 *Liber AL*, II:25.



*by a mixture of lying and bullying.”*<sup>389</sup>

In this way, democracy (ironically) encourages rule by deception and coercion of the mob-mentality. It does not engender political progress.

Democracy can lead to the “bully” gaining power but it can also lead to the mediocre gaining power. Crowley writes, “The principle of popular election is a fatal folly; its results are visible in every so-called democracy. The elected man is always the mediocrity; he is the safe man, the sound man, the man who displeases the majority less than any other; and therefore never the genius, the man of progress and illumination.”<sup>390</sup> When the majority is in power – it is mob-rule – and the “efficient eccentrics,” who are the real men and women of “progress and illumination” are never elected because the majority will always elect the common denominator. This is also not conducive to political progress.

Coming back to the idea that each person has a particular function for it to fulfill – a star with a certain course to run – Thelema would be against the general leveling of all people to uniformity that is associated with democracy. We tell our kids they can grow up to be anything but again, “Each star has a function in its galaxy proper to its own nature. Much mischief has come from our ignorance in insisting, on the contrary, that each citizen is fit for any and every social duty.”<sup>391</sup> Although in theory, there are potentially infinite possible courses of action, each person must understand their own tendencies, drives, and proclivities to find that “function” which fits them. This large variation of many types of people allows for progress. Crowley writes, “Here also is the voice of true Science, crying aloud that Variation is the Key of Evolution. Thereunto Art cometh the third, perceiving Beauty in the Harmony of the Diverse. Know then, o my Son, that all Laws, all Systems, all Customs, all Ideals and Standards which tend to produce uniformity, are in direct opposition to Nature’s Will to change and to develop through Variety, and are accursed. Do thou with all thy Might of Manhood strive against these Forces, for they resist Change, which is Life; and thus they are of Death.”<sup>392</sup> Basically, Thelema

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389 “The Scientific Solution to the Problem of Government” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

390 *Liber CXCIV: An Intimation with Reference to the Constitution of our Order*.

391 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:58.

392 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 31.

encourages maximum possible variation for the accomplishment of diverse functions.

## Aristocracy

Now we turn to aristocracy – might Thelema align with aristocracy in some way? Many will most likely point to “Let my servants be few & secret: they shall rule the many & the known”<sup>393</sup> to justify the aristocratic tendencies of Thelema. Firstly, Crowley writes, “The theories of Divine Right, aristocratic superiority, the moral order of Nature, are all today exploded bluffs. Even those of us who believe in supernatural sanctions for our privileges to browbeat and rob the people no longer delude ourselves with the thought that our victims share our superstitions. Even dictators understand this. Mussolini has tried to induce the ghost of Ancient Rome to strut the stage in the image of Julius Caesar; Hitler has invented a farrago of nonsense about Nordics and Aryans; nobody even pretends to believe either, except through the 'will-to-believe.' And the pretence is visibly breaking down everywhere.”<sup>394</sup> In this sense, Thelema certainly doesn't approve of aristocracy founded on various superstitions. Coming back to the idea that Thelema focuses on the fitness of each person for their particular function, its possible that a meritocracy (a system where progress is based on accomplishments) could align closely. In this case, people would theoretically progress in the areas where they showed aptitude for advancement.

Further, the aristocracy may turn into a tyranny. Thelema is certainly against the tyrant who denies others their rights to their own advantage – everyone has the absolute right to accomplish their Wills. Crowley even mentions “the safefuard tyrannicide”<sup>395</sup> in relation to the line in *Liber OZ* which states “Man has the right to kill those who would thwart these rights.” In short, Thelema recognizes the right of man to fight for his own freedom in the face of tyranny. If anything, Thelema would approve of the Taoist king or the Socratic philosopher-king for their rule is based on their ability to fit each person to their respective functions, yet “it

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393 *Liber AL*, I:10.

394 “The Scientific Solution to the Problem of Government” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

395 Letter from Aleister Crowley to Gerald Yorke, 13 September 1941.

is impossible in practice to assure the good-will of those in power.”<sup>396</sup> For this reason, we must guard against tyrants of all types, especially the wolf who appears in sheep's clothing – that is, those who promise benevolence only to gain power over others.

Coming back to aristocracy, one could say that Thelema adopts many facets of the “aristocratic attitude.” Crowley writes, “The key of all conduct, generally speaking, is to make every common thing noble, every small thing great.”<sup>397</sup> He constantly makes references to Thelemites seeing themselves as Kings and Queens, seeing everyone as royal, noble, and perfect. For example, “Live as the kings and princes, crowned and uncrowned, of this world, have always lived, as masters always live.”<sup>398</sup> Every person is the Crowned and Conquering Child, divinity Itself – what could be a more noble attitude? Further, *Liber AL* exhorts the reader to be strong, healthy, beautiful, powerful; the moral, social, and sexual freedom implied by this might be said to be “aristocratic.” Also, chivalry or *bushido* are similar to Thelema’s attitude in that people can compete, contend, debate, etc. and still maintain respect for each other. *Liber AL* describes this attitude succinctly: “As brothers fight ye!”<sup>399</sup> This again springs out of the “noble attitude” engendered in Thelema.

But what about “the slaves shall serve”<sup>400</sup>? If Thelema views all as free, sovereign, responsible, and noble then why the mention of slaves? It is true that “‘There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt!’ but it is only the greatest of the race who have the strength and courage to obey it.”<sup>401</sup> In short, there are those who are too riddled with fear to accept the Law along with the freedom and responsibility it entails. Crowley writes, “Our Law teaches that a star often veils itself from its nature. Thus the vast bulk of humanity is obsessed by an abject fear of freedom; the principal objections hitherto urged against my Law have been those of people who cannot bear to imagine the horrors which would result if they were free to do their own wills. The sense of sin, shame, self-distrust, this is what makes folk cling to Christianity-slavery... Now ‘the Law is for all’; but such

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396 *Liber CLXI: Concerning the Law of Thelema.*

397 *Liber CXXIV: Of Eden and the Sacred Oak.*

398 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty.*

399 *Liber AL*, III:59.

400 *Liber AL*, II:58.

401 *Liber CL: De Lege Libellum.*

defectives will refuse it.”<sup>402</sup> Again he writes, “In my ideal state everyone is respected for what he is. There will always be slaves, and the slave is to be defined as he who acquiesces in being a slave.”<sup>403</sup> Therefore slaves in Thelema are not physical servants but rather those who have slavish spirits: those who cannot accept the Law of Thelema because of fear of revealing their own natures, fear of the great freedom allowed, and fear of the great responsibility needed to do only one’s Will.

## Conclusion

In short, “The main ethical principle [of *The Book of the Law*] is that each human being has his own definite object in life. He has every right to fulfil this purpose, and none to do anything else. It is the business of the community to help each of its members to achieve this aim; in consequence all rules should be made, and all questions of policy decided, by the application of this principle to the circumstances.”<sup>404</sup> Thelema constantly asserts the need to understand the diverse needs and proclivities of each system so that each part may fulfill its particular function with maximum effectiveness. “Success is your proof.”<sup>405</sup> In this sense, it is highly elastic. It adopts several tenets of anarchy, democracy, and aristocracy while admonishing others; it contains their elements but is not limited to them. The individual freedom and autonomy of anarchy are propounded but its lack of structuralization is admonished. The individual sovereignty and equal rights of democracy are propounded but its herdmentality, uniformity, and tendency to lead rulers to use deception are admonished. The noble spirit and moral freedom of aristocracy are propounded but its claims of inherent superiority (by Divine Right, birth, lineage, *et cetera*) and its tendency towards tyranny are admonished.

Crowley writes, “[The Law of Thelema] admits that each member of the human race is unique, sovereign and responsible only to himself. In this way it is the logical climax of the idea of democracy. Yet at the same time it is the climax of aristocracy by asserting each individual equally to

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402 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:58.

403 *Confessions*, chapter 60.

404 *Confessions*, chapter 87.

405 *Liber AL*, III:46.

be the centre of the universe.”<sup>406</sup> Essentially, Thelema is about fitting each part to its particular function in the whole for maximum effectiveness. Thelema may draw upon major political ideas like anarchy, democracy, and aristocracy but it is not limited to them. It seems, in the end, necessity and adaptability will dictate the politics of Thelema.

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<sup>406</sup> *Confessions*, chapter 87.

## CHAPTER 14

# DEATH IN THELEMA

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*This article was written in early 2012 e.v., with the intention of setting forth what The Book of the Law and Crowley actually say about death in the philosophy of Thelema. This is essay particularly in response to a fairly common view that metempsychosis or reincarnation are inherently part of Thelema. To counterbalance this, a view founded on our central Holy Book and Crowley's commentaries thereon is the central focus of this essay.*

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Thelema is an all-encompassing paradigm, and it therefore deals with all aspects of life. A universal experience of all people – and all living things – is death. What then is the view of death and the afterlife in Thelema?

We may examine this question first by understanding what Thelemites do not believe. Thelema does not have a conception of death like that of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam). There is no notion of a heaven or hell that is beyond this world. There is no notion of Judgment for our moral actions or beliefs. This much is clear to anyone who has performed even a cursory review of the Thelemic literary corpus.

Thelema also does not have a conception of death like that of the Dharmic religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism). There is no notion of a desire to escape Samsara, the wheel of birth, death, and rebirth. There is also no notion of reincarnating in order to perfect the soul or achieve enlightenment throughout several lifetimes<sup>407</sup> just as Crowley wrote, “The idea of incarnations 'perfecting' a thing originally perfect by definition is imbecile.”<sup>408</sup> Thelemites see life and the world of

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407 This topic in particular is addressed in more depth in chapter 6.

408 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:8.

duality as providing the opportunity for the “chance of union,”<sup>409</sup> to experience the joy of “love under will.”

Several questions still remain: Does Thelema hold the belief that we have only one life (like Abrahamic religions) or that we have many lives (like Dharmic religions)? Is there anything that survives death? If there are many lives, is there something that travels from life to life or are they all distinct in some way?

The first difficulty in figuring out Thelema’s approach to death is that the term “death” is used in at least two ways: firstly, it refers to the physical death of the body and, secondly, it refers to the spiritual experience of the death of the sense of self which is called “Crossing the Abyss” in this system. We may see the distinction in many places, and Crowley himself often differentiates the two ideas such as when he writes, “The death of the individual is his awakening to the impersonal immortality of Hadit. This applies less to physical death than to the Crossing of the Abyss.”<sup>410</sup>

The “soul” in Thelema is understood to be something that is eternal and without quality – it is something beyond space and beyond time and identical with God or Godhead Itself. In the above quotation, Crowley explains that the death of the individual – what is often called the ego-self – causes an identity with Hadit which is “impersonal” – that is, not having anything to do with what we might ascribe to the personality or any personal qualities whatsoever – and “immortal” – that is, it does not ever die. What Crowley is describing is “the Crossing of the Abyss” which is an experience that one has while physically alive. Initiation or the process of “spiritual progress” essentially involves coming to conscious awareness and identity with this Self or Soul. When describing this Soul in a Three-in-One fashion, composed of *Jechidah*, *Chiah*, and *Neshamah*,<sup>411</sup> Crowley writes, “It is the work of Initiation to *journey inwards* to them.”<sup>412</sup>

This is a very basic understanding of the “death” that is involved in the Crossing of the Abyss. But what of the death of the physical body? Again, it is difficult to determine which references to death and dying are

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409 *Liber AL*, I:29.

410 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:6.

411 The Three-in-One aspects of the human soul, which correspond with Kether, Chokmah, and Binah on the Tree of Life.

412 *Little Essays Toward Truth*, “Man”.

speaking about physical or spiritual death. There are many mentions of death in the Holy Books of Thelema, but there is one clear mention of the death of the body in *The Book of the Law*: “Think not, o king, upon that lie: That Thou Must Die: verily thou shalt not die, but live. Now let it be understood: If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever.”<sup>413</sup> The line itself, specifically “If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever,” is not particularly clear. Does this mean that when the body dies, we enter into an eternal ecstasy rather than incarnating ever again? Does it mean that we enter into the ecstasy that is beyond time (so to speak) and then enter back into space and time with every new incarnation? Is it simply a metaphor for the Crossing of the Abyss that happens to use the image of the body? Crowley comments on this line:

*“One’s ‘immortal soul’ is a different kind of thing altogether from one’s mortal vesture. This Soul is a particular Star, with its own peculiar qualities, of course; but these qualities are all ‘eternal,’ and part of the nature of the Soul. This Soul being a monistic consciousness, it is unable to appreciate itself and its qualities, as explained in a previous entry; so it realizes itself by the device of duality, with the limitations of time, space and causality.”*<sup>414</sup>

Here we see the clear understanding that the immortal soul is not the same as the “mortal vesture,” which presumably refers to the mind (including the personality) and body of the individual.<sup>415</sup> Also, Crowley contrasts the “eternal” Soul or Star with duality, which includes “time, space, and causality.” This re-affirms the notion that the Soul is beyond these things. In the *Djeridensis Working*, Crowley writes on this line:

*“The root of all such error is the belief of Kings that they are mortal. This is confuse their essence with that basis of a certain class of events which refers to the kind of life which includes death.*

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413 *Liber AL*, II:21.

414 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:21.

415 Or the *Ruach* (mind) and *Nephesh* (body) to continue with the Hebrew terminology for the parts of the soul as utilized by Crowley in his essay “Man” in *Little Essays Toward Truth* and elsewhere.



*Aiwass insists that if the body dissolve its King remains in timeless rapture. For his events have ceased; and he stands in a single state of joy as made one with Nuit. Should he wish further knowledge of himself, he must choose some other means by which to measure it, by which to set in motion a fresh series of events.”*<sup>416</sup>

Here we have a little more information. The idea that the Soul is eternal and the true essence and identity of everyone is re-affirmed, and it is once again contrasted with impermanent things (“a certain class of events which refers to the kind of life which includes death”) such as the “mortal vesture” mentioned previously. More importantly, we have a clarification to the line “If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever.” After death, “events have ceased” and the Soul is in ecstasy or joy. If the Soul desires “further knowledge of himself” (which we know to mean experience in the world of duality), there needs to be “some other means” to “set in motion a fresh series of events” – that is, a new incarnation.

We now have the basic conception of death in Thelema. The true essence and identity of every person, the Soul or Star, is perfect and beyond space, time, and causality. It is essentially a “monistic consciousness” (the Zero/0 of the Thelemic ontology) so it has to incarnate into a specific mind and body in order to have experience (the Two/2 of the Thelemic ontology). When the person’s body dies, the Soul remains in formless, timeless ecstasy or joy when not incarnated.

This is a consistent and satisfactory answer to the question of death, yet some questions remain unanswered. Specifically, is there any thread temporally tying together the lives of a Soul? That is, is there any notion of reincarnation or metempsychosis (transmigration of the soul)? After all, didn’t Crowley himself claim to have “past lives”? It is indeed logically possible that we may not believe in the notion of escaping Samsara or perfecting our souls yet still believe in some form of connection between lives.

If we look, the official website of U.S. Grand Lodge O.T.O. explicitly states a belief in metempsychosis. That being said, on this website it is said that the “Body of Light” is subject to metempsychosis and not necessarily the Soul of which we have been speaking. Let’s look at

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416 *Djeridensis Working*, II:21.

what Crowley himself said about the idea of metempsychosis.

In a chapter in *Liber Aleph* entitled “De Morte”<sup>417</sup> (“On Death”), Crowley begins with this sentence, “Thou hast made Question of me concerning Death, and this is my Opinion, of which I say not: this is the Truth.” This disclaimer is not given for any other chapter, nor is it typical of his writing on Thelema to write in such a skeptical or reticent fashion. Interestingly, he begins his short treatise *Liber ThIshARB* in a similar way, which is a document that details the practice of going backwards in one’s memory including back to past lives. He starts the document with these words, “May be. It has not been possible to construct this book on a basis of pure Scepticism. This matters less, as the practice leads to Scepticism, and it may be through it.” In *Liber ThIshARB*, Crowley is extremely explicit about the validity of these “memories,” saying repeatedly that they must be viewed skeptically and be checked with facts to ascertain if they are valid. He writes in the same document, “But let him not trust his memory to assert its conclusions as fact, and act thereupon, without most adequate confirmation.” It should be clear that Crowley treated this subject of the afterlife with great caution and critical thinking.

Coming back to the chapter “De Morte” from *Liber Aleph*, keeping Crowley’s disclaimer in mind, we can continue to examine the rest of what he says. Crowley then explains the idea of the Soul incarnating into a mind and body. He writes that the soul “inhabiteth a Tabernacle of Illusion, a Body and Mind. And this Tabernacle is Subject to the Law of Change, for it is complex, and diffuse reacting to every Stimulus or Impression.” This affirms the previously mentioned idea that the mind and body are impermanent vehicles of the immortal Soul. He continues:

*“If then the mind be attached constantly to the Body, Death hath no Power to decompose it wholly, but a decaying Shell of the dead Man, his Mind holding together for a little his Body of Light, haunteth the Earth, seeking a new Tabernacle (in its Error that feareth Change) in some other Body. These Shells are broken away utterly from the Star that did enlighten them, and they are Vampires, obsessing them that adventure themselves into the Astral World without Magical Protection, or invoke them, as do*

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417 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 192.

*the Spiritists. For by Death is Man released only from the Gross Body, at the first, and is complete otherwise upon the Astral Plane, as he was in his Life. But this Wholeness suffereth Stress, and its Girders are loosened, the weaker first and after that the stronger.”*

Here is one possibility that Crowley expounds: if your mind is attached to the body, the mind will hold together and “haunt the Earth” but it has “broken away utterly from the Star.” The idea being that the mind can, in some way, persist beyond death but it is no longer connected to the Star or Soul. These “Shells” can account for some of what is seen in the “astral world,” what Spiritists communicate with, and potentially for other phenomena such as ghosts. Crowley then continues in the next chapter,<sup>418</sup> contrasting this notion with what happens to Adepts after death (I apologize for the long quotation but it is all pertinent):

*“Consider now in this Light what shall come to the Adept, to him that hath aspired constantly and firmly to his Star, attuning the Mind unto the Musick of its Will. In him, if his Mind be knit perfectly together is itself, and conjoined with the Star, is so strong a Confection that it breaketh away easily not only from the Gross Body, but the fine. It is this Fine Body which bindeth it to the Astral, as did the Gross to the Material World so then it accomplisheth willingly the Sacrament of a second Death and leaveth the Body of Light. But the Mind, cleaveth closely, by Right of its Harmony, and Might of its Love, to its Star, resisteth the Ministers of Disruption, for a Season, according to its Strength. Now, if this Star be of those that are bound by the Great Oath, incarnating without Remission because of Delight in the Cosmic Sacrament, it seeketh a new Vehicle in the appointed Way, and indwelleth the Fœtus of a Child, and quickeneth it. And if at this Time the mind of its Former Tabernacle yet cling to it, then is there Continuity of Character, and it may be Memory, between the two Vehicles. This is, briefly and without Elaboration, is the Way of Asar in Amenniti, according to mine Opinion, of which I say not: This is the Truth.”*

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418 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 193.

The basic idea is that Adepts spend their lives attuning their minds to the Will and so the mind can “cleave closely... to its Star” and incarnate into a new body. This allows for “Continuity of Character, and it may be Memory, between the two Vehicles,” which is the basic understanding of reincarnation and the basis for the belief in past lives. It is interesting, though, that Crowley appears to believe the continuity between lives is only possible for Adepts who have trained their minds thoroughly. Also of note is that Crowley, in ending this chapter on death, says once again “according to mine Opinion, of which I say not: This is the Truth.”

We can see that Crowley did indeed entertain a notion of metempsychosis, but one that is limited in a way to Adepts. We can also see that Crowley was especially careful to be skeptical and encourage skepticism around this issue. No other chapter in *Liber Aleph* contains such a disclaimer, let alone one both at the beginning and end of the discussion. The Holy Books themselves are not explicitly clear about this issue. Though there is an identification between Aleister Crowley and Ankh-af-na-khonsu in *Liber AL*,<sup>419</sup> it is not explicit whether this is a literal or symbolic statement (the latter of which *Liber AL* is clearly full of).

In conclusion, Thelema is a system where we believe each individual has a Soul or Star which is perfect, impersonal, and also beyond space, time, causality, and any form of duality. The Soul incarnates into the world of duality through a mind and body. When the physical body dies, and when not incarnated in general, the Soul remains in a timeless, formless ecstasy. All of this can be agreed upon, being that it is consistently affirmed and re-affirmed throughout Thelemic Holy Books as well as in Crowley’s commentaries to these texts. Beyond this, Crowley maintained that it is possible for the mind to “cleave” to a Star if one is an Adept, and this can lead to a “continuity of character” as well as the memory of past lives. That being said, Crowley had an atypical skepticism and cautiousness around this issue. This idea of some kind of continuity of character through lives remains to be explored by each Thelemite, confirmed or rejected based on experience, checking the facts, and utility.

I want to end this essay by very briefly touching upon the last of the criteria just mentioned: utility. I encourage Thelemites – and magicians in general – to consider the usefulness of believing in past lives. Supposing for a moment that it is true that you have past lives, each life presents an

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419 As in *Liber AL*, I:14 and I:36.

entirely unique situation: you are born in a different place, with a different family, a different physiology (including genetic predispositions), possibly a different language, a different culture, a different experience being raised, a different peer group, exposure to different ideas at different times, *et cetera*. It is my personal opinion that, for example, the fact you are interested in trains as a child doesn't mean you should be a train conductor or engineer as an adult. If one's own childhood may not necessarily supply the necessary information to discover and accomplish your Will, how much less pertinent would information about a previous life? Further, we may so easily fall victim to that demon that appears to plague occultists of all stripes: the demon of Glamor. It is plain that there is a large possibility of an "ego trip" were one to think that you were Buddha, Caesar, or any figure of importance. There is a glamor in the claim to past lives, especially the glamor in possessing some kind of strange or powerful access to memories across lifetimes. Crowley himself warned about this when he wrote:

*"I do wish you would understand that all these speculations are not only idle and senseless because you cannot possibly verify their accuracy, but a deadly poison. You ask if we, meaning, I suppose, the English, are now reincarnating the Egyptians. When I was a boy it was the Romans, while the French undertook the same thankless office for the Greeks. I say 'deadly poison' because when you analyse you see at once that this is a device for flattering yourself. You have a great reverence for the people who produced Luxor and the Pyramids; and it makes you feel nice and comfortable inside if you think that you were running around in those days as Rameses II or a high priest in Thebes or something equally congenial."*<sup>420</sup>

I am not discouraging the belief in or the practice of obtaining memories of past lives, but I encourage any readers of this essay to think very critically about the utility of memories of past lives. I hope that you seriously consider the possibility and consequences of falling prey to the glamor of the idea and remember that Crowley himself was very skeptical, repeating "this is my Opinion, of which I say not: this is the Truth."

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<sup>420</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 41.

## CHAPTER 15

# PRINCIPLES OF PROMULGATION

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*This article was written in mid-2010 e.v. in response to seeing widespread misunderstanding and contention about the nature of promulgation in Thelema. This essay's basic intention is to clarify what promulgation is and is not.*

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*“You may regard the establishment of the Law of Thelema as an essential element of your True Will, since, whatever the ultimate nature of that Will, the evident condition of putting it into execution is freedom from external interference.”<sup>421</sup>*

Some people have qualms about promulgation of the Law of Thelema, often from a misperception of the motives of those who promulgate.

### **I) “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”<sup>422</sup>**

Our highest and most central law as Thelemites is “Do what thou wilt,” and all of our actions are an expression of this idea. While there are many Mysteries to be approached and Secrets to be studied, all aims are subsumed under the prime directive of accomplishment of one’s will. This means, in terms of promulgation, that all efforts to spread ideas not directly connected with spreading the Law of Thelema – the use of magick & yoga, fraternity, the Secret of IX<sup>o</sup> O.T.O., philosophy, etc. – are done as expressions of that same Law. That is, when we teach magick it is done under the understanding that it will help us understand and do our Wills more fully, teachings about fraternity are done in the context of the Law, and efforts to teach other topics are so that the individual may come to a more comprehensive understanding of the Law.

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<sup>421</sup> “Duty” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

<sup>422</sup> *Liber AL*, III:60.

## II) “The Law is for all.” <sup>423</sup>

The Law of Thelema applies to all planes. Thelema is not simply a Law for the elite of mankind, although it makes room for them and allows for their full development as Hermits. While some may strive to become an Ipsissimus of the A·:·A·: or IX<sup>o</sup> of the O.T.O., it is valid for some to be Men of Earth or Lovers. There are many “resting places” in these Orders that are natural for some to remain at. As promulgators of the Law of Thelema, it is our duty to make this Law known to any and everyone, not that we may know the true Will of the recipient of promulgation materials, but so that each may read the source material and integrate the Law on their own terms.

Further, the establishment of the Law of Thelema in the world is inherently tied up with the accomplishment of one’s own will. As the quotation at the beginning of this essay says, “You may regard the establishment of the Law of Thelema as an essential element of your True Will, since, whatever the ultimate nature of that Will, the evident condition of putting it into execution is freedom from external interference.” That is, in establishing the Law of Liberty in the outer, it allows the accomplishment of the Will free from “external interference,” including from the hounding busybodies left over from the Old Aeons. In this way we move closer to the ideal of humanity moving as it wills without hindrance or inhibition from the chafing of its parts, even as the stars move in the night sky.

## III) “Argue not; convert not...” <sup>424</sup>

While our duty may be to make the Law known to the public, it is NOT our duty to:

- convert people to our point-of-view
- convince people that we are correct
- threaten people who do not accept the Law or our views

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<sup>423</sup> *Liber AL*, I:34.

<sup>424</sup> *Liber AL*, III:42.

- argue about philosophical or theological points

While this is all true, *The Book of the Law* also says, “...and to each man and woman that thou meetest, were it but to dine or to drink at them, it is the Law to give. Then they shall chance to abide in this bliss or no; it is no odds. Do this quickly!”<sup>425</sup> This is a fundamental point to understand about the difference between promulgation by Thelemites and traditional conversion attempts by people like Christians. We do not threaten people with tales of sin, paeans of our guiltiness, and after-worldly judgment nor is the whole complex of “saving one’s soul” present in promulgating the Law of Thelema to others. We give the Law to all without argumentation or hopes of conversion, and they can “abide in this bliss or no; it is no odds” to us.

#### IV) “We shall bring you to Absolute Truth, Absolute Light, Absolute Bliss.”<sup>426</sup>

While these are all theoretical justifications of promulgation, there is also a more intimate sense that Thelemites who experience the beauty, truth, and wisdom of the Law of Thelema will inherently want to share this bliss with others. In experiencing the freedom from tyranny & superstition and the liberty of the spirit inherent in the doctrine of Thelema, it is only natural to want to share the keys that helped break one’s own bondage.

Spreading the Law of Thelema is not done out of a desire to boost your ego; on the contrary, experiences while promulgating are often quite a blow to the ego along with the fact that one is naturally exposing oneself to outside elements that must be integrated by “love under will.” Spreading the Law of Thelema is not done out of a desire to recruit for a particular organization, although exposing people to the teachings of an Order like the O.T.O. is certainly a valid expression of promulgation. The goal is not to get a group that is the biggest, baddest person on the block so you can revel in its power but rather the goal is for each individual, on their own terms and in their own way, to acknowledge, understand, and begin to enact the Law of Thelema in their own lives.

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<sup>425</sup> *Liber AL*, III:39.

<sup>426</sup> *Liber Porta Lucis*, line 17.



## CHAPTER 16

# PROMULGATION OF THELEMA ON THE INTERNET

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*This article was written in mid-2013 e.v. in response to various forms of criticism and backlash against different promulgation projects on the Internet. Although the value of using the Internet to promulgate the Law is obvious to some, the criticism was consistent enough to warrant a general response detailing the rationale behind and the evidence supporting the efficacy of promulgation on the Internet.*

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There are a few individuals who have qualms about promulgation of the Law of Thelema on the Internet, specifically through social media outlets such as Facebook. The basic argument against doing this is that promulgating on Facebook “dumbs down” the Law by just using a single quotation or image.

I understand this concern, and I agree to some extent. It would be better for people to read the source texts of Crowley’s writings rather than simply to click “Like” on an image on Facebook. That is a fairly unarguable point in itself, yet – within the context of the Internet – there are many reasons why this argument misses the point.

First of all, here are some relevant quotations from Crowley himself on promulgation:

- *Crowley wrote to Frater Achad in June of 1916:* “Observe: the business before the meetings is this: How shall we put into effect the Law of Thelema. **We have the Law already; I don’t see that we need any more knowledge; but we need very badly the power to administer it.** I think I’ve been making a fool of myself, thinking and talking and writing. What I need is efficiency in

promulgation.”

- *Crowley also wrote on August 28, 1936:* “One thing I will say: that I do not expect anything to come of qabalistic speculations. I think that they may even be extremely mischievous in times like the present. **Our sole business should be to use the Law to reconstruct the world from the chaos into which it is already half tumbled. That formula is a simple one, and requires no specialised training. The work requires the cooperation of tens of thousands of people who have never heard of the Qabalah, and they have to be addressed in language which they can understand.**”
- *Crowley also wrote to Grady McMurtry (Hymenaeus Alpha) in August of 1945:* “**It is necessary to broaden the scope of presentation of the Law of Thelema so that people of all types may be able to appreciate that particular part which they can understand.** In this manner the thought processes of the majority will be so directed that all those who can Understand the Law will be given the opportunity to do so while at the same time providing a guide for those whose Understanding is incomplete.”

Sabazius X° has also written in *Agape* X:4, “While we have no duty to 'convert,' **we do have a duty to disseminate the Law as widely as possible throughout human society, not just within specific sub-cultures, classes, and social groups.**”<sup>427</sup>

From these quotations, we can see that Crowley was interested in several things regarding promulgation of the Law:

- Crowley wanted more power and efficiency in spreading the Law.
- Crowley wanted the cooperation of tens of thousands of people who do not need to understand specialized things such as the Qabalah.
- Crowley wanted the Law to be presented in a way that people of all types can appreciate the parts of the Law that they can

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<sup>427</sup> *Agape*, Volume 10, Issue 4, February 2009 e.v.

understand.

Therefore, good promulgation requires (1) a powerful medium (or diverse media) to spread the Law, (2) the ability to reach thousands of people, and (3) presentation in a simple and straightforward way.

I personally believe that the Internet is a perfect medium to fulfill all 3 of these requisites for good promulgation. Facebook in particular is currently a medium that allows many people to not only see bits and pieces of the Law through quotations and images, but it also allows individuals to easily share these things to further promulgation. For example, it is not uncommon for a single image with a quotation from Crowley to be seen by over 10,000 different individuals in a single posting. It (1) used a powerful medium of Facebook that (2) reached over 10,000 people and (3) was a quotation that most people, even without any knowledge of Thelema or more technical subjects such as Magick or Qabalah, could appreciate.

Currently, the potential reach of Facebook is actually fairly astonishing. To give an example, the “Aleister Crowley” Facebook page currently<sup>428</sup> has an average weekly reach of around 45,000 individuals. That means that, in any given week, some post (whether text, link, video, or image) is seen on the News Feed of around 45,000 unique users. What other promulgation effort can reach 45,000 people *every week*? To continue with this example, any time that someone clicks “Like,” comments, or shares a post on the “Aleister Crowley” Facebook page, it can be seen by any of that person’s Facebook Friends. How many Friends of people who are “Fans” of this Facebook page are there? *Over 24 million*. Friends of these Fans can then click “Like,” comment, or share so the number of possible viewers is actually higher than 24 million. This is only a single Facebook Page (let alone all the others and people’s individual Facebook Profiles), and the numbers should, in my opinion, speak for themselves. Does it not say in *The Book of the Law*, “Success is your proof”?<sup>429</sup> It is possible that this is, in fact, the largest and most widespread promulgation effort that Thelema has seen in its entire history.

What do these efforts do that are beneficial toward the end of

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428 As of mid-2013, e.v. The numbers will obviously change over time but it is given for the sake of example.

429 *Liber AL*, III:46.

promulgating the Law?

- Thousands of people will see content, whether a link to a full text or a quotation or whatever else, that they otherwise would not have seen or thought about.
- Thousands of people who have never heard about Thelema or Aleister Crowley are given a chance to see a small bit of what the Law is about.
- Thousands of people are given an opportunity to promulgate the Law themselves (who would often not do so otherwise) by spreading the content.
- Everyone can choose whether to follow these Facebook pages, and they can choose to comment or share on them. It is, in a way, the pinnacle of promulgation as opposed to proselytization. No one is being forced to do or see or listen to anything.

Is this a replacement for people reading the source materials, engaging in their local communities, doing the practices of Yoga and Magick, and generally integrating the Law into their lives? Of course not. But neither is any other form of outreach, including the most beautifully bound and articulately written book. It is just as likely for someone to read an entire book on Magick and never perform a ritual as it is for someone to share a quotation on Facebook and not really integrate it into their lives.

We have no power to *force* Thelema on anyone: it is the Work of each individual to study, understand, and integrate it into their lives and no amount of work by other people can *ever* replace that. It never has and it never will. These Internet promulgation efforts simply give more and more opportunities for individuals to spread the Law to “people of all types” as Crowley wanted. It is, in a way, even *more* powerful than books because it is free, efficient, allows people to perpetuate the ideas with little to no effort, and can reach many individuals who would not otherwise have even heard of Crowley or the Law of Liberty. Also – although it may come as a shock or an insult to many Thelemites – not *everyone* is an intellectual who has time to read long, obtuse essays or books. Whether from lack of education, interest, or proclivity, there are many people – in fact, I would say *most* people – who are not bibliophile eggheads like myself (and many current Thelemites). “The Law is for all,” and that does

not mean only bibliophile eggheads.

Some people are concerned whether these Internet promulgation efforts have led to increased initiates at the local OTO body or even more Thelemites. At the core of this is a concern as to how much people are really integrating these ideas and putting them into practice. As I just said: it is the Work of each individual to study, understand, and integrate it into their lives and no amount of work by other people can ever replace that. More importantly, *there is absolutely no way to ever know for sure*. Aside from the fact that we don't systematically ask every single new face at an event what specific things led to them showing up, there is also the fact that many people are not exactly sure, cannot remember, or do not even want to say (perhaps in part because of the chance of being met with sanctimoniousness!) There is also no way to know how these promulgation efforts affect existing members of organizations like OTO. I personally think that if some Facebook post got someone to think a little bit about Thelema that day, even if it is only for a few moments, then that is better than them not thinking about it. Perhaps they have never even encountered that particular link or quotation before. Further: Aside from organizations like OTO, there is absolutely no way to determine how this affects Thelemites (and non-Thelemites) who are not associated with any particular organization.

In short, as I've already said, there is absolutely no way to ever know sure. What we *do* know is the incredible extent to which these Internet promulgation efforts have reached people in some way or another, Thelemite and non-Thelemite alike. It is a certain fact that "tens of thousands of people" (just as Crowley wanted) are seeing this content when they otherwise would not have seen it. *The Book of the Law* says, "and to each man and woman that thou meetest, were it but to dine or to drink at them, it is the Law to give. Then they shall chance to abide in this bliss or no; it is no odds."<sup>430</sup> Really, should we be concerned about whether or not other people are truly engaging with the material anyhow? Are we not affording individuals a "chance to abide in this bliss or no" and, whether or not they do anything at all with it, "it is no odds"? Isn't the insistence that individuals do a certain thing or act in a particular way a fundamental breach of acknowledging "Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law"?

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430 *Liber AL*, III:39.

*The Book of the Law* says, “Success is thy proof: argue not; convert not; talk not overmuch!”<sup>431</sup> Let’s engage in a little thought experiment: Consider the difference between (a) an individual who, for example, creates an image with a quotation about the Law and spreads it on Facebook versus (b) an individual who criticizes this effort. Person A is creating an opportunity or chance for someone to hear about the Law, think about the Law, and share the Law without any attempt to convert anyone (“Success is thy proof”). Person B is, first of all, reactive – they are setting the causal principle of their actions outside of themselves by reacting instead of acting. Person B is arguing rather than spreading the Law (“argue not”), trying to enforce and impose their standard of how to behave as “a real Thelemite” on others (“convert not”), and are spending time and energy chastising others (“talk not overmuch”) instead creating their own material that would, *obviously*, be so much better. If 10,000 people see something about Thelema because of the posting of an image, how many people are really being reached through criticizing it?

While constructive criticism is always beneficial to honing the efficiency of an approach, there is a lot of criticism that is simply emotional and reactive (i.e. not constructive). There seem to be some people who, whether consciously or not, want to keep Thelema as a cloistered, elitist, and tiny clique. That is their prerogative – Do what thou wilt, of course – but I believe that I, along with tens of thousands of other people, are doing a lot of substantial work to spread the Law of Thelema to the rest of the world in accordance with the attitude of the Prophet (as seen in the quotations above). “The Law is for all” after all, and I say: If we truly believe that Thelema is the Law of Liberty – the Key to our evolution as individuals and a species – we should give as many people as possible the “chance to abide in this bliss or no.”

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431 *Liber AL*, III:42.

# CHAPTER 17

## ON CONTRIBUTING TO THE GREATER COMMUNITY

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*This article was written in mid-2013 e.v. in response to what appeared to be various forms of resistance to Thelemites helping “the greater community,” i.e. those who are not in their Order or are not Thelemites. This essay was intended to make the case for why contributing to the greater community is important and can be seen to be based philosophically in the tenets of Thelema itself.*

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### Prologue

Before even beginning to discuss the extent that contributing to the greater community is part of Thelema, it should be acknowledged that the “alpha and omega” of Thelema is Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of

the Law. There is no law beyond doing your Will and you have no right but to do It. The answer to any question that takes the form “Is X or Y part of Thelema” is always “if it is your Will, then yes; if it is not your Will, then no.” I am not saying anyone “should” or “should not” do anything, but I am presenting an argument why contributing to the greater community is justified within the philosophy of Thelema. With that in mind, we can take a look at what Thelema implies and Crowley said about contributing to the greater community.

## **A Maturing View of True Will**

I would argue that, at a less mature level, Thelema is understood to be an entirely selfish doctrine. (By “less mature,” I simply mean “not fully developed,” and no pejorative implication is meant by it). When first learning about Thelema, individuals often understand “Do what thou wilt” to essentially mean “I have the right to find my Will and do it, so my personal needs trump everyone else’s.” From a certain standpoint, this is true. Your needs certainly deserve to be fulfilled. The problem is that many people simply do not know yet what their true “personal needs” and desires are in the first place – hence the necessity to engage in the process to know one’s Will. Further, one in this mindset maintains a very dichotomous (i.e. dualistic, black-and-white) view of the “self” as distinct from “others.”

Many people move to the next level of maturity when they join an organization or start applying Thelema at a broader scale. That is, one matures to realize that everyone else has the right to do their own Will just as much as oneself. It is the realization that, just as you are the center of your own universe, everyone around you is the center of their own universes. Not only this, but many come to realize that becoming aware of others’ needs and even helping to fulfill them actually makes one’s own Will much easier to accomplish. The dichotomous view of “my Will versus the world” begins to break down and we see that we are a Star in the company of Stars. We see that disagreement does not preclude a greater harmony or cooperation, and often we find that we can accomplish greater things if we work together with others. We may even begin see that the distinction between “self” and “other” is much more tenuous, fluid, and dynamic than previously supposed, perhaps gaining a



glimmer of the meaning of “the union of opposites” being the Great Work.

This all may sound very obvious to some, but this is where things generally start to “break down.” Thelemites may see the rationale to serve their own needs and the needs of their Brothers and Sisters, but many do not see a rationale for contributing to the greater community. By “the greater community” I simply mean “people who are not part of OTO” or even “people who are not self-identified Thelemites.” Why might this be?

## Why should we Contribute to the Greater Community?

I am defining contributing as “giving resources, including but not limited to time, energy, and money.” We should certainly make sure to dedicate our resources to ourselves, making sure that our needs are met so that we may accomplish our Wills. Many Thelemites naturally and intuitively understand that contributing to an organization like OTO – i.e. by giving their time, energy, and money – is a great way to not only aid others in accomplishing their Wills but to learn more about one’s own Will in the process. The struggle for freedom – and the freedom that one has won for oneself – is naturally desired to be shared with others, so we band together into communities in order to preserve and promulgate the Law of Life, Light, Love, and Liberty. Why should we stop at our local community of Thelemites? Is not the Law for all? Do we not acknowledge that every man and every woman is a star? Do we not want *all* individuals to have the freedom to do their Wills?

The image that precedes this essay is a well surrounded by four palm trees. This comes from Crowley’s essay *Liber CXXIV: Of Eden and the Sacred Oak* with the subtitle “And of the Greater and Lesser Hospitality of the OTO.” The subject of the essay is about “Profess Houses” in OTO, but I believe many of the principles apply on a greater, more general scale. As it is said, “For, in True Things, all are but images one of another; man is but a map of the universe, and Society is but the same on a larger scale.”<sup>432</sup> The import of the image is that the Thelemic community – represented by the Profess House, but it could be any group of Thelemites of any or no formal organization – is a source of

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<sup>432</sup> *Liber CXCIV: An Intimation with Reference to the Constitution of our Order.*

nourishment and hospitality to everything around it. Crowley writes:

*“The symbol of the Profess-House is therefore a great Oak from which flow streams of water to every quarter fertilising indeed the ground about the hill and fortifying with moisture the roots of the oak itself, but not eddying about it and sapping its foundations. And in the spread of this Eden shall many men rejoice, taking shelter beneath overspreading branches, and refreshing their weary limbs in the fresh waters of the fount celestial pure. Alternatively, the symbol may be that of a well in the desert, sheltered by four great palms.”*

Although the idea of the paradise of Eden with four rivers is a bit utopian and hyperbolic, it is nonetheless an important symbol. The idea is that the community (represented by the oak or the well) nourishes things around it (the four streams of water or the four palms); further, in the community’s nourishing of others, it also fortifies itself without losing its own foundations. I think this is a beautiful image: every Thelemic community is a beacon of Light to those who stumble in darkness, a well of Life for those who struggle to subsist.

Crowley himself says clearly, “thou must by Law **assure to every Man a Means of satisfying his bodily and his mental Needs**, leaving him free to develop any Super-Structure in Accordance with his Will, and protecting him from any that may seek to deprive him of these vertebral Rights.”<sup>433</sup> This is essentially the idea of Maslow’s “hierarchy of needs” about four decades before the idea was described by Maslow: every individual needs the foundation of their basic needs – their “bodily and mental needs” – before the capstone of any kind of “Super-Structure” can be developed. Crowley reinforces this idea when he wrote, “The whole world as I see it is at present lost in constipations of this kind; the real needs of humanity are what they have always been: food, shelter, love and freedom. That, roughly speaking, is the general true will of the species, and all devices, which are not subservient to this will, are errors.”<sup>434</sup> If we have the means to, for example, satisfy the bodily needs of those who spend most of their energy concerned about food and shelter, does it not

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433 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 33.

434 Letter from Aleister Crowley to Lady Frieda Harris, 19 December 1939.

make sense to contribute to them if we are capable? That is, if we have the resources – the time, money, and/or energy – to aid others in by helping to satisfy their basic needs, are we not simply – in some some small way – allowing more and more individuals to do their Wills more fully?

Crowley writes, “Pity, sympathy and like emotions are fundamentally insults to the Godhead of the person exciting them, and therefore also to your own. **The distress of another may be relieved; but always with the positive and noble idea of making manifest the perfection of the Universe.** Pity is the source of every mean, ignoble, cowardly vice; and the essential blasphemy against Truth.”<sup>435</sup> Here we have a very good lesson from Crowley: if we are to help people, it is to manifest the perfection of every man and every woman being able to do their True Wills. It is to work towards the order and harmony of all the stars on Earth being as perfect as the order and harmony of all the stars in the Heavens. It is not done out of pity for distress or suffering, nor is it really done out of any emotion at all. This relief – this service of others – is done out of the desire to fulfill the Law of Liberty, to bring about a world where everyone has the capability and freedom to accomplish their True Wills. Perhaps this is one way that we can fulfill what is hoped for in OTO US Grand Lodge’s Vision Statement, “We will foster harmonious and constructive relationships with the academic, business, civil, and greater social communities within which we operate.”

We therefore have a very powerful but very simple view of contribution to the greater community: Contributing is done to help satisfy basic needs such as food and shelter which are common across all humanity that they may be able to more fully accomplish their True Wills. We do not impose any “Super-Structure” upon others but allow them to develop as they Will and make their own choices, and we do not contribute aid out of pity. This is done to “make manifest the perfection of the Universe.”

## **So Why Aren’t We Doing this Already?**

**Contributing to others is too Christian!** The most obvious answer to why many Thelemites do not see contributing to the greater community as

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435 “Duty” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

justified is that helping other people sounds like “charity,” a word that is inevitably tied up in many people’s minds with Christianity. Aside from the various arguments around charity itself, I think we can acknowledge that rejecting an idea or behavior simply because it resembles some other belief system is not a good reason for rejecting it. Most Thelemites would think twice before rejecting *Liber Resh* as “too Muslim,” rejecting the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram as “too Jewish,” rejecting the Gnostic Mass as “too Christian,” or rejecting the use of a mantra as “too Hindu.” The reason to reject all these things should be determined by whether or not it is fulfilling or thwarting your individual Will, and that is always the only determining factor for everything. Perhaps some do not realize that “charity” comes from “*caritas*,” the Latin word used in the New Testament to translate the Greek word *agape*, which some Thelemites may be familiar with. With this, I would also add things like the argument that contributing to others is too “liberal,” “socialist,” “communist,” or whatever label associate with the general idea.

**Contributing to others is too Humanitarian!** Yes, Crowley said “An end to the humanitarian mawkishness which is destroying the human race by the deliberate artificial protection of the unfit.”<sup>436</sup> He also lived off of a family inheritance and the generous donations of his friends and disciples. There is no need to even argue what “unfit” means in this context. I personally believe that we should concern ourselves with what is “fit” and “unfit” within ourselves to accomplish our own True Wills, and we acknowledge that every man and every woman is a star with an indefeasible right to accomplish their Wills as we do ours. Further, we have all benefited from others’ resources, from amniotic fluids to stimulating conversations to job promotions. While it is obvious that our own choices determine our destiny to a large extent, it would be a vain and short-sighted thing to believe we are entirely “self-made” in any way. As it is said, “A man is what he maketh himself within the limits fixed by his inherited destiny; he is a part of mankind; his actions affect not only what he calleth himself, but also the whole universe.”<sup>437</sup> Aside from the fact that this means your acts (such as contributing to others) affect all of those around you, it also means every single other individual’s actions affect your universe as well.

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<sup>436</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:18.

<sup>437</sup> *Liber Librae*.

A humble acknowledgment of this fact makes the idea of contributing to others seem quite natural.

**We need to focus on our own!** Yes, we do need to focus on “our own.” Our concern should begin with ourselves and emanate outward farther and farther. If, for example, an OTO body is struggling to even pay the rent, it would not make sense to devote money toward contributing to the general community. As it is said, “If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?”<sup>438</sup> Of course you need a sure foundation, both individually and organizationally. That still doesn’t preclude the possibility of extending influence and resources beyond oneself once that sure foundation is secured.

## Summary

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. If it is your Will to contribute to the greater community, then that is fine; if it is not your Will, then that is fine as well. Nonetheless, there is a good rationale for engaging in contributing to the greater community. If we appreciate the freedom to know and do our Wills, we will naturally appreciate aiding others to achieve this freedom, even if it is in a small way. Crowley insisted that we are to assure the satisfaction of basic needs such as food and shelter so that individuals may have the capacity and freedom to develop their own unique proclivities. He also reminded us that this should be done out of making manifest the perfection of the Universe on Earth, of wanting every man and every woman to be able to accomplish their Wills, not out of pity or distress. If we have the resources to help others satisfy their basic needs so they may more fully know and do their Wills, why wouldn’t we contribute to the greater community?

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<sup>438</sup> *Liber Librae*.

# CHAPTER 18

## A SHORT COMMENT ON THE COMMENT

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*This article was written in late 2008 e.v. The Comment that is appended to The Book of the Law has always been, and probably always will be, a source of contentious debate. The intention of this short essay was simply to show that things may not be as obvious as they seem. Its secondary purpose is to encourage discussion and debate about the Comment and Thelema in general rather than fearing we may become shunned as centres of pestilence.*

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Anyone who has read *The Book of Law*, has surely come upon the Comment which appends this great work. It inspires a cornucopia of reactions from awe to fear to zeal. For the sake of completeness I quote the Comment in full:

*“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.*

*The study of this Book is forbidden. It is wise to destroy this copy after the first reading.*

*Whosoever disregards this does so at his own risk and peril. These are most dire.*

*Those who discuss the contents of this Book are to be shunned by all, as centres of pestilence.*

*All questions of the Law are to be decided only by appeal to my writings, each for himself.*

*There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”*

Most take this Comment as an injunction that only the individual can properly interpret *The Book of the Law* for him or herself, which I believe is, on its face, quite correct. But what I want to explore are some interesting implications and ideas surrounding this Comment.

Firstly, it hasn't been noted widely that this Comment itself requires interpretation. Many people interpret this Comment itself in various ways. We might take this Comment on its face and interpret it literally. In this case we should shun anyone who discusses *The Book of the Law* at all as “centres of pestilence,” but we should also have destroyed *The Book of the Law* upon our first reading. This is exactly what many have done, having burned the book, thrown it into the ocean, or many other stories I have heard. Further, people often ignore the very first and very last lines of this Comment which both contain the phrase “Do what thou wilt.” Couldn't it possibly be within the scope of one's Will to discuss, study, and interpret this Book? If there really is “no law beyond Do what thou wilt” then the other injunctions can only be mere appendages to this imperative. Therefore, even on a literal interpretation, if we take into account the first and last lines of the Comment, we are therefore still not obligated to either destroy the Book or shun others as centres of pestilence. In a sense, the literal interpretation is self-refuting.

Further, if we accept *The Book of the Law's* prime injunction of “Do what thou wilt,” we might be able to interpret the other lines of the Comment in another light. If the sole authority of each star is his or her own Will, then there are absolutely no other authorities to guide his or her conduct. Therefore, one could view the injunctions to destroy the Book and to shun others as “centres of pestilence” as a sort of test. If one is still susceptible to obeying another's commands without thought of one's own Will – if one, in short, still is not acknowledging one's own Will as the sole authority of one's conduct – then these commands will naturally get rid of the “weeds” insofar as it causes them to destroy the Book and avoid discussion & study of it. Going even further, where in Thelema does it say Thelemites are afraid of “risk and peril”? Did the perils of the unconquered mountains deter the Beast from his expeditions? “Is fear in

thine heart”<sup>439</sup> when you hear these seemingly harsh statements of forbidden activity? Is a life without risk and peril truly a life fully lived? In *The Book of the Law* itself we are bidden to “fear not to undergo the curses,”<sup>440</sup> and, going even further, to “Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth.”<sup>441</sup> Again, the Comment may appear in this way as a sort of “test” upon the reader and aspirant: if one is still following other's commands of what is “forbidden” and what to “shun”, if one is still afraid of facing consequences and engaging in “perilous” activities... then perhaps this Book and its Word is not for you (at least at that time).

We might also look further into the words used in this Comment. Many people would acknowledge that the words used in *Liber AL vel Legis* have a symbolic meaning and I see no reason to see why the inspired Comment cannot include such symbolic meanings. The symbols of Thelema can often be off-putting on first glance with its mentions of war, pestilence, pitilessness, *et cetera*. Even “poison” is used as a symbol of mysticism in *Liber LXV* at various times.<sup>442</sup> The word “pestilence” itself is used in *Liber LXV* when it is written, “I too am the Soul of the desert; thou shalt seek me yet again in the wilderness of sand. At thy right hand a great lord and a comely; at thy left hand a woman clad in gossamer and gold and having the stars in her hair. *Ye shall journey far into a land of pestilence and evil; ye shall encamp in the river of a foolish city forgotten; there shall ye meet with Me.*”<sup>443</sup> Is it possible the “pestilence” of the Law means it will spread like a virus and the “centres of pestilence” are its hosts?

In short, the Comment itself requires interpretation. If we take the Comment literally or symbolically, neither interpretation (which is what they are) lends itself to an obvious following of the injunctions to destroy the Book, not study it, not discuss it, or shun those who choose to do any of the following (or their opposites). In my opinion, the growth of Thelema

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439 *Liber AL*, II:46.

440 *Liber AL*, III:16.

441 *Liber AL*, III:17.

442 For example, in *Liber LXV*, III:39: “Thou hast fastened the fangs of Eternity in my soul, and the Poison of the Infinite hath consumed me utterly.”

443 *Liber LXV*, IV:61-62.



and its widespread, diverse community can be sustained not through dogmatic verbotenism nor through extreme secrecy, i.e. the shunning of all people who even hint at commenting on or interpreting or discussing this Book in part or in full. I say, with the Beast, “To hell with this Verbotenism!”<sup>444</sup> The best path for growth is in all cases for a variety of opinions to come together and discuss their various points-of-view without taking any of them to be the One True Opinion. The only other advice would be to avoid “folly” insofar as we neglect to “appeal to [The Beast's] writings” on the matter of *Liber AL* in his own commentaries and writings like *Liber Aleph*, *De Lege Libellum*, *et cetera*. In this way, we may measure our own understandings against others and perhaps learn something ourselves from the views of others.

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444 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:63.



*That Which Was, Is, and Is to Come*  
is an interpretation of Atut IV: The Emperor

# CHAPTER 19

## THELEMA & OTTO'S IDEA OF THE HOLY

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*This article was written in mid 2008 e.v. as an exploration of Thelema in the context theologian Rudolf Otto's idea of the “numinous,” the “mysterium tremendum et fascinans,” from his influential book The Idea of the Holy. The intention is to help elucidate Thelema's approach to the divine with the help of Otto's ideas.*

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### 1) Introduction

The religious experience was described by many academics like William James<sup>445</sup> but one of the best formulations comes from Rudolf Otto, a 20th century German theologian. His take on the religious experience is exceptionally suitable both for his ability to describe the experience & feeling in its various facets but also for his grasp that words are mere symbols for something non-rational, that they are analogies used to explain that ineffable experience.

Speaking of this religious experience, Crowley announces his preference of the terminology “Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel,” explaining that this experience comes in many names and forms including “Augoeides,” “Higher Self,” “Genius,” “Logos,” “Adonai,” “Adi-Buddha,” “Vishnu,” “The Great Person,” and “Jechidah” according to which tradition one is working within. He then says:

*“We also get metaphysical analysis of His nature, deeper and deeper according to the subtlety of the writer; for this vision - it is all one same phenomenon, variously coloured by our varying Ruachs [Ruach: the third form, the Mind, the Reasoning Power, that which possesses the Knowledge of Good and Evil] - is, I*

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<sup>445</sup> James' classic *The Varieties of Religious Experience* is still referenced to this day by scholars, and it was on the list of recommended reading given to students by Crowley.

*believe, the first and the last of all Spiritual Experience.”*<sup>446</sup>

Let us then examine this spiritual experience through the coloring of Rudolph Otto's "Ruach." In brief, Otto summarizes this experience as the term "numinous" from the Latin "*numen*" and ventures to describe this numen further as "*mysterium tremendum*." It is an awe-ful mystery, full of majesty and energy. In reaction to this *mysterium* one is likely to adopt the attitude called "creature-consciousness" by Otto – that feeling of absolute nothingness in the face of this greater power. It is both the ineffable, or non-rational, and amoral. It is one thing to call a man holy, obviously based on his behavior (and that which we condone to be "moral") and quite another to call an experience holy wherein we perceive something of immense power, energy, and ineffability which engenders both our awe and our humility in the sense of our powerlessness before its presence.

This essay elucidates these points in greater depth, delineating Otto's explanation of the numinous in terms of an analysis of the phrase *mysterium tremendum*, applying it to the theory & practice of Thelema.

## 2) The "Holy" as Ineffable

Otto's examination starts by looking at the word "holy" and its connotations:

*"Holiness' – 'the holy' – is a category of interpretation and valuation peculiar to the sphere of religion... which remains inexpressible – αρρητον or ineffabile - in the sense that it completely eludes apprehension in terms of concepts."*<sup>447</sup>

He explains further:

*"All language, in so far as it consists of words, purports to convey ideas or concepts – that is what language means – and the more clearly and unequivocally it does so, the better the language. And hence expositions of religious truth in language inevitably tend to*

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446 "The Temple of Solomon the King" in *The Equinox I:1*.

447 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

*stress the 'rational' attributes of God. But though the above mistake is thus a natural one enough, it is none the less seriously misleading. For so far are these 'rational' attributes from exhausting the idea of deity, that they in fact imply a non-rational or supra-rational Subject of which they are predicates... we have to predicate them of a subject which they qualify, but which in its deeper essence is not, nor indeed can be, comprehended in them; which rather requires comprehension of a quite different kind.”*<sup>448</sup>

In this, Otto explains the same thing that is warned against in *Liber AL vel Legis*, “Reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise.”<sup>449</sup> Crowley reminds us, “If we in any way shadow forth the Ineffable, it must be by a degradation. Every symbol is a blasphemy against the Truth that it indicates.”<sup>450</sup> And he further reaffirms this notion of the ineffability of holiness in the Gnostic Mass when it is proclaimed, “I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD.”<sup>451</sup> Another example may be found in *Liber Aleph* where it is written, “So unto us is every Phenomenon a Shew of Godliness, proceeding continually in a Pageant that returneth unto itself, identical in the Phase of Naught as of Many, but whirling in the Orgia of Ineffable Holiness as it were a Dance that weaveth Figures of Beauty in Variety inexhaustible.”<sup>452</sup> Otto explains further regarding ineffability:

*“It gives the peace that passes understanding, and of which the tongue can only stammer brokenly. Only from afar, by metaphors and analogies, do we come to apprehend what it is in itself, and even so our notion is but inadequate and confused... It is instructive that... consciousness would fain put its highest consummation into words, 'all images fall away' and the mind turns from them to grasp expressions that are purely negative... All this teaches us the independence of the positive content of this experience from the implications of its overt conceptual*

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448 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

449 *Liber AL*, II:32.

450 “The Big Stick” in *The Equinox I:4*.

451 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

452 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 190.

*expression, and how it can be firmly grasped, thoroughly understood, and profoundly appreciated, purely in, with, and from the feeling itself.”*<sup>453</sup>

Thelema also speaks of that which makes “all images fall away” in its Holy Books: “Be not contented with the image. I am who am the Image of an Image say this. Debate not of the image, saying Beyond! Beyond!”<sup>454</sup> In speaking of the bliss in the experience of the numinous, Otto again stresses its ineffability:

*“What we have here to point out is the unutterableness of what has been yet genuinely experienced, and how such an experience may pass into blissful excitement, rapture, and exaltation verging often on the bizarre and the abnormal.”*<sup>455</sup>

A parallel of this type of “bizarre and abnormal” expression of the ineffable can be found in many of the Holy Books of Thelema. One such example is: “Then the adept was rapt away in bliss, and the beyond of bliss, and exceeded the excess of excess. Also his body shook and staggered with the burden of that bliss and that excess and that ultimate nameless.”<sup>456</sup>

We therefore now have our first notion of the “holy” as necessarily ineffable and therefore non-rational insofar as it is not amenable to simple reason.

### 3) The “Holy” as “Numinous”

Otto continues in his explanation by noting that “holy” often has moral connotations to the average man (he speaks and writes from a Christian perspective) but that his notion of holy is entirely amoral:

*“We generally take 'holy' as meaning 'completely good'; it is the absolute moral attribute, denoting the consummation of moral*

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453 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

454 *Liber LXV*, I:7-9.

455 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

456 *Liber LXV*, II:45-46.

*goodness. In this sense Kant calls the will which remains unwaveringly obedient to the moral law from the motive of duty a 'holy' will' ; here clearly we have simply the perfectly moral will... But this common usage of the term is inaccurate.... 'Holy', or at least the equivalent words in Latin and Greek, in Semitic and other ancient languages, denoted first and foremost only this overplus: if the ethical element was present at all, at any rate it was not original and never constituted the whole meaning of the word... ”*<sup>457</sup>

Because Otto wished to not confuse his notion of this amoral “holiness” with the common usage of the word in terms of morality, he sees fit to adopt the new term “*numen*” with “numinous” as its adjective form:

*“It will be useful, at least for the temporary purpose of the investigation, to invent a special term to stand for 'the holy' minus its moral factor or 'moment', and, as we can now add minus its 'rational' aspect altogether... Here, too, it has a name of its own, viz. the Hebrew qadosh, to which the Greek αγιος [hagios] and the Latin sanctus, and, more accurately still, sacer, are the corresponding terms... all those expressions (qadosh, αγιος, sacer, &c.) mean beyond all question something quite other than 'the good'... I adopt a word coined from the Latin numen.”*

In the literary corpus of Thelema, there are many references to almost all of these usages of the term “holy.” The Hebrew term “*qadosh*” is used in Liber Ararita: “Then in the might of the Lion did I formulate unto myself that holy and formless fire, Qadosh, which darteth and flasheth through the depths of the Universe.”<sup>458</sup> The Greek term αγιος is used in the Gnostic Mass: “HAGIOS, HAGIOS, HAGIOS IAO.”<sup>459</sup> The Latin term *sanctum* is used in the context of “Holy of Holies” (*sanctum sanctorum*<sup>460</sup>), and Holy Spirit (*spiritum sanctum*). Crowley uses the latter

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457 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

458 Liber Ararita, VIII:0.

459 Liber XV: *The Gnostic Mass*.

460 Used, for example, in the “Grimorium Sanctissimum” found in the appendices of *Liber ABA*.

form when explaining the formula of IAO (mentioned above in connection with “αγιος” in the Gnostic Mass): “Ex Deo nascimur. In Jesu Morimur / Per Spiritum Sanctum reviviscimus. [‘Out of God we are born, In Jesus we die, through the Holy Spirit we are revived. ]”<sup>461</sup>

We can see here that there are many uses of the various forms of “holy,” or “*numen*,” in the literature of Thelema. Further, we can rest easy knowing that there are no unnecessary moral connotations in this notion of the numinous, allowing the use of this conception in elucidating facets of Thelema where “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”<sup>462</sup> This *numen* is therefore both non-rational (or “ineffable”) and non-moral.

#### 4) The Reaction to the Numinous as “Creature-Consciousness”

Otto describes holiness itself as “numinous” and explains this term further by the phrase “*mysterium tremendum*,” which will be elucidated in the next few sections of this essay. In encountering this *numen*, one takes on a characteristic attitude which Otto calls “creature-consciousness” or “creature-feeling”:

*“I propose to call it 'creature-consciousness' or creature-feeling. It is the emotion of a creature, submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness in contrast to that which is supreme above all creatures... All that this new term, 'creature-feeling', can express is the note of submergence into nothingness before an overpowering, absolute might of some kind... the 'creature-feeling' is itself a first subjective concomitant and effect of another feeling-element, which casts it like a shadow, but which in itself indubitably has immediate and primary reference to an object outside the self. Now this object is just what we have already spoken of as 'the numinous'. For the 'creature-feeling' and the sense of dependence to arise in the mind the 'numen' must be experienced as present.”*<sup>463</sup>

Therefore this “creature-consciousness” is the natural reaction to

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461 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 5.

462 *Liber AL*, III:60.

463 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.



(and therefore dependent upon) the experiencing of the numinous. This attitude is exemplified in Crowley's work *The Book of Lies*:

*"I am not I; I am but an hollow tube to bring down Fire from Heaven. Mighty and marvelous is this Weakness, this Heaven which draweth me into Her Womb, this Dome which hideth, which absorbeth Me. This is The Night wherein I am lost, the Love through which I am no longer I."*<sup>464</sup>

Also, the entirety of the Holy Book known as *Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni* deals with this "submergence into nothingness" under the symbol of the draining out of one's blood into the Holy Graal. It begins with the lines, "This is the secret of the Holy Graal... Thou shalt drain out thy blood that is thy life... Thou shalt mingle thy life with the universal life. Thou shalt not keep back one drop."<sup>465</sup>

## 5) The Numinous as "Mysterium Tremendum"

Otto elucidated the term "holy" under the less ambiguous figure of "*numen*." He then goes on to explain this "*numen*" with a famous phrase "*mysterium tremendum*": "We are dealing with something for which there is only one appropriate expression, 'mysterium tremendum'... that which is a mystery inexpressible and above all creatures."<sup>466</sup> To understand this phrase each word must be analyzed.

### The Analysis of "Mysterium"

First, the term *mysterium* may be understood as the ineffability of the numinous which leads us to understand holiness as not entirely amenable to reason (as mentioned at the beginning of this essay).

*"Conceptually mysterium denotes merely that which is hidden and esoteric, that which is beyond conception or understanding, extraordinary and unfamiliar. The term does not define the object more positively in its qualitative character. But though what is*

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464 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 15.

465 *Liber Cheth*, lines 1-3.

466 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

*enunciated in the word is negative, what is meant is something absolutely and intensely positive. This pure positive we can experience in feelings, feelings which our discussion can help to make clear to us, in so far as it arouses them actually in our hearts.”*<sup>467</sup>

In the face of the ineffability of the numinous we may proclaim, “*Ein begriffener Gott ist kein Gott* [‘A God comprehended is no God. ]”<sup>468</sup> Or we might exclaim with Crowley, “I am He. Speak not, O my God! Let the work be accomplished in silence.”<sup>469</sup>

This *mysterium* can be further analyzed by introducing two terms: the “Wholly Other” and *fascinans*. Let us first look into what is meant by the “Wholly Other.” Otto explains the attitude of the individual when encountering the facet of the numinous he understands as a *mysterium*:

*“We need an expression for the mental reaction peculiar to it [mysterium]; and here, too, only one word seems appropriate, though, as it is strictly applicable only to a ‘natural’ state of mind, it has here meaning only by analogy: it is the word ‘stupor’ ... it signifies blank wonder, an astonishment that strikes us dumb, amazement absolute... Taken in the religious sense, that which is ‘mysterious’ is - to give it perhaps the most striking expression - the ‘wholly other’ (θατερον [thateron], anyad, alienum), that which is quite beyond the sphere of the usual, the intelligible, and the familiar, which therefore falls quite outside the limits of the ‘canny,’ and is contrasted with it, filling the mind with blank wonder and astonishment.”*<sup>470</sup>

Therefore it is the unintelligibility and unfamiliarity (in relation to the normal experience of consciousness) which gives rise to this explanation of the numinous as “Wholly Other.” He explains further:

*“The truly ‘mysterious’ object is beyond our apprehension and*

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467 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

468 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

469 *Liber VII*, I:7.

470 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

*comprehension, not only because our knowledge has certain irremovable limits, but because in it we come upon something inherently 'wholly other,' whose kind and character are incommensurable with our own, and before which we therefore recoil in a wonder that strikes us chill and numb.*" <sup>471</sup>

In speaking of this "Wholly Other," Otto treads into territory that is quite familiar for Thelemites who are used to seeing this numinous under the figure of "Naught," "None," or "Nothing":

*"In mysticism we have in the 'beyond' (επεκεινα [epekeina]) again the strongest stressing and over-stressing of those non-rational elements which are already inherent in all religion. Mysticism continues to its extreme point in this contrasting of the numinous object (the numen), as the 'wholly other,' with ordinary experience. Not content with contrasting it with all that is of nature or this world, mysticism concludes by contrasting it with Being itself and all that 'is,' and finally actually calls it 'that which is nothing.' By this 'nothing' is meant not only that of which nothing can be predicated, but that which is absolutely and intrinsically other than and opposite of everything that is and can be thought. But while exaggerating to the point of paradox this negation and contrast - the only means open to conceptual thought to apprehend the mysterium - mysticism at the same time retains the positive quality of the 'wholly other' as a very living factor in its over-brimming religious emotion. But what is true of the strange 'nothingness' of our mystics holds good equally of the sunyam and the sunyata, the 'void' and 'emptiness' of the Buddhist mystics... the 'void' of the eastern, like the 'nothing' of the western, mystic is a numinous ideogram of the 'wholly other.'"* <sup>472</sup>

The unspeakable, unthinkable nature of this *numen* is elucidated in somewhat paradoxical terms in *The Book of Lies*: "That is not which is. The only Word is Silence. The only Meaning of that Word is not.

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471 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

472 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

Thoughts are false.”<sup>473</sup> This ineffable “Nothing” itself is mentioned many times in Crowley’s writings including a full explanation in his early essay “Berashith” but its quintessence comes in *The Book of the Law*, “O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!”<sup>474</sup>

As mentioned before, the mysterium can be analyzed both as “Wholly Other” and with the help of another term: *fascinans*. He writes, “The qualitative content of the numinous experience, to which ‘the mysterious’ stands as form, is in one of its aspects the element of daunting ‘awefulness’ and ‘majesty’... but it is clear that it has at the same time another aspect, in which it shows itself as something uniquely attractive and fascinating.”<sup>475</sup>

This *numen* as *tremendum* (which will be analyzed later) and in all of its ineffability, is something that draws one who experiences it into it with a sort of fascination:

*“The daemonic-divine object may appear to the mind an object of horror and dread, but at the same time it is no less something that allures with a potent charm, and the creature, who trembles before it, utterly cowed and cast down, has always at the same time the impulse to turn to it, nay even to make it somehow his own. The ‘mystery’ is for him not merely something to be wondered at but something that entrances him; and beside that in it which bewilders and confounds, he feels a something that captivates and transports him with a strange ravishment, rising often enough to the pitch of dizzy intoxication; it is the Dionysiac-element in the numen.”*<sup>476</sup>

This enticing fascination can be seen under the figure of Nuit in *Liber AL*, “Sing the rapturous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Wear to me jewels! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you! I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous

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473 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 5.

474 *Liber AL*, I:27.

475 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

476 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

night-sky. To me! To me!”<sup>477</sup> Or also in the line, “There is a light before thine eyes, o prophet, a light undesired, most desirable.”<sup>478</sup> The aspect of the numinous as a mysterium is therefore both “Wholly Other” in its unintelligibility and ineffability, known to mystics as “Nothing” (as no thought or word can adequately portray it), but the *numen* also has the characteristic of *fascinans*, being fascinating, enticing, and entrancing.

### The Analysis of “Tremendum”

We have just analyzed half of the phrase “*mysterium tremendum*,” used to describe the new term for “holy” which Otto calls the *numen*. Now we turn our attention to the second half of this phrase, *tremendum*. On this, Otto initially states:

*“[The Greek] δεινός [deinos] is the equivalent of dirus and tremendus. It may mean evil or imposing, potent and strange, queer and marvelous, horrifying and fascinating, divine and daemonic, and a source of 'energy'... δεινός is simply the numinous... The nearest that German can get to it is in the expression das Ungeheure (monstrous)... The variations of meaning in the German word ungeheuer can be well illustrated from Goethe. He, too, uses the word to denote the huge in size - what is too vast for our faculty of space-perception, such as the immeasurable vault of the night sky.”*<sup>479</sup>

An analogy will be immediately apparent to the Thelemite: Nuit. In the first chapter of *The Book of the Law* we hear Nuit say, “I am Heaven... Since I am Infinite Space and the Infinite Stars thereof, do ye also thus. Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt... I am the blue-lidded daughter of Sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky.”<sup>480</sup> She is described further as “the gemméd

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477 *Liber AL*, I:63-65.

478 *Liber AL*, II:61.

479 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

480 *Liber AL*, I:21,22,64.

azure,”<sup>481</sup> “the stooping starlight,”<sup>482</sup> “azure-lidded woman,”<sup>483</sup> “a lambent flame of blue, all-touching, all penetrant, her lovely hands upon the black earth & her lithe body arched for love,”<sup>484</sup> “the Queen of Space... continuous one of Heaven,”<sup>485</sup> *et cetera*. Nuit – as well as the descriptions of Adonai/God in *Liber LXV* and *Liber VII*, for example – continually call to mind this aspect of “*tremendum*” in the numinous.

Otto seeks to further explain “*tremendum*” by three characteristics: awe-fulness, overpowering-ness (*majestas*), and energy. First, let us examine the attribute of “awe-fulness” with its analogies of “tremor” and “fear.” Otto writes:

*“Tremor is in itself merely the perfectly familiar and 'natural' emotion of fear. But here the term is taken, aptly enough but still only by analogy, to denote a quite specific kind of emotional response, wholly distinct from that of being afraid, though it so far resembles it that the analogy of fear may be used to throw light upon its nature. There are in some languages special expressions which denote, either exclusively or in the first instance, this 'fear' that is more than fear proper. The Hebrew hiqdish (hallow) is an example... Specially noticeable is the 'emah of Yahweh ('fear of God'), which Yahweh can pour forth... Here we have a terror fraught with an inward shuddering such as not even the most menacing and overpowering created thing can instill... In the Greek language we have a corresponding term in σεβαστος [sebastos]... Of modern languages English has the words 'awe', 'aweful', which in their deeper and most special sense approximate closely to our meaning... 'Religious dread' (or 'awe') would perhaps be a better designation... It first begins to stir in the feeling of 'something uncanny', 'eerie', or 'weird'. It is this feeling which, emerging in the mind of primeval man, forms the starting-point for the entire religious development in history.”*<sup>486</sup>

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481 *Liber AL*, I:14.

482 *Liber AL*, I:16.

483 *Liber AL*, I:19.

484 *Liber AL*, I:26.

485 *Liber AL*, I:27.

486 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

Although one might say that part of the mystical and magical path is the conquering of this fear, it appears in Thelemic literature as well as in, for example, “He enveloped me with his demon tentacles; yea, the eight fears took hold upon me.”<sup>487</sup> It should be remembered, though, that this is not normal fear but the religious awe that fills one with a consciousness explained previously as “creature-consciousness.” The response to such a presence is trembling and shuddering:

*“The 'shudder' reappears in a form ennobled beyond measure where the soul, held speechless, trembles inwardly to the farthest fibre of its being. It invades the mind mightily in Christian worship with the words: 'Holy, holy, holy'... The 'shudder' has here lost its crazy bewildering note, but not the ineffable something that holds the mind. It has become a mystical awe, and sets free as its accompaniment, reflected in self-consciousness, that 'creature-feeling' that has already been described as the feeling of personal nothingness and submergence before the awe-inspiring object directly experienced. This is the οργε (orgé), the Wrath of Yahweh, which recurs in the New Testament as οργηθειον [orgetheon], and which is clearly analogous to the idea occurring in many religions of a mysterious ira deorum [divine ire]...”<sup>488</sup>*

Aside from previously mentioning the cry of “Holy, holy, holy” occurring in the Gnostic Mass as “HAGIOS, HAGIOS, HAGIOS IAO,” we see there is an accompanying reaction of shuddering to this awe-ful object of consciousness. Another example of this may be taken from our Holy Books:

*“Stained is the purple of thy mouth, O brilliant one, with the white glory of the lips of Adonai. The foam of the grape is like the storm upon the sea; the ships tremble and shudder, the shipmaster is afraid. That is thy drunkenness, O holy one, and the winds whirl away the soul of the scribe into the happy haven. O Lord God! let the haven be cast down by the fury of the storm! Let the foam of*

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487 *Liber LXV*, IV:35.

488 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

*the grape tincture my soul with Thy light!”*<sup>489</sup>

The aspect of wrathfulness which inspires awe can be found also in many passages of the Holy Books of Thelema (the entirety of the third chapter of *Liber AL* could be quoted as an example). The wrathful aspect of the numinous is poetically announced in *Liber LXV*, “Thou art Sebek the crocodile against Asar; thou art Mati, the Slayer in the Deep. Thou art Typhon, the Wrath of the Elements, O Thou who transcendest the Forces in their Concourse and Cohesion, in their Death and their Disruption. Thou art Python, the terrible serpent about the end of all things!”<sup>490</sup> It also occurs in *Liber VII*, “The forest of the spears of the Most High is called Night, and Hades, and the Day of Wrath; but I am His captain, and I bear His cup.”<sup>491</sup>

Connected with this idea of wrath and awe-fulness is that of “overpoweringness.” Otto explains:

*“It will be felt at once that there is yet a further element which must be added, that, namely, of 'might', 'power' 'absolute overpoweringness'. We will take to represent this term majestas, majesty. The tremendum may then be rendered more adequately tremenda majestas, or 'aweful majesty'... It is especially in relation to this element of majesty or absolute overpoweringness that the creature-consciousness, of which we have already spoken, comes upon the scene, as a sort of shadow or subjective reflection of it. Thus, in contrast to 'the overpowering' of which we are conscious as an object over against the self, there is the feeling of one's own submergence, of being but 'dust and ashes' and nothingness. And this forms the numinous raw material for the feeling of religious humility.”*<sup>492</sup>

In the context of the *majestas* of the numinous, the overwhelming power which consumes the consciousness, Otto talks of the connections to mysticism when he writes, “We come upon the ideas, first, of the

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489 *Liber LXV*, I:59-62.

490 *Liber LXV*, III:30.

491 *Liber VII*, VII:36.

492 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.



annihilation of the self, and then, as its complement, of the transcendent as the sole and entire reality. These are the characteristic notes of mysticism in all its forms, however otherwise various in content.”<sup>493</sup> The idea of annihilation of the self is treated in many places in Crowley’s writing like the previously quoted passages from *The Book of Lies* and *Liber Cheth* (see part 4 of this essay). Crowley also gives practical instruction on this in terms of Will:

*“The Aspirant must well understand that it is no paradox to say that the Annihilation of the Ego in the Abyss is the condition of emancipating the true Self, and exalting to unimaginable heights. So long as one remains 'one's self,' one is overwhelmed by the Universe; destroy the sense of self, and every event is equally an expression of one's Will, since its occurrence is the resultant of the concurrence of the forces which one recognizes as one's own.”*<sup>494</sup>

In addition to this aspect of “*tremendum*” being characterized both by “awe-fulness” and “overpoweringness” (*majestas*), it carries also the attribute of “energy”:

*“There is, finally, a third element comprised in those of tremendum and majestas, awfulness and majesty, and this I venture to call the 'urgency' or 'energy' of the numinous object. It is particularly vividly perceptible in the οργε [orge] or 'wrath'; and it everywhere clothes itself in symbolical expressions - vitality, passion, emotional temper, will, force, movement, excitement, activity, impetus.”*<sup>495</sup>

The writings of Thelema also abound with references to this passionate energy and activity, for example:

*“Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.”*<sup>496</sup>

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493 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

494 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:8.

495 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

496 *Liber AL*, II:20.

*“[Hadit] is eternal energy, the Infinite Motion of Things, the central core of all being.”*<sup>497</sup>

*“Lord secret and most holy, source of life, source of love, source of liberty, be thou ever constant and mighty within us, force of energy, fire of motion; with diligence let us ever labour with thee, that we may remain in thine abundant joy.”*<sup>498</sup>

*“GOD is concealed in the whirling energy of Nature.”*<sup>499</sup>

The references are nearly endless in this philosophy of Will. Again turning his attention toward mysticism, Otto explains this aspect of “energy”:

*“[It is] a force that knows not stint nor stay, which is urgent, active, compelling, and alive. In mysticism, too, this element of 'energy' is a very living and vigorous factor, at any rate in the 'voluntaristic' mysticism, the mysticism of love, where it is very forcibly seen that 'consuming fire' of love whose burning strength the mystic can hardly bear. And in this urgency and pressure the mystic's 'love' claims a perceptible kinship with the *οργε* [orge] itself, the scorching and consuming wrath of God; it is the same 'energy,' only differently directed... The element of 'energy' reappears in Fichte's speculations on the Absolute as the gigantic, never-resting, active world-stress, and in Schopenhauer's daemonic 'Will.’”*<sup>500</sup>

In Thelema, where “Love is the law, love under will,”<sup>501</sup> we can see, again, nearly endless references to this “mysticism of love.” One particular aspect of this mentioned above by Otto, the consuming fire of love, can be seen in innumerable writings of Crowley. Here are just a few examples:

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497 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty.*

498 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass.*

499 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 0.

500 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy.*

501 *Liber AL*, I:57.

*“Even as the profane hand / Reacheth to the sacred sand, / Fire consumes him that his name be forgotten in the land.”*<sup>502</sup>

*“Penned by the master mage to his desire, / She baffles his seductions and his ire, / Praying God’s all-annihilating fire.”*<sup>503</sup>

*“In the East is the Magick Fire, in which all burns up at last.”*<sup>504</sup>

*“Into the Magick Fire all things are cast. It symbolizes the final burning up of all things in Shivaradhana. It is the absolute destruction alike of the Magician and the Universe.”*<sup>505</sup>

*“Concerning the Enflaming of the Heart: ...In the end shall come suddenly a great flame and a devouring, and burn thee utterly. Now of these sparks, and of these splutterings of flame, and of these beginnings of the Infinite Fire, thou shalt thus be aware. For the sparks thy heart shall leap up, and thy ceremony or meditation or toil shall seem of a sudden to go of its own will; and for the little flames this shall be increased in volume and intensity; and for the beginnings of the Infinite Fire thy ceremony shall be caught up unto ravishing song, and thy meditation shall be ecstasy, and thy toil shall be a delight exceeding all pleasure thou hast ever known. And of the Great Flame that answereth thee it may not be spoken; for therein is the End of this Magick Art of Devotion.”*<sup>506</sup>

*“Satan, the Old Serpent, in the Abyss, the Lake of Fire and Sulphur, is the Sun-Father, the vibration of Life, Lord of Infinite Space that flames with His Consuming Energy, and is also that throned Light whose Spirit is suffused throughout the City of Jewels.”*<sup>507</sup>

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502 *The Rites of Eleusis*, “The Rite of Saturn.”

503 *Liber Turris vel Domus Dei*.

504 *Liber ABA*, Part II.

505 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 26.

506 *Liber Astarte vel Berylli*.

507 *Magick in Theory & Practice*, Appendix III.

*“By addition [of 5 & 6] ariseth Eleven, the number of True Magick: and by multiplication Three Hundred, the Number of the Holy Spirit or Fire, the letter Shin, wherein all things are consumed utterly.”*<sup>508</sup>

*“Then in the might of the Lion did I formulate unto myself that holy and formless fire, Qadosh, which darteth and flasheth through the depths of the Universe.”*<sup>509</sup>

The aspect of a consuming fire of love can be seen to be intimately involved in Thelema. This fire that consumes the ego leaves one to identify with the *numen* itself, the subject of the next section.

The numinous is now understood as a *mysterium* under the double-figure of being “Wholly Other” in its ineffability/unintelligibility and *fascinans* in the sense that it is enticing/entrancing as well as *tremendum* under the triple-figure of awe-fulness, overpoweringness (*majestas*), and energy.

## 6) Religious Practice as Identification with Numen

Otto goes on to give an explanation of the practice of mysticism: the identification of the self with the overpowering, awe-inspiring energy numen:

*“Religious practice may manifest itself in those normal and easily intelligible forms which occupy so prominent a place in the history of religion, such forms as propitiation, petition, sacrifice, thanking, et cetera. But besides these there is a series of strange proceedings which are constantly attracting greater and greater attention, and in which it is claimed that we may recognize, besides mere religion in general, the particular roots of mysticism. I refer to those numerous curious modes of behavior and fantastic form of meditation, by means of which the religious man attempts to master 'the mysterious,' and to fill himself and even to identify himself with it...*

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508 *De Lege Libellum*.

509 *Liber Ararita*, VII:0.

*Possession of and by the numen becomes an end in itself; it begins to be sought for its own sake; and the wildest and most artificial methods of asceticism are put into practice to attain it. In a word, the vita religiosa [religious life] begins; and to remain in these strange and bizarre states of numinous possession becomes a good in itself, even a way of salvation... Widely various as these states are in themselves, yet they have this element in common, that in them the mysterium is experienced in its essential, positive, and specific character, as something that bestows upon man a beatitude beyond compare, but one whose real nature he can neither proclaim in speech nor conceive in thought, but may know only by a direct and living experience.”<sup>510</sup>*

He explains again:

*“A characteristic common to all types of mysticism is the Identification, in different degrees of completeness, of the personal self with the transcendent Reality... It must be Identification with the Something that is at once absolutely supreme in power and reality and wholly non-rational.”<sup>511</sup>*

This identification can be found in the Holy Books of Thelema in many places, often taking the characteristic form of “I am He!”<sup>512</sup> Crowley explains this in detail:

*“This vision is, I believe, the first and the last of all Spiritual Experience. For though He is attributed to Malkuth [Malkuth: the tenth Sephira], and the Door of the Path of His overshadowing, He is also in Kether (Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth in Kether - 'as above, so beneath'), and the End of the 'Path of the Wise' is identity with Him. So that while he is the Holy Guardian Angel, He is also Hua [The supreme and secret title of Kether] and the Tao [The great extreme of the Yi King]. For since Intra Nobis Regnum dei [I.N.R.I.] all things are in Ourselves, and all Spiritual*

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510 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

511 Otto, Rudolf. *The Idea of the Holy*.

512 *Liber Samekh*.

## Conclusion

This essay was intended to give the reader a very basic introduction to Otto's ideas of the numinous. It is often helpful to study one's own tradition in the light of other perspectives in order to see things from a new point-of-view.

It seems unlikely that Crowley was aware of Otto and his work. Nonetheless, it is illuminating to see Otto's examination of religious experience directly reflected in the writings of Thelema, sometimes down to virtually identical phrasings. I believe this goes to reinforce the penning of our Holy Books (and many of Crowley's other writings) were a result of genuine spiritual experience; an outgrowth of actual direct experience or *gnosis*.

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513 “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox* I:1.

IO  
 LAUGH IN THE FACE OF SORROW  
 100

EVERYTHING PASSES  
 45

ALL IN THE BLACK OF NIGHT  
 ALL ON THE BLACK OF EARTH

KEEP SILENT  
 515

IAO

IAO's BED OF FLOWERS

*IAO's Bed of Flowers*  
 is based on a Working  
 of the Element of Earth

## CHAPTER 20

# UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD AND AGAPE

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*This article was written in early 2014 e.v. as notes for a lecture. The intention was to explain how Agape, divine love, is the foundation of fraternity.*

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*“Little children, love one another!”<sup>514</sup>*

Fraternity is a word that is thrown around a lot, but what exactly does it mean?

Fraternity is based on the Latin word “*frater*” which means “brother.” In one sense, a fraternity is any group of people that are associated together by bonds of brotherhood and united in some common interest and/or purpose. Freemasonry and Ordo Templi Orientis are examples of this definition of fraternity.

A subtler meaning is the very quality of brotherhood itself, as in the slogan of the French revolution, “liberty, equality, fraternity.” It's this second definition of fraternity that I would like to investigate further. First we will consider the symbolic basis of universal brotherhood, the way in which we symbolically conceive of this fraternity, and then we will discuss the experiential basis of universal brotherhood, the work we need to do.

### Universal Brotherhood

First of all: In a sense, every individual shares the same Father, the Sun. The Sun is the visible and sensible source of light and source of life to all of us on Earth. Without the energy from the Sun, life would perish, and our annual revolution and daily rotation about our Father rules the

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<sup>514</sup> *The Book of Lies*, chapter 69.



rhythms of our lives.

We also all share the same Earth, “the Mother of us all.”<sup>515</sup> She is the “womb of all life,”<sup>516</sup> the literal ground and foundation for our existence, enclosing us in the security of her atmosphere and nourishing all life within her embrace. In this sense, every individual is a child of the same Father and the same Mother, so we are therefore all brothers and sisters. We are told to “Come forth, o children, under the stars, & take your fill of love!”<sup>517</sup> and this is the Aeon of the Child. We are the children of the Sun and the Earth, and we bear their essence in microcosm.

Like the Earth, our bodies are our temples, giving us form and granting us the possibility of the awareness of Existence. Our forms are the heirs of countless generations that have been born out of Earth's womb.

As Crowley says:

*“O man! behold thyself! With what pains wast thou fashioned!  
What ages have gone to thy shaping! The history of the planet is  
woven into the very substance of thy brain! ...Thou dost  
incorporate so many elements, thou art the fruit of so many æons  
of labour, thou art fashioned thus as thou art, and not otherwise,  
for some colossal End.”*<sup>518</sup>

We also each bear the same Creative Power with which the Sun enlightens our world. We are Life itself and givers of Life: we create innumerable things through our thoughts, words, and actions, let alone our ability to create new life. This Creative Power and life-force has been called many things; in Thelema it is often called the “Phallus” – and this is within every individual regardless of their sex, otherwise they would be dead. As Crowley says, the Sun “is the representative of god in the

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515 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass.*

516 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass.*

517 *Liber AL, I:12.*

518 *De Lege Libellum.*

Macrocosm, as the Phallus is in the Microcosm.”<sup>519</sup> We are each therefore microcosmic gods on Earth, little Suns, each creators in our own right, each “one Star in the company of stars,”<sup>520</sup> for “every man and every woman is a star”<sup>521</sup> and humanity is “the company of heaven.”<sup>522</sup>

We are all children of the same macrocosmic parents and therefore all brothers and sisters, and we all bear the combined essence of Sun and Earth in ourselves as creative gods in the microcosm. This is the symbolic basis for universal brotherhood, the global fraternity.

## The Work of Agape

Beyond understanding the symbolic foundations of universal brotherhood, we have to each cultivate fraternity within ourselves. Though we may understand this Universal Brotherhood intellectually, though we may even have a deep and intuitive, experiential sense of its truth, we inevitably do not act in the spirit of fraternity in treating one another as brothers and sisters.

No one is perfect in this regard, and it is unreasonable to expect another or oneself to be infallible in abiding in a constant appreciation of our communion in a Universal Brotherhood. Nonetheless, this is the work before us: to cultivate a genuine sense of fraternity for others.

Though being in a fraternal Order like Ordo Templi Orientis gives us extra means and opportunities to practice fraternity within an intentional community bound by common beliefs, rites, and oaths, this is the work of every individual regardless of association in any temporal organization. We need an experiential foundation of Universal Brotherhood; we need to practice fraternity.

A sense of fraternity can't simply come from liking everyone. We all like some people and dislike others. There is nothing wrong with that,

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519 *The Book of Lies*, commentary to chapter 19.

520 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

521 *Liber AL*, I:3.

522 *Liber AL*, I:2.

and there is no reason to discard our disliking of certain people. Fraternity isn't simply about pretending to like those whom we dislike, nor is it attempting to try to like everyone. Fraternity is a recognition of a bond between two individuals that is deeper and more fundamental than our likes and dislikes of one another. That is, we can maintain our likes and dislikes, but we must recognize that it is only the most superficial layer of our interaction with one another; it is merely on the surface.

One way to look at the situation is the typical dichotomy of want versus Will. When we are in a place of wanting, we demand things of other people, we have expectations, and we generally treat people like “it”s or objects, attempting to get what pleasure we can from them and avoid any pain. On this level, we are attracted to some individuals, averse to others, and neutral to the rest. We seek money, status, attention, validation, and avoid their opposites.

On a deeper level, one of Being or of Will, we are in touch with our “starry nature,” so to speak. We acknowledge a more fundamental bond beyond our attraction, aversion, and neutrality; this is the bond where we acknowledge that “every man and every woman is a star.” We see ourselves as children of the same Cosmic Parents, we share the same stellar and earthly heritage. On this level, we each have the right to do our Wills and every other individual has the right to do theirs, regardless of how much or little we may like them. This is to say that, when we are able to drop down into ourselves and get in touch with a deeper layer of Being, we are able to accept and respect others as individuals with unique Wills, regardless of who they are.

What is then needed – at least to begin with – is a deepening of an appreciation of our inherently deeper relation with the other, our fraternity as being a star among stars. We need to remember that each individual has a Will that is supreme and sovereign for them, just like our Will is for us. This begins with and is fostered by every genuine interaction we have with others. Rather than treating others as “it”s or objects, we need to cultivate a sense where we are treating the other as a “Thou,” as a subject.

Every time we greet each other with “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” – or simply “93” – we acknowledge the other as a “Thou.” What is required is the conscious intention behind this statement since it is so easy to lose the spirit of the Law and simply repeat the words. It is then a legitimate practice in itself to try to bring more intention and awareness to our greetings and farewells, using them as a foundational method with which we forge the bonds of fraternity that connect us beneath the more superficial layers of like and dislike.

This forged bond of fraternity is a form of what we call “Agape” or Love. In the Old Aeon, this word meant the Love of God, and this is still true in the New Aeon except that we assert, “There is no god but man.” Our Love of God is therefore the Love of one another unconditionally.

It may be useful to recognize that there is a layer or level of ourselves that we can potentially tap into that recognizes the other as a “Thou,” as a star, and accepts and respects them unconditionally. Naturally, there is the other layer or level where we do treat people conditionally: we are friendly on the condition that they are nice to us, we don't speak with them on the condition they remain aggressive, *et cetera*. I do not think it is entirely possible to wipe out this level of conditionality, of treating others on the more superficial level of like and dislike, without each person becoming a veritable Master of the Temple. More realistically, I think we can do well to acknowledge this layer of like and dislike as a reality, and then we can consciously work with it to the best of our ability. What is different is the cultivation of a much deeper level that exists regardless of the current status of our likes and dislikes, which can be accessed through intentional practice such as consciously acknowledging the other as a star when greeting them.

In the end, regardless of whatever rank someone is, we are all essentially equals. The janitor and the CEO are both stars as are the Minerval and the Outer Head of the Order; they are co-equal, both gods. This means when there are inevitable interpersonal conflicts, we can recognize there is a level of mutuality or equality that persists regardless of

any quarrels, and if we are capable of drawing upon that deeper level of acknowledgment, we can then more fraternally engage in conflicts with others. That is my earnest hope, at least.

So as a fellow child of Father Sun and Mother Earth, as one star in the company of heaven that is humanity, as one of those working to cultivate fraternity and Agape in myself, I leave with a sentiment that I cannot convey any better than Crowley: “Little children, love one another!”<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>523</sup> *The Book of Lies*, chapter 69.

## CHAPTER 21

# IS THE HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL?

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*This article was written in mid-2010 e.v. as a way to address another ongoing debate: is the Angel internal or external? The general idea is that it is useless to ponder about the metaphysics of the situation, we can speak about it both ways if it is more convenient, and in the end it is the work we do that matters.*

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Many people push for an interpretation of the Holy Guardian Angel as exclusively internal (as in the case when we say the Angel is another name for the unconscious or a name for some deeper/truer aspect of ourselves) or exclusively external (as in the case when we say the Angel is a physically and mentally separate entity from the individual who oversees and guides his or her life).

In *Magick Without Tears*, Crowley is discussing how language is often vague when describing “God” and spiritual experience in general. He talks about this notion of God as “within” when he says, “The word of Sin is Restriction.’ Our formula, roughly speaking, is to go out and grab what we want. We do this so thoroughly that we grow thereby, extending our conception of ‘I’ by including each new accretion instead of remaining a closely delineated self, proud of possessing other things, as do the Black Brothers. We are whole-hearted extroverts; the penalty of restricting oneself is anything from neurosis to down right lunacy; in particular, melancholia.”<sup>524</sup> Even in our extroversion – in our reaching out to and interacting with the world – we are exploring that which is within and letting it manifest. He goes on to say:

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<sup>524</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 28.

*“You ask whether these remarks do not conflict with my repeated definition of Initiation as the Way In. Not at all; The Inmost is identical with the All. As you travel inward, you become able to perceive all the layers which surround the 'Self' from within, thus enlarging the scope of your vision of the Universe... **When the entire system of the Universe is conterminous with your comprehension, 'inward' and 'outward' become identical.**”*  
(emphasis added)<sup>525</sup>

Even as we moved inwards in our moving outwards as extroverts, so too does our Way In lead us to the All. In talking about the Holy Guardian Angel and Attainment, we often speak about getting beyond dualities including good and evil, upright and averse, mercy and severity, and even self and not-self. One we also have to learn to get beyond is our dualistic understanding of things as either inside or outside.

While this is true, we have to understand that it may be more practical and effective to speak about the Holy Guardian Angel as either external or internal at various times and to different people. Crowley, when talking about whether angels and demons were truly external/separate from ourselves, remarked “Our Canon of Truth is Maximum Convenience.”<sup>526</sup> If it makes communication clearer and more coherent to speak of a Being separate from myself, the Angel will be spoken of as external; if it makes communication clearer and more coherent to speak of the True Self or an aspect of oneself that is the Angel, then the Angel will be spoken of as internal. All this should be understood in the light that Godhead itself is beyond these divisions with which language inherently limits us.

In the end, what matters little is our theorizing about the Angel or Knowledge and Conversation. It isn't called “The Great Work” for nothing since we get out of our practice what we put into it. What matters

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<sup>525</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 28.

<sup>526</sup> “Notes for an Astral Atlas” in Appendix III of *Liber ABA*.

is the work we do to aspire to this lofty goal, what inspiration we gather and effort we put in, and how we put these experiences into practice. Then, I imagine, we will have little need to theorize about it and will instead enjoy the fruits of our labor.

*“The keystone to this arch some have called God, some Brahma, some Zeus, some Allah, some even IAO the God of the sounding name; but in truth, O seeker, it is Thy-SELF – this higher dimension in which the inner becomes the outer, and in which the single Eye alone can see the throbbing heart, Master of the entangled skein of veins.”<sup>527</sup>*

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<sup>527</sup> “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox I:3*.



## CHAPTER 22

# THELEMA AND BUDDHISM

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*This article was written in 2007 e.v. for the Journal of Thelemic Studies. It was intended to look at how Crowley (and consequently Thelema) was influenced by Buddhism, particularly that version espoused in the Dhammapada and other early texts.*

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### Introduction

Progress is largely the result of the process of synthesis. A molecule may “progress” into more structuralized forms by bonding with certain other molecules to form a synthesis of a new molecule – for example, an Oxygen molecule combines with two Hydrogen molecules to form the synthesis, H<sub>2</sub>O. Humanity progresses with the “synthesis” or union of male & female and the consequent production of a physical child. Many leaps in technology and philosophy have also come from the concise synthesis of previous conflicting ideas into a new “child”-idea. The correct summarization of past knowledge and integration of that information with new and diverse ideas gives much potential for further knowledge. This work is a synthesis of the two apparently differing traditions of Buddhist and Thelemic thought. These traditions will each be examined through a major text – the *Dhammapada* in the case of Buddhism, and *Liber AL vel Legis*, or *The Book of the Law*, for Thelema.

The word “tradition” is used in favor of “philosophy,” “religion,” or any other in this work, for Buddhism and Thelema both do not exactly fit the definitions of either of these terms and to use them to describe would be to confine them to something smaller than they really are. They both could be called religious, scientific, mystical, psychological, and/or philosophical traditions to an extent, but these certain adjectives will not

be used except in certain situations to reflect the wide-ranging nature of both Buddhism and Thelema. The broadness of the term “tradition” reflects the seemingly endless implications and applications of Buddhist and Thelemic thought.

Although these traditions originated on nearly opposite sides of the earth, they are much more complementary than one might initially imagine. A common misconception is that one must “convert” to a certain religion or tradition and maintain this allegiance to be considered part of that tradition. For both Buddhism and Thelema, this perception is false. Buddhists, especially in modern times with instantaneous world-wide communication now being a reality, often emphasize the universality of their own teachings and their applicability to other traditions. For Thelema, this is equally true, as we will see, and requires no Judeo-Christian notion of “conversion.” It will be found that it is very possible to be a “Buddhist Thelemite,” a “Thelemic Buddhist,” or a “Buddhist Thelemic Protestant,” *et cetera*, if you choose to label yourself as such (although I personally see little benefit in doing such).<sup>528</sup> Swami Vivekananda once said, “The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.” This is truly the sentiment that must be kept in mind. Even so, we may not even consider ourselves part of a specific tradition but still be able to gain useful insight from study of another. It is possible to acknowledge the validity of the Thelemic maxims “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law,”<sup>529</sup> “Love is the law, love under will,”<sup>530</sup> and “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt”<sup>531</sup> and simultaneously accept various Buddhist theories, metaphors, and especially practices as will be seen; similarly, Buddhist concepts such

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528 Vivekananda, Swami. “Address at the Final Session” from *Addresses at The Parliament of Religions*.

529 *Liber AL*, I:40.

530 *Liber AL*, I:57.

531 *Liber AL*, III:60.

as impermanence (*anicca*), not-self (*anatta*), and suffering (*dukkha*) can help a Thelemite gain better insight into themselves and the universe. Although this is true, there are some interesting and important discrepancies in theory between the two traditions that need to be understood as well. This work shows the comparisons between Buddhism and Thelema through close study of the *Dhammapada* and *Liber AL vel Legis*, allowing the reader to better understand each tradition in the light of the other. By viewing a certain idea from two standpoints - that of a Thelemite and that of a Buddhist - one may also gain a more objective outlook at that particular idea. As an aside, it should be acknowledged from the very start that there is an unfathomable amount of texts, beliefs, and practices aside from those delineated in *Dhammapada* which is why this text is essentially used as a foundation - for its concise brevity and simplicity.

This work will first briefly examine the histories of both of these texts. A slight emphasis on Thelema and its respective text *Liber AL vel Legis* is given in this work because much more is known about the author, Aleister Crowley, and his life than of the *Dhammapada*. Further, the scope of literature about Buddhism, which has existed since about 500 BCE, is tremendous compared to that relating to Thelema and *Liber AL vel Legis*, which was written just over a century ago. The reticence to write about *Liber AL vel Legis* in the past is unfortunate but it is being overcome. This lack of an academic foundation of literature on Thelema causes much confusion and trepidation amongst budding Thelemites, for they often are confused by the large amount of literature and do not understand how to integrate their knowledge of disparate traditions. Often, Thelemites have had the misconception that Thelema looks down upon other traditions or sees them as unworthy. In fact, the opposite is closer to the truth, as will be seen later. To help relieve this lack of a Thelemic understanding of other traditions, this work is offered as a small consolation.

Similarities in theory and practice will be examined to allow us to understand that these two traditions are more complementary than

opposing and also to see each tradition's respective strengths and weaknesses. Contrasting elements of theory will also be investigated to understand the fundamental differences between these two traditions and to appreciate their distinctiveness. Essentially, the reader will hopefully obtain a well-rounded and balanced knowledge base about the relationship between Thelema and Buddhism to inform their own previous knowledge to form a synthesis – an improved and transformed outlook on Buddhism, Thelema, and, hopefully existence in general.

## Part 1: A Brief History of the *Dhammapada*

The *Dhammapada* is a famous and highly popular Buddhist scripture of 423 stanzas from the Pali Tipitaka, which refers to the collection of Pali scriptures of Theravada Buddhism. Although there are other versions of the *Dhammapada*, including the Patna Dharmapada of 414 stanzas, the Udanavarga with over 1000 stanzas, and the Gandhari Dharmapada of 540 stanzas, we will be looking solely at the version in Pali, which many assumed was the original *Dhammapada* until recently<sup>532</sup> and generally is the most familiar.

Unlike many other Buddhist scriptures which contain lengthy stories and parables, the *Dhammapada* is a collection of extremely concise and vibrant stanzas that are much like aphorisms in their poignancy. Although we do not have enough space to go into the differences between Theravada Buddhism and its later developments of Mahayana, Tibetan, Zen, Vajrayana, *et cetera*, it should be understood that although the *Dhammapada* is part of the canon of Theravada literature,<sup>533</sup> it is still read and beloved by Buddhists of all sects.<sup>534</sup>

In the introduction to Eknath Easwaran's translation, Stephen Ruppenthal goes as far as to compare the importance of the *Dhammpada*

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532 J.R. Carter & M. Palihawadana. *The Dhammapada*. Oxford University Press. Oxford, NY (2000), pg.xii.

533 Carter & Palihawadana, pg.xi.

534 Ibid.

for Buddhism to the importance of Christ's Sermon on the Mount for Christianity. He claims that, "If everything else were lost, we would need nothing more than the *Dhammapada* to follow the way of the Buddha."<sup>535</sup> For this reason, we will focus on this text; it will provide the foundational framework of our understanding of Buddhism so we may compare concepts that are found with those in the sacred text of Thelema, *Liber AL vel Legis*.

There is not one overall, accepted belief-system about what constitutes Buddhism. As mentioned before, there are many different sects and offshoots in Buddhism that each hold their own unique views. Ruppenthal goes on in his introduction to say that "The Buddha did not leave a static structure of belief that we can affirm and be done with."<sup>536</sup> Although this is unfortunate in some ways, the *Dhammapada* may be the closest we will get to such a universal teaching in Buddhism.

"*Dhammapada*" itself literally means the "The path of Dhamma," or "verses on Dhamma".<sup>537</sup> The word *dhamma*, a Pali word which is more well-known as "dharma" in Sanskrit, translates to mean truth, law (both universal and man-made), duty, and/or righteousness. Most importantly, in Buddhist texts, the word *dhamma* is often used to refer to Buddha's teachings. Therefore, an exact translation is not possible but essentially refers to the path of truth or law as set forth by Buddha.

Buddha did not write anything himself, but his disciples memorized his teachings and transmitted them orally. The Pali Tipitaka which contains the *Dhammapada*, was written down in the first century BCE from oral tradition.<sup>538</sup> Because Crowley refers to Max Muller's translation of the *Dhammapada* in various places, quotations from this text will be taken from this edition to understand most clearly and precisely the way in which the language of Buddhism influenced Crowley.

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535 Easwaran, Eknath. *The Dhammapada*. The Blue Mountain Center of Meditation (2004), pg.7

536 Easwaran, pg.7-8.

537 Easwaran, pg.295.

538 Gombrich, *Theravada Buddhism*, 2nd edn, Routledge, London, (2006), pg.3.

## Part 2: A Brief History of *Liber AL vel Legis* and the Tradition of Thelema

*Liber AL vel Legis* is also known as “The Book of the Law,” “Liber AL” (pronounced “Lee-ber El”), “Liber Legis” (“Book of the Law” in Latin), “Liber 220” and other names, all of which refer to the same text. This book was “received” by Aleister Crowley on the three consecutive days of April 8, 9, and 10 in 1904. He claims to have heard a voice over his left shoulder for exactly one hour each day, starting right at noon, dictating the three chapters of *Liber AL vel Legis* on each day.

Crowley identified this being who was dictating *Liber AL vel Legis* as “Aiwass.” He writes in *The Equinox of the Gods*, “[Aiwass] is the name given by W. to P. as that of her informant,”<sup>539</sup> meaning that Rose Crowley, his wife, initially gave Crowley (who is “P.” or Frater Perdurabo, which was a motto Crowley took on as a Neophyte in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in 1898) the name of this being. He continues, “Also it is the name given as that of the revealer of Liber Legis,”<sup>540</sup> which is in conformity with line 7 of chapter 1 in *Liber AL vel Legis* (henceforth noted in the form of “AL I:7”): “Behold! It is revealed by Aiwass, the minister of Hoor-paar-kraat.”

Crowley admits, “whether Aiwass is a spiritual being, or a man known to Fra[ter] P[erdurabo], is a matter of the merest conjecture.”<sup>541</sup> Crowley sometimes felt that Aiwass was a spiritual being, his own Holy Guardian Angel, his True Self, his subconscious, or just an adept. Who Aiwass actually was is really not of concern in this treatise, for what is said in *Liber AL vel Legis* should stand on its own merit – “Success is your proof,” as it says in AL III:46. Either way, to Crowley, “This Book [*Liber AL*] proves: there is a Person thinking and acting in a praeterhuman

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539 *The Equinox of the Gods*, chapter 6.

540 Ibid.

541 Ibid.

manner, either without a body of flesh, or with the power of communicating telepathically with men and inscrutably directing their actions.”<sup>542</sup>

The reception of *The Book of the Law* was an event so complex and important that Crowley attempted to describe its reception in three places. First, it was described in 1910 in “The Temple of Solomon the King,” which was an essay that appeared in various numbers of *The Equinox* journal that Crowley issued. Secondly, Crowley describes this reception in 1929 in *The Confessions of Aleister Crowley*. Thirdly, he made a more formal attempt at writing the history of the reception with *The Equinox of the Gods* in 1936. Besides describing the actual process of receiving the Book, Crowley wrote at least three different commentaries at three different times on *Liber AL vel Legis* – an “Old” comment from *The Equinox* in 1912, a “New” comment composed in Cefalu, and the “Djeridensis Working” or “The Comment Called D” from November of 1923.<sup>543</sup> He wrote the comment that appears at the end of most editions in Tunis in 1926. This essay is intended to primarily be a comparative work, not a historical work. Therefore, if the reader wishes to more fully understand this complex event and examine the details, I will refer you to the three works mentioned above and the various biographies on Aleister Crowley (especially *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley* by Lawrence Sutin and *Perdurabo: The Life of Aleister Crowley* by Richard Kaczynski).

The tradition of Thelema could be said to have been formally inaugurated when Crowley received *Liber AL vel Legis* in 1904. In *Liber AL* it is declared “The word of the Law is Thelema”<sup>544</sup> or “Will” in Greek. It continues, “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law”<sup>545</sup> and also “There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt,”<sup>546</sup> as if we

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<sup>542</sup> *The Equinox of the Gods*, chapter 7.

<sup>543</sup> Sutin, Lawrence. *Do What Thou Wilt: A Life of Aleister Crowley*. St. Martin’s Griffin, NY (2000), p.316.

<sup>544</sup> *Liber AL*, I:39.

<sup>545</sup> *Liber AL*, I:40.

<sup>546</sup> *Liber AL*, III:60.

hadn't already gotten the picture.

An argument against the idea that Crowley established Thelema in 1904 with the reception of *Liber AL* might mention that the words “Do what thou wilt” have been uttered at least twice before. Firstly, St. Augustine of Hippo wrote “Dilige, et quod vis fac” in his *Confessions* at the end of the 4th century CE, which means “Love, and do what thou wilt.” Here St. Augustine means that if one loves God, one is free to act because their will is surrendered to the will of God (and therefore apparently can't possibly act wrongly). Though the wording is extremely similar, this is not what is meant by *Liber AL vel Legis* in its aphorisms of “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” and “Love is the law, love under will.” As Crowley says so concisely, “While Will is the Law, the nature of that Will is Love. Love is as it were a byproduct of that Will; it does not contradict or supersede that Will; and if apparent contradiction should arise in any crisis, it is the Will that will guide us aright. Lo, while in *The Book of the Law* is much of Love, there is no word of Sentimentality.”<sup>547</sup> Here he explicitly states that the “Love” in *Liber AL* is not the sentimental love that many think of when first hearing the word, and it is especially not love of the orthodox Judeo-Christian-Islamic notion of a vengeful Father-in-the-sky God.

Secondly, Francois Rabelais, possibly inspired by this aphorism from St. Augustine, proclaimed “Fay ce que voudras” (“Do what thou wilt” in French) in his masterpiece *Gargantua & Pantagruel* in the 16th century CE. “Do what thou wilt” was the motto of Rabelais' utopian “Abbey of Thelema,” which would later be taken as a model for Crowley's own Abbey of Thelema in Cefalu, Italy. According to Crowley in an unfinished essay entitled “The Antecedents of Thelema,” the “Do what thou wilt” of Rabelais is much more in conformity with the doctrines of Thelema than St. Augustine's, especially in light of the conduct of the Abbey that Rabelais imagined. Crowley had read and was most definitely influenced by both of these authors.<sup>548</sup> In the 18th century, Sir Francis

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<sup>547</sup> *Liber II: The Message of the Master Therion*.

<sup>548</sup> See “The Antecedents of Thelema” in *The Revival of Magick*.



Dashwood, who was the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Britain and founder of The Hellfire Club, would later be influenced by Rabelais' writing. Apparently, "fay ce que voudras" from Gargantua & Pantagruel was written on the doorway of the abbey that Dashwood created in Medmenham, England.<sup>549</sup>

Beyond the mere phrase of "Do what thou wilt," there is an unfathomable amount of similarities of Thelema with various other systems of thought. Truly, Aleister Crowley did not fashion the idea of Thelema out of nothing. There are similarities with Buddhism (as this essay is written to partly investigate), Hinduism, Taoism, Gnosticism, Christianity, Islam, Sufism, Qabalah, and other traditions. There are also similarities with the philosophies of Westerners like Nietzsche, Kant, Thomas Henry Huxley, and Schopenhauer. Aleister Crowley studied many traditions and read an unfathomable amount of books, which can be seen by the sheer amount of seemingly divergent references he is able to relate to in his various writings. Crowley saw a universal understanding of different systems of thought necessary for the spiritual aspirant, which can be seen in that he recommends a plethora of books for the average student to read in his various writings. Themes in *Liber AL vel Legis* unmistakably reflect ideas that occupied Crowley's attention throughout his studies prior to the reception of the book: the "Khu,"<sup>550</sup> "Khabs,"<sup>551</sup> "Nuit," "Hadit," "Ra-Hoor-Khuit," and "Hoor-paar- kraat"<sup>552</sup> of the Egyptian tradition, the idea of the precession of the Equinoxes<sup>553</sup> from the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, the "Kiblah"<sup>554</sup> and "Kaaba"<sup>555</sup> from Islam, the Biblical symbolism of the Beast<sup>556</sup> and Scarlet Woman<sup>557</sup> from Book of Revelations, and large amounts of Qabalistic, numerological clues

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549 *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1911). Buckingham.

550 *Liber AL*, I:8.

551 *Liber AL*, I:8-9; II:2.

552 *Liber AL*, I:7; II:8.

553 *Liber AL*, I:49.

554 *Liber AL*, III:10.

555 *Liber AL*, III:41.

556 *Liber AL*, I:15; III:14,22.

557 *Liber AL*, I:15; III:14,43.

and riddles<sup>558</sup> all appear in *Liber AL*.

It is clear these traditions all had an influence on how Crowley would interpret and develop Thelema. Through much study of these various systems, they obviously had an influence on him. If *Liber AL vel Legis* is taken to be a product of part of Crowley's psyche, subconscious, or "higher self," one can clearly see the importance of these apparently divergent systems to Thelema. From all of this we may conclude that although Crowley formally established the tradition of Thelema with the reception of *Liber AL vel Legis* in April of 1904, it was not drawn out of thin air but from an amazingly eclectic variety of spiritual, intellectual, and intuitive sources. In fact, it is this rich background of relations to many divergent spiritual and intellectual traditions that makes Thelema founded in and a fulfillment of the wisdom of the past.

### **Part 3: The Influence of Buddhism on Aleister Crowley**

At the time Aleister Crowley was exploring the Buddhist tradition, Eastern religions were generally looked upon as primitive or exotic by the Western world. The first translation of the *Dhammapada* into English came only in 1869 from Max Müller. This translation was later featured more prominently in the "Sacred Books of the East" series in 1885, issued when Aleister Crowley was 10 years old. Crowley was one of the first Western students to seriously explore and explain Buddhism as a legitimate spiritual, psychological, and philosophical system.<sup>559</sup>

The influence of Buddhism on Aleister Crowley comes primarily from one man – Allan Bennett (1872-1923). Bennett was arguably the first Englishman to be accepted in a Buddhist monastery, he created the International Buddhist Society in 1903 in Burma, issued the periodical *Buddhism*, and led the first Buddhist mission to England in 1908.<sup>560</sup> In short, he was a very powerful and prominent figure in the early effort to

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<sup>558</sup> *Liber AL*, I:24,25,28,60; II:15,16,76, *et cetera*.

<sup>559</sup> Sutin, pg.4.

<sup>560</sup> Sutin, pg.97.

bring Buddhism to the West in the beginning of the 20th century.

Crowley first met Bennett at a Golden Dawn ritual ceremony. Bennett had been initiated into the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, a pseudo-Masonic and Hermetic fraternity, in 1894 and proceeded to the Second Order thereof in 1895; he was a talented magician and was very close to MacGregor Mathers, the head of the Order.<sup>561</sup> As described in Crowley's *Confessions*, while disrobing after the ritual, Bennett approached Crowley and said "Little brother, you have been meddling with the Goetia!" which are demons that are described in the famous 17th century grimoire known as the *Lemegeton*. Crowley said that he hadn't been doing anything of the sort, to which Bennett replied, "In that case, the Goetia has been meddling with you."<sup>562</sup> Clearly impressed by the man, Crowley called him the next day to receive instruction on the occult from him. Crowley moved into his flat on Chancery Lane and became Bennett's student in ceremonial magic and Buddhism for a while. They formed a harmonious relationship and, apparently, Bennett even saw fit to teach Crowley things from the Second Order of the Golden Dawn of which he formally was not entitled to learn.<sup>563</sup> Allan Bennett's asthma was complicated by London's climate so, combined with the fact that he also wished to study the Eastern traditions with the legitimate native teachers, he moved to Ceylon.<sup>564</sup>

Sutin observes that "Crowley was approaching the viewpoint of Theravada Buddhism" in 1900 as illustrated by the ideas in his poem "The Growth of God" from his stay in Mexico.<sup>565</sup> The poem has themes of suffering and dissolution of the self which is common in Buddhism. In April of 1901, Crowley stopped in San Francisco before his trip to meet with Bennett in Ceylon. While there, he spent most of his time in Chinatown and in a Buddhist temple, burning incense.<sup>566</sup> Crowley later

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561 Sutin, pg.64.

562 *Confessions*, chapter 20.

563 Sutin, pg.66.

564 Sutin, p.70.

565 Sutin, p.81.

566 Sutin, p.86.

arrived in Japan and attempted to enter Buddhist monasteries there, but he was turned away.<sup>567</sup> Both of these occurrences show the growing interest and absorption Crowley had in Buddhist studies in 1901 – just three years before the reception of *Liber AL vel Legis*.

In Ceylon, Bennett was the tutor of the sons of P. Ramanathan, a Shaivite Hindu (a sect that worships Shiva as the supreme God), who in turn taught Bennett the practices of yoga.<sup>568</sup> Crowley joined Bennett as a student of Ramanathan for merely a week, and then he suggested to Bennett that they continue their studies that they had begun earlier in London by moving to Kandy in the middle of Ceylon.<sup>569</sup> They left Ramanathan and studied yoga intensely in Kandy. Sutin claims that “fundamentally, most of what Crowley knew firsthand of yoga came from his six weeks with Bennett in Ceylon.”<sup>570</sup> At this time, Crowley claims to have attained the meditative state of *dhyana* on October 1 and 2 of 1901.<sup>571</sup> Very soon after this success, Crowley moved on to other pursuits – namely, preparing a climb of the infamous mountain K2 with Oscar Eckenstein during the spring of 1902.

In November of 1902, Bennett left to Burma to study in a Buddhist monastery – the first English man to do so – under the Lamma Sayadaw Kyoung, and Crowley departed to attempt the K2 climb. At this monastery, Bennett would take on the name of Bhikku Ananda Metteyya.<sup>572</sup>

In 1902, Crowley made his way back to Burma for about a week to visit Allan Bennett and speak about Buddhism and the practice of magic. Bennett had parted with the practice of magic and obviously turned strongly towards Buddhism.<sup>573</sup> Although at this time Crowley was strongly Buddhist in his ideals, he would not abandon the practice of magic

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567 Sutin, p.89.

568 Sutin, p.90.

569 Sutin, p.91.

570 Sutin, p.95.

571 Sutin, p.94.

572 Sutin, p.96-97.

573 Sutin, p.98.

completely like Bennett. Crowley would go on to publicize the practice of magic – renamed “magick” by him “to distinguish the Science of the Magi from all its counterfeits”<sup>574</sup> like stage tricks and illusions – by publishing such books as *Magick in Theory and Practice* in 1929.

The most important testaments to Crowley’s Buddhist thought in this period are his essays “Berashith” (1902), “The Three Characteristics” (1902), and “Science and Buddhism” (1903). In “Berashith,” which is the first Hebrew word in the book of Genesis from the Old Testament that is usually translated as “In the Beginning,” there is much evidence of Crowley’s Buddhist viewpoint during these years just prior to the reception of *Liber AL vel Legis*. The purpose of the essay, as explained in the first few lines, is “explaining the divergences between the three great forms of religion now existing in the world—Buddhism, Hinduism and Christianity, and of adapting them to ontological science by conclusions not mystical but mathematical.” Here we can see plainly that Crowley was not only profoundly influenced by these religious traditions but also simultaneously attempted to adopt a scientific standpoint in assessing their truths. There is a parenthetical note by Crowley in this essay which refers to Max Muller’s translation of the *Dhammapada*. These are some of the first proofs in writing we have that Crowley was familiar with the Buddhist doctrine – especially the *Dhammapada*. In 1929, he clearly called the *Dhammapada* “the best of the Buddhist classics”<sup>575</sup> in a reading list he was assigning to aspirants. Further, he shows knowledge of Schopenhauer who studied and had similar ideas to those of Buddhism. Crowley goes on in the essay “Berashith” to explain Buddha’s interesting attitude toward metaphysical questions, who generally says that they are irrelevant to relieving present suffering.

After a short paragraph attempting to explain the nature of *nirvana*, Crowley says, “On mature consideration, therefore, I confidently and deliberately take my refuge in the Triple Gem. Namo Tasso Bhagavato Arahato Sammasambuddhasa!” This, obviously a Buddhist

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<sup>574</sup> *Book Four: Part II*.

<sup>575</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, Appendix I.

saying, translates as “Hail unto Thee, the Blessed One, the Perfect One, the Enlightened One!” according to Crowley. The “Triple Gem” mentioned is also known as the “Three Jewels,” or the “Three Treasures,” and when said by Buddhists for refuge, they are often called the “Three Refuges.” They refer to the three things that a Buddhist takes refuge in: *buddha*, the *dhamma*, and the *sangha*.<sup>576</sup> These three refuges are explained in part XII of “Science and Buddhism,” an essay that will be investigated in more depth later.

*Buddha*, in this context, is most likely referring to the historical personage of the Buddha, Shakyamuni. Crowley affirms this when he says, “that there was once a man who found the Way is my encouragement.”

*Dhamma* (or *dharma*), as explained in first section of this essay, specifically refers to Buddha’s teachings and the practice thereof in this context.<sup>577</sup> Crowley defines *dhamma* as, “the Law underlying phenomena and its unchanging certainty; the Law given by the Buddha to show us the Way, the inevitable tendency to Persistence in Motion or Rest – and Persistence, even in Motion, negates change in consciousness – these observed orders of fact are our bases.”<sup>578</sup>

*Sangha* is a word that means “assembly” and refers to all those beings that have attained various stages of attainment; also, especially for the monastic Buddhists, the *sangha* is the community of ordained monks and nuns.<sup>579</sup> For taking refuge in the *sangha*, Crowley explains this means “...these are not isolated efforts on my part; although in one sense isolation is eternally perfect and can never be overcome (i.e. on normal planes), in another sense associates are possible and desirable. One third of humanity are Buddhists; add men of Science and we form an absolute majority; among Buddhists a very large proportion have deliberately gone out from social life of any kind to tread these paths of Research.”<sup>580</sup> The idea is that

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576 Carter, J.R. & M. Paliawadana, pg.78.

577 Carter, J.R. & M. Paliawadana, pg.72.

578 “Science and Buddhism,” part XII.

579 Carter, J.R. & M. Paliawadana, pg.78.

580 “Science and Buddhism,” part XII.

one takes refuge in the fact that there are many others on the same path as oneself.

Essentially, this succinctly shows Crowley's devotion to Buddhism in a phrase. To top it off, the entire essay is ended with the famous Buddhist mantra, "OM MANI PADME HOUM."

Further, Crowley took the name Abhavananda while in Ceylon, which means "the bliss of non-existence." He refers to himself as this name in various parts of the essay, "The Three Characteristics," which was first published in 1902. This "bliss of non-existence" refers to the Buddhist notion of *nirvana* which literally means "extinction" or "extinguishing." The essay "The Three Characteristics" is a series of fictional accounts illustrating various Buddhist ideas. The title of the essay itself refers to the fundamental Buddhist theory of the three characteristics of all things that exist: suffering (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and lack of independent self (*anatta*). This short writing is further proof of Crowley's strongly Buddhist viewpoint before *Liber AL's* reception.

In 1903, just a year prior to the reception of *Liber AL vel Legis*, Crowley wrote an essay entitled "Science and Buddhism." Its self-proclaimed purpose is, "to draw a strict comparison between the modern scientific conceptions of Phenomena and their explanation, where such exists, and the ancient ideas of the Buddhists; to show that Buddhism, alike in theory and practice, is a scientific religion; a logical superstructure on a basis of experimentally verifiable truth; and that its method is identical with that of science." Crowley hoped that this scientific approach to Buddhism would lead to a more empirical understanding of consciousness.<sup>581</sup>

One interesting example of Crowley's scientific approach to his studies comes when he starts to explain the tenets of Buddhism in this essay. He says, "The essential features of Buddhism have been summed up by the Buddha himself. To me, of course, what the Buddha said or did not say is immaterial; a thing is true or not true, whoever said it." We must

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581 Sutin, pg.108.

adopt this same attitude towards Thelema as well as Buddhism if we are to maintain a philosophy that is grounded in reality instead of blind faith and dogma. This is essential and what differentiates Thelema from many other systems that, instead of referencing reality and science, set up *a priori* ideals and attempt to conform the world they see to those ideals, no matter how absurd. An example of this is a Christian who interprets the Bible literally trying to explain the existence of dinosaur fossils – God must have put them there to test our faith! A scientific approach to consciousness allows us to maintain an interest in claims by Buddhists, Thelemites, and other traditions while reserving the right to discard claims if science and the test of experience prove the truth to be different.

Around this time of writing “Science and Buddhism,” Crowley had two reservations about his Buddhist principles: firstly, he knew that Hindu meditation practices were effective, and, secondly, he could not deny the reality of magic.<sup>582</sup> Crowley said, “I cannot deny that certain phenomena do accompany the use of certain rituals; I only deny the usefulness of such methods to the White Adept.”<sup>583</sup> By this he meant that it was obvious that magic was efficacious but he reserved whether they were useful to the “White Adept” which usually refers to one focused solely on spiritual attainment.

After *Liber AL vel Legis* was received in April of 1904, Crowley slowly abandoned his Buddhist principles and adopted the view of Thelema, although Thelema does not entirely contradict Buddhist teachings as will be shown. He did not do this without a profound sense of conflict, and it could be said that he never could completely overcome a certain conflict in his being with the system set forward in *Liber AL*. Sutin explains this tumultuous tension succinctly when he says, “The striking paradox of [Crowley] is that, for all his lifelong devotion to the cause of Thelema, he often allowed that he himself could not quite overcome an internal resistance to its teachings. He deemed it vicious, amoral, lamentable in its unremitting contempt for pity, crudely styled, disdainful

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582 Sutin, pg.108-109.

583 “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox I(4)*, p.177



toward his own Buddhist leanings – these complaints continued throughout the remaining decades of his life.”<sup>584</sup>

In 1906, Crowley met Alan Bennett (Ananda Metteyya) again in Burma but was now more skeptical of the moral restrictions enforced on Buddhists and its deterministic approach to enlightenment.<sup>585</sup> Bennett believed strongly that one’s *karma* largely determines one’s life, especially one’s ability for spiritual achievements. Crowley felt that this was theoretically sound but practically, if the individual will is believed to have no power, then “self-enervation alone could result.”<sup>586</sup> This shows the beginnings of Crowley’s failing faith in Buddhist principles.

After 1904 and the reception of *Liber AL*, the subject of Buddhism is treated by Crowley every now and then in places like “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox Vol.I No.1-10* around 1909-1913, his commentary to H.P. Blavatsky’s *The Voice of Silence* from *The Equinox Vol.III No.1* in 1919, the commentaries to *Liber LXV* written around 1923 in Tunisia, and his *Little Essays Toward Truth* in 1938. Obviously the principles of Buddhism left their indelible mark on Crowley who evidently contemplated their significance and sometimes referred various concepts and states of consciousness found in the study of Thelema against ideas in Buddhism for the rest of his life.

Essentially, we can see the profound influence Buddhism had on Crowley, especially in the years immediately preceding the reception of *Liber AL vel Legis*. For this reason the importance of understanding the similarities between Buddhism and Thelema, which is based around *Liber AL vel Legis*, becomes particularly apparent. An understanding of Buddhism will complement our understanding of Thelema and, likewise, an understanding of Thelema will complement our understanding of Buddhism.

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584 Sutin, pg.139.

585 Sutin, pg.162-163.

586 Ibid.

## Part 4: *Liber AL's* View of Buddhism

The views expressed in *Liber AL vel Legis*, especially in the third chapter, can be considered to be “harsh” to some. This hostility in *Liber AL* becomes especially apparent when Horus (the Hawk-headed sky and solar god of the Egyptians), under the form of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, curses many foreign traditions in these memorable lines:

*“I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men. Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed & blind him. With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din. Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds.”*<sup>587</sup>

Firstly, it should be known that Crowley admits Hinduism (“the Indian”), Buddhism, Confucianism or perhaps Taoism (“Mongol”), and Jewish Qabalah (“Din”) are, in theory, “metaphysically and mystically comprehensive enough to assure... the possession of much truth.”<sup>588</sup> He notes that these traditions have their flesh attacked unlike Jesus, who represents Christianity and has his eyes attacked, and Mohammed who represents Islam and has his face attacked. In this case, the eyes and face represent the point-of-view of the tradition and the flesh represents their practice. This indicates that in those whose flesh was only attacked – the Hindu, Confucianist, Qabalist, and Buddhist traditions – “the metaphysics, or point of view, is correct... but the practice imperfect.”<sup>589</sup> Essentially, Crowley is saying that there are many pretenders, false gurus, and general misunderstanding and imperfection in the practice of these traditions. To be true, every single tradition has its share of extremists and charlatans; there are always a few people that can give an ideology a bad name.

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<sup>587</sup> *Liber AL*, III:49-51.

<sup>588</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:53.

<sup>589</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:53.

Unfortunately, Thelema is not excluded from this.

The reason Horus attacks Jesus' eyes is because, "it is the eyes of 'Jesus' – his point of view – that must be destroyed."<sup>590</sup> The reason the face of Mohammed is attacked is explained:

*“Mohammed's point of view is wrong too; but he needs no such sharp correction as 'Jesus'. It is his face – his outward semblance – that is to be covered with His wings. The tenets of Islam, correctly interpreted, are not far from our Way of Life and Light and Love and Liberty. This applies especially to the secret tenets. The external creed is mere nonsense suited to the intelligence of the peoples among whom it was promulgated; but even so, Islam is magnificent in practice. Its code is that of a man of courage and honour and self-respect.”*<sup>591</sup>

Secondly, it should be noted that Aleister Crowley admitted, “The third chapter [of *Liber AL vel Legis*] seemed to me gratuitously atrocious.”<sup>592</sup> The book challenged many of his beliefs at the time of its reception, especially ideas like compassion in Buddhism, which will be discussed later. It is plain to see that Crowley deeply respected all traditions of the past (with a healthy skepticism as well) and was an extremely vigorous reader in all subjects, so this attack must have also seemed needlessly violent. This respect Crowley had for other traditions makes it obvious that these lines did not come from a conscious attempt to smear the religions of the past.

Further, earlier in *Liber AL* it is said, “Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little...”<sup>593</sup> Crowley comments succinctly on this line saying, “All religions have some truth.

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590 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:51.

591 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:52.

592 Sutin, pg.130.

593 *Liber AL*, I:56.

We possess all intellectual truth, and some, not all, mystic truth.”<sup>594</sup> We can clearly see that *Liber AL* does not entirely condemn all other past religions, philosophies, truths, *et cetera*. Using common sense, we can understand that the traditions of the past – especially those named in *AL* III:49-54 – contain some truths and insights but also much falsity, obscurity, and dogma. Thelema distinguishes itself from the rest of these traditions by holding a scientific attitude toward phenomena. If we discover facts in the world that contradict our interpretations of *Liber AL*, it is apparent that one must either acknowledge the interpretation of the line is incorrect or the line itself is incorrect and must be superseded by current knowledge. We must adapt our point-of-view to the facts, not the facts to our point-of-view.

This scientific attitude in Thelema is precisely what is being implied in the lengthy quotation of curses that heads this chapter. Crowley asserts, “Thelema is Magick, and Magick is Science, the antithesis of the religious hypothesis... Also, see *The Book of the Law*, III:49-54.”<sup>595</sup> Crowley asserts that Thelema is “the antithesis of the religious hypothesis” and then cites the exact lines that are quoted at the beginning of this section (*AL* III:49-54). This cursing by Horus of all these religious traditions is now understood to be against their religious theories and dogmatism. Further, Crowley explains, “It is particularly to be noted that Magick, so often mixed up in the popular idea of a religion, has nothing to do with it. It is, in fact, the exact opposite of religion; it is, even more than Physical Science, its irreconcilable enemy.”<sup>596</sup> Thelema is to be established under scientific lines, as previously noted.

Coming back to the cursing of the past religious traditions in *Liber AL* III:49-54, we’ve understood these to be attacks against imperfect practice and the religious dogma and superstitions found in each. Further meaning of these curses can be derived from the first phrase mentioned: “I am in the secret four-fold word that is a blasphemy against all the gods of

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594 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:56.

595 “Antecedents of Thelema,” available in *The Revival of Magick*.

596 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 6.

men.” Crowley explains, “The evident interpretation of this is to take the [secret four-fold] word to be 'Do what thou wilt,' which is a secret word, because its meaning for every man is his own inmost secret. And it is the most profound blasphemy possible against all 'gods of men,' because it makes every man his own God.”<sup>597</sup> Now we understand that the “four-fold word” is “Do what thou wilt” (which “there is no law beyond” in Thelema) is a “blasphemy” and “curse” because it establishes every individual as their own God. Although this is not much of a blasphemy for a non-theistic tradition like Buddhism, it certainly is to any that holds an external God to be supreme. One important aspect of Thelema is that it does not depend on grace from God, grace from guru, initiations from esoteric societies for figureheads, or anything “external” in the normal sense.

## Part 5: War & Conquering

*“I forbid argument. Conquer! That is enough.”*<sup>598</sup>

*“My disciples are proud and beautiful; they are strong and swift; they rule their way like mighty conquerors.”*<sup>599</sup>

We have already encountered Horus – known in various forms in *Liber AL vel Legis* as Hoor-paar-kraat, Heru-pa-kraath, Heru-Ra-Ha, and most commonly as Ra-Hoor-Khuit – while discussing the “curses” in the previous section. In the beginning of the third chapter of *Liber AL*, Ra-Hoor-Khuit declares, “Now let it be first understood that I am a god of War and of Vengeance.”<sup>600</sup>

These martial themes of war, vengeance, and conquest are apparent throughout *Liber AL*, especially in the third chapter: they deserve further investigation and understanding before we reject it all as

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<sup>597</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:49.

<sup>598</sup> *Liber AL*, III:11.

<sup>599</sup> *Liber Tzaddi*, line 24.

<sup>600</sup> *Liber AL*, III:3.

immature squabbling. In this age where humanity has gone through two World Wars and many more that are still continuing, humanity largely sees war as monstrous and certainly not spiritual.

The notions of war as chivalrous and honorable have long since passed. M. Brewster Smith, psychology professor and former president of the American Psychological Association, once clearly summarized this idea when he said, “My generation’s experience of war – World War II and since – involved little heroism and much wretched slogging it out in grim necessity and loyalty to one’s buddies... Since the defeat of the Axis powers of World War II, it has become uncommon in the world of Westernized nations to hear war idealized as an ennobling discipline: Now we cast our military adventures and our preparation for them in the guise of reluctant defense.”<sup>601</sup> After all of these horrors, one might ask oneself whether it is possible to rationally come to terms with these ideas of war in ourselves and the world.

Thelema is one of many traditions that attempt to wed the shunned martial aspects of the universe to the spiritual aspects. This has a long tradition with the famous knight-monks of the Knights Templar, the “engaged Buddhists” of the Vietnam War, the *mujahideen* of Islam, the “Sacred Path of the Warrior” of the more modern Shambhala movement, and not to mention the nearly inexhaustible amount of warrior symbols and archetypes from around the world. This includes the epic story of Arjuna on the battlefield in the *Bhagavad Gita* of Hinduism, the plethora of stories about Knights winning some honor in the Medieval Ages, and even the symbolic *kirpan* dagger worn by Sikhs.

Even Jesus, whom many think is the ideal of the “meek and mild,” once said “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.”<sup>602</sup> Aleister Crowley reinforces this motif of the spiritual warrior in the Thelemic tradition when he poetically proclaims, “Mighty and terrible and glorious as [Love] is, however, it is but the

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601 Smith, M. Brewster. (1992). “Nationalism, Ethnocentrism, and the New World Order.”

602 Matthew 10:34.

pennon upon the sacred lance of Will, the damascened inscription upon the swords of the Knight-monks of Thelema.”<sup>603</sup>

## War & Conflict

*Liber AL vel Legis*, as mentioned in earlier installments, is not merely a step into the future but is also a fulfillment of the wisdom of the past. In the past, war was respected and understood differently than in these days. Joseph Campbell explains about the cultures of the past:

*“There is... the cruel fact to be recognized that killing is the precondition of all living whatsoever: life lives on life, eats life, and would otherwise not exist. To some this terrible necessity is fundamentally unacceptable, and such people have, at times, brought forth mythologies of a way to perpetual peace. However, those have not been the people generally who have survived in what Darwin termed the universal struggle for existence. Rather, it has been those who have been reconciled to the nature of life on this earth. Plainly and simply: it has been the nations, tribes, and peoples bred to mythologies of war that have survived to communicate their life-supporting mythic lore to descendants.”*<sup>604</sup>

In this sense, war is understood to be a sort of symbol of the struggle of life and the necessary expression thereof. Those who affirm life and its struggle for existence are those who “have been reconciled to the nature of life on this earth,” and Thelema represents one of the most modern fulfillments of this life-affirming view of the universe.

Crowley explained his distaste for the motif of denying or distorting this life-affirming view when he said, “My primary objection to Christianity is 'gentle Jesus, meek and mild,' the pacifist, the conscientious objector, the Tolstoyan, the 'passive resister.'... 'Jesus' himself, in the legend, 'set his face as a flint to go to Jerusalem,' with the foreknowledge

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603 *Liber II The Message of the Master Therion.*

604 Campbell, Joseph. (1972). *Myths to Live By*, p.169.

of his fate. But Christians have not emphasized that heroism since the Crusades. The sloppy sentimental Jesus of the Sunday-school is the only survivor; and the War killed him, thank Ares!”<sup>605</sup> Here Crowley implies that the true image of Jesus should be one who “set his face as a flint to go to Jerusalem” without fear or weakness, which brings back once again the images of Jesus bringing “not... peace, but a sword.”<sup>606</sup>

We see that a “mythology,” a symbolic understanding of the universe, which embraces war is one that acknowledges the inherent conflict in life but nonetheless affirms it all. Crowley emphatically declares, “All leaders of men are active, finding pleasure even in toil, hardship, and defeat: *they accept every Event as proper to their chosen course of action, and conquer even when they are beaten down for the moment. They die at the crisis of the battle, with failure certain; yet they rejoice, having lived and loved and fought and done their will;* those for whose cause they fought will reap at last where they have sowed”<sup>607</sup> (emphasis added). This attitude of conquering all obstacles and, most importantly, rejoicing in both happiness and hardship is an important angle to interpret the use of “conquering” and “war” in the tradition of Thelema and the text of *Liber AL vel Legis*.

Further concerning war, Campbell explains, “Heraclitus declared war to be the creator of all great things; and in the words again of Spengler, 'The one who lacks courage to be a hammer comes off in the role of the anvil.' Many a sensitive mind, reacting to this unwelcome truth, has found nature intolerable, and has cried down all those best fit to live as 'wicked,' 'evil,' or 'monstrous,' setting up instead, as a counter-ideal, the model of him who turns the other cheek and whose kingdom is not of this world.”<sup>608</sup> In this sense, the mythologies of “war” are understood to be “life-affirming” or “world-affirming” in contrast to those mythologies of “peace” which posit a perfect land in another world. Examples of this are

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605 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:57.

606 Matthew 10:34.

607 *Djeridensis Working*, II:18.

608 Campbell, p.170.



abound in all cultures of the world. Christianity's notion of heaven in the clouds is the most obvious reference, but there are also other traditions that attempt to escape this world including Pure Land Buddhism, or Amidism, which is a sect of Mahayana Buddhism that believes one is supposedly guaranteed rebirth into the pure land of enlightenment if one merely has devotion toward or prays to "Amitabha Buddha." These are both views of religious traditions that cause the aspirant to look outside of him or herself for salvation, an attitude fundamentally rejected by Thelema.

As asserted in the previous section, one important aspect of Thelema is that it does not depend on grace from God, grace from guru, initiations from esoteric societies, from figureheads, or anything "external" in the normal sense. *Liber AL* summarizes its view on this in the line, "Every man and every woman is a star."<sup>609</sup> Explaining this important facet of Thelemic philosophy, Crowley says:

*"We are not to regard ourselves as base beings, without whose sphere is Light or 'God'. Our minds and bodies are veils of the Light within. The uninitiate is a 'Dark Star', and the Great Work for him is to make his veils transparent by 'purifying' them. This 'purification' is really 'simplification'; it is not that the veil is dirty, but that the complexity of its folds makes it opaque. The Great Work therefore consists principally in the solution of complexes. Everything in itself is perfect, but when things are muddled, they become 'evil'."*<sup>610</sup>

This concisely lays forth the life-affirming and especially individually-affirming message of *Liber AL* and Thelema. Essentially, in Thelema, divinity is understood to be inherent within, except it is veiled in a complexity of "folds," which are essentially one's psychological "complexes." This is an entirely valid psychological approach as well,

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609 *Liber AL*, I:3.

610 New Comment to *Liber AL*, I:8.

which was later taken up by later individuals including Jung and his ruminations about “individuation” and “complexes” and Freud’s notions of “repression” and “neurosis.” This all relates back to the maxim “Every man and every woman is a star” in that every man and every woman is a “light unto themselves,” a star (“Khabs”), with no absolute need for exterior powers like grace of God or guru to fulfill their unique will.

## Conquering

Now we will begin looking at the lines in the *Dhammapada* which talk about the notion of conquering. The most important lines of the *Dhammapada* that have a bearing on this subject come in the eighth chapter:

*“If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors. One’s own self conquered is better than all other people; not even a god, a Gandharva [animal spirits], not Mara [Death and the tempter] with Brahman [limitless Godhead] could change into defeat the victory of a man who has vanquished himself, and always lives under restraint.”*<sup>611</sup>

These lines synthesize the previous ruminations about the necessity of accepting all facets of life including conflict, and it forms a new and extremely important view of “conquering.” Before, we understood that the self is a “warrior” who rejoices in struggles and hardships. Now we can understand that although there are many external obstacles, the one’s which are most important and most difficult to conquer are the internal obstacles. Once again, Buddha emphasizes this by saying “If one man conquer in battle a thousand times thousand men, and if another conquer himself, he is the greatest of conquerors.” Crowley thought this line so important that he said in regards to it, “This is the whole of Buddhism, as

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611 *Dhammapada*, chapter 8, lines 103-105

it is of any and all systems of self-control.”<sup>612</sup> Further, he explains that “The Dharma [the Law of Buddhism] is to be attained to by the wise, each one for himself. Salvation rests on Work, and not on Faith, not in reforming the so-called fallen, but in conquering oneself.”<sup>613</sup> The *dharma* is here simply the path of illuminated consciousness, of one who, in terms of Thelema, is doing his or her Will.

A question may arise from this: is Thelema itself “a system of self-control” that Crowley refers to, like Buddhism? Crowley himself answers this question quite clearly when he asserts, “About 90% of Thelema, at a guess, is nothing *but* self-discipline. One is only allowed to do anything and everything so as to have more scope for exercising that virtue,”<sup>614</sup> and also, “What is true for every School is equally true for every individual. Success in life, on the basis of the Law of Thelema, implies severe self-discipline.”<sup>615</sup> The difference in self-discipline of Thelema from Buddhism is that, in Thelema, there are no *a priori* “wrong” actions except those that somehow restrict or impede one's Will.

This exact assertion of conquering oneself can be seen paralleled in the famous yogi Swami Vivekananda's proclamation, “He who conquers self conquers all.” It may also be seen in the famous magician Eliphas Levi's declaration, “The magnum opus is pre-eminently the creation of man by himself, that is, the full and complete conquest which he can make of his faculties and his future; it is pre-eminently the perfect emancipation of his will.”<sup>616</sup> Levi here acknowledges that this conquering of oneself is precisely what is needed to “perfectly emancipate” the Will.

With this, I end with a question posed by Nietzsche's “Zarathustra” that I pose to the readers of this essay: “Art thou the victorious one, the self-conquerer, the ruler of thy passions, the master of thy virtues? Thus do I ask thee.”<sup>617</sup>

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612 “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox I:4*.

613 “The Temple of Solomon the King” in *The Equinox I:4*.

614 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 70.

615 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 8.

616 Levi, Eliphas. *Transcendental Magic*, chapter 12.

617 Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, chapter 20.

## CHAPTER 23

# THELEMIC MYSTICISM

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*This article was written in 2013 e.v. as a distillation of my knowledge and experience of mysticism in general. It is intended to be devoid of any particular dogma but with a special focus on Thelemic terms of symbols.*

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## INTRODUCTION

The intent of this essay is to set forth the basic theoretical principles and practical methods of Mysticism in the clearest possible language. This will therefore be neither academic nor exhaustive in its extent.

The intended audiences are those who want to learn about Thelemic Mysticism or those who are aware of Thelemic Mysticism but may seek further guidance on their Paths. It is hoped that this essay will help clarify the definition and basic tenets of Mysticism, encourage those who are already aspirants to this Truth, and potentially aid aspirants in avoiding various detours and pitfalls along the Mystic Path.

Since the Mystic Goal is universal, much of the language in this introduction will be generally applicable to all forms of Mysticism, regardless of religion or culture. Nonetheless, since the focus of this essay is upon *Thelemic* Mysticism which is a particular breed or “flavor” of Mysticism, there will be various quotations interspersed throughout the essay from the Holy Books of Thelema and other important writings of The Master Therion.

This is to both help show that Thelema reinforces the same essential principles of Mysticism as well as to show the particular language and style used throughout Thelemic writings.

## What is Mysticism?

Mysticism is a name for both the Goal and the Path to the Goal of the Mystic.

As a Goal: **Mysticism is the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual goal/truth.**

Since the Mystic Goal involves a direct experience, it can also be called the Mystic Experience or the Mystical Experience.

The Mystic Goal cannot be accurately named because it is beyond the normal distinctions that are inherently made by names and definitions. No name, description, or definition could ever be complete, so the Mystic Goal is ultimately nameless. Though the many names and metaphors for this Goal are necessarily partial, the Goal itself is always the same regardless of whether it is called “crossing the Abyss,” “enlightenment,” “cosmic consciousness,” “samadhi,” “union with the Absolute,” “union with God,” “union of subject and object,” “union of microcosm and macrocosm,” “union of opposites,” “attaining Nirvana,” “accomplishing Great Work” or whatever else.

*“Now the Great Work is one, and the Initiation is one, and the Reward is one, however diverse are the symbols wherein the Unutterable is clothed.”*  
–Liber Causae, line 5

*“In the true religion there is no sect.”*  
–Liber Librae, line 21

Since the Mystic Goal is the same regardless of time, place, or culture (despite the outward multiplicity of forms), Thelemic

Mysticism is nothing new; it is merely a particular set of symbols and methods that achieve the same Truth as every other seeker of enlightenment in human history.

Thelemic Mysticism is aware of the many strands of Mysticism throughout human history, and it is therefore able to see beyond the partial truths, symbols, and language in which the Mystic Truth is explained by people of various temperaments and cultures.

*“Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little...”*

–Liber AL, I:56

In terms of Thelemic language, Crowley sometimes equates “Mysticism” with “Yoga,” the latter of which he defines simply as “Union.” Insofar as Mysticism may be understood as Union with God (or the Absolute, or Truth, or Reality, or whatever else), “Mysticism” and “Yoga” are essentially the same and the terms are interchangeable in virtually all cases of Crowley mentioning them.

**As a Path: Mysticism is the Science and Art of achieving the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual truth or goal.**

There are many metaphors for the Path, “the Path” being one of them. The metaphors can only be maps, and they plot and guide the progress of the individual on her way to the Goal.

*“In all systems of religion is to be found a system of Initiation, which may be defined as the process by which a man comes to learn that unknown Crown.”*

–Liber Causae, line 2

The Path itself is the various means of discipline and training for attaining the Mystic Goal, and the methods are often of the

character of meditation and/or devotion.

All cultures have some kind of system of spiritual training – often called “initiation” in Thelema – yet different systems have different methods and different languages for talking about the Path and the Goal. Nevertheless, the Mystic Goal itself is always essentially the same.

*“There must ever be division in the word. For the colours are many, but the light is one... Therefore do ye fret yourselves because of this. Be not contented with the image... Debate not of the image, saying Beyond! Beyond!”*

–Liber LXV, I:2-4, 7-9

A “Mystic” is any individual who has achieved this Goal or is on the Path to the Goal. Mystics are not content with merely having intellectual knowledge or emotional feelings about Truth, Reality, God, the One, or the Absolute (or whatever name suits you best).

Whether by choice or being called in some way, Mystics are those who strive toward the *direct experience* of Truth itself and, with the right attitude and effort, attain this experience. If we make the analogy that the Mystic Goal or Truth is like fire, the philosopher is content thinking about and conceptualizing fire, the scientist is content observing and manipulating fire, the romantic is content feeling love toward and writing poetry about fire, but the Mystic is only content in knowing the fire by being directly burnt and consumed by it.

This Mystic Experience or

*“Ye shall comprehend, when, rising above Reason, which is but a manipulation of the Mind, ye come to pure Knowledge by direct perception of the Truth.”*

–De Lege Libellum

*“There is a physio-logical (or pathological; never mind now!) state which I call Samadhi; and that state is as real – in relation to man – as sleep, or intoxication, or death.”*

–The Soldier and the Hunchback

Mystic Goal is not some transcendent world, object, or state that is somehow removed or distinct from everything else. It is only “beyond this world” by metaphor, not in reality. It is an experience that can (and has) been attained consciously while individuals are still alive and awake. Mystics who attain the Mystic Goal are not physically annihilated and most can and do still function within the world. The Mystic Experience is potentially available to everyone if they apply the right methods, just like cells are invisible but available to be perceived if one properly uses a microscope.

Direct experience means not hearing about the Mystic Goal from other people, thinking about it intellectually, or feeling good (or bad) feelings about the idea; it means actually bringing this Goal into our conscious awareness. Direct experience means that we experience the Mystic Goal through a shift in our way of perceiving, a change in our perception itself. We directly experience what the Mystic “Unity” is like in the Mystic Goal in the same way we directly experience what sleep is like in sleeping. It is intimate, immediate, and un-mistakable in the same way a headache or intoxication are directly perceived in an intimate, immediate, and un-mistakable way.

The Mystic Goal is sometimes called “Samadhi” and used in an analogy such as Dreaming:Waking::Waking:Samadhi; because it refers to a “state” of consciousness in this way, this is why the Mystic Goal is sometimes called the “Mystic Consciousness” or Unified/Undifferentiated/Cosmic Consciousness.

*“I love you; I would sprinkle you with the divine dew of immortality. This immortality is no vain hope beyond the grave: I offer you the certain consciousness of bliss. I offer it at once, on earth; before an hour hath struck upon the bell, ye shall be with Me in the Abodes that are beyond Decay.”*

–Liber Tzaddi, lines 28-30



## What Mysticism isn't

Mysticism is only the pursuit of the Mystic Goal, **the direct experience of union with God** (as it is most commonly called in our Judeo-Christian, Western world). It is nothing else.

Therefore, Mysticism is **NOT** these things:

Senses: Mysticism is not the sensory experience of anything, including any tactile feeling, any taste, any smell, any sight, or any sound.

- This is why virtually every single Mystic mentions the necessity of restraining and/or transcending the senses in some way.

- Sensory phenomena may accompany the Path and Goal of Mysticism, and they may even

prove useful in various ways, but they are not the Goal itself.

- Sensory phenomena are incredibly “intimate” in that they are felt directly, so there are many sensory metaphors and symbols used in Mysticism (e.g. “seeing God,” “tasting the Divine kisses,” “hearing the voice of God,” “smelling the perfume of God,” “touching” or even sexually uniting with God, *et cetera*)

“Thou art delicious beyond all taste and touch, Thou art not-to-be-beheld for glory, Thy voice is beyond the Speech and the Silence and the Speech therein, and Thy perfume is of pure ambergris, that is not weighed against the finest gold of the fine gold.”  
–Liber LXV, III:19

Intellect: Mysticism is not the intellectual knowledge of anything, including math, science, logic, pop culture, and Mysticism itself (knowing about the Goal is not the same as achieving the Goal; the map is not the territory).

“*Since truth is supra-rational, it is incommunicable in the language of reason.*”  
–Postcards to Probationers

- Mysticism is neither Reason nor Faith. The Mystic Goal is often explained to be “beyond” Reason in this way, i.e. intellect, knowledge, logic, or “ratiocination,” and Mysticism has nothing to do with “faith” in the ordinary sense of accepting propositions without evidence. The Mystic demands the supreme evidence of direct experience; they demand certainty, not faith.
- Mysticism has nothing to do with knowledge derived through science (empiricism) or through logic (rationalism); Mysticism is concerned with one special class of knowledge, the direct experience of Truth. To distinguish this from normal knowledge, it is often called Wisdom or Understanding or Knowledge with a capital “K” (or “true” or “perfect” is prefixed to the term to make it, for example, “True Wisdom” or “Perfection of Wisdom”).
- Knowledge may accompany the Path and Goal of Mysticism, and it may even prove useful in various ways, but it is not the Goal itself.

Emotion: Mysticism is not heightened emotions or any other form of emotional experience (heightened, dulled, strange, unique, potent, expansive, contractive, *et cetera*).

- This is why virtually every Mystic mentions the necessity of “taming the lower nature” in order to see the Truth; otherwise one’s vision is clouded.

*“Every emotion is an obsession; the most horrible of blasphemies is to attribute any emotion to God in the macrocosm, or to the pure soul in the microcosm. How can that which is self-existent, complete, be ‘moved?’”*  
 –Book Four, Part 2, chapter 8

- Emotion may accompany the Path and Goal of Mysticism, and it may even prove useful in various ways, but it is not the Goal itself.

Visions: Mysticism is not visions of any kind, including the most

spectacular spiritual visions of 1,000-armed bodhisattvas, the most dazzling display of 1,000-eyed winged beasts, or even the most lofty visions seen in Crowley's *The Vision and the Voice*.

- Visions necessarily deal with combinations of the above – sense, intellect, and emotion – although they are in the “interior world”; visions are the “inner” parallel of our various sensory experiences, and – to the Mystic – they are equally blinds to the Light of Truth.
- Virtually all Mystics of every culture affirm that the ultimate Mystic Goal is beyond names, beyond forms, and beyond all images. In short, a vision of a bodhisattva does not make you a bodhisattva; a vision of Krishna does not make you united with Him; a vision of Horus does not make you the Crowned and Conquering Child. *Only* through the Mystic's *direct experience* of the Mystic Truth does one become a bodhisattva, become united with Krishna, become the Crowned and Conquering Child, or whatever metaphor resonates with you.

Being a Moral Paragon: Mysticism is not about being a moral paragon, a shining example of virtuousness that is associated with being a “saint”; it is not about “being a good person” or even “being a spiritual person.” The various virtues and vices of common religion have nothing inherently to do with Mysticism. Those vices that prevent the full attainment of the Mystic Goal are vices, and those virtues that aid the full attainment of the Mystic Goal are virtues, but these are seen as means toward the end of the Mystic Goal. The Mystic does not embark and travel on the Mystic Path in order to be praised by his colleagues or to be seen as a shining example of morality. Especially within Thelemic Mysticism, morality is simply the

*“Morality is immaterial; for both Socrates and Mohammed were Christs... Since the ultimate truth of teleology is unknown, all codes of morality are arbitrary. Therefore the student has no concern with ethics as such.”*

–Postcards to Probationers

means toward the end of attaining the Mystic Goal, and since everyone is unique, the morality may be unique for each individual. This does not mean that Mystics do not care about vice and virtue, but they see them specifically in the context of hindering or helping their attainment of the direct experience of God/Truth/the Absolute. Contrary to being moral paragons, many mystics are actually criticized, persecuted, and reviled by the masses for their “unnatural,” “uncivilized,” or “blasphemous” behavior. Famous mystics like Meister Eckhart, Mansur Al-Hallaj, and even Christ himself were persecuted for their blasphemy, and the “outrageous” behavior of mystics is so pervasive there is even a term for it: “crazy wisdom.”

Causing Change in the World: Mysticism is NOT the change of anything within the world. The bestowal of gifts or alms, the incitement of political change, acts of kindness and malice, the use of divination to ascertain and affect the future, and it is even the progress through any kind of organization (whether “mundane” like a corporation or “sacred” such as an esoteric organization) have nothing to do with the Mystic Path or the Mystic Goal. It is for this reason that Mysticism is often distinguished from Magick, although they inevitably intertwine, interconnect, and – in certain ways of thinking about and enacting Magick – have the same Goal. Mysticism is ONLY the Goal or the Path toward the Goal of direct experience of the Absolute, the ultimate spiritual Truth, the quintessential Mystic Goal.

## **Magick vs. Mysticism**

Magick is often defined in a way that complements or contrasts Mysticism. *Liber ABA: Book Four*, the Magnum Opus of Aleister Crowley, has four parts: the first part is titled “Mysticism” and the second part is titled “Magick.”

**Magick** is famously defined by Crowley as “the Science and Art of

causing Change in conformity with Will.” Magick therefore involves many methods whereby the Magician may progressively expand, conquer, and enrich her Will. The Magician is concerned with more Power to execute her Will through, essentially, more control (of body and mind), more knowledge (of both self and the world), and more skill.

*“The aspiring Magician only analyses himself for the purpose of finding new worlds to conquer... the whole of Magick [is] the science and art of extending, first in oneself, one’s own faculties, secondly in external nature their hidden characteristics.”*

–Magick Without Tears, ch. 83

**Mysticism** is defined above as “the Science and Art of achieving the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual truth or goal.” Therefore, there is no Goal other than attaining this direct experience. Anything that hinders the attainment of this Goal through distraction from the Goal is not part the Path. Anything that helps attain the Goal by focusing further upon the Goal is part of the Path. It is for this reason that most Mystical systems of training involve the divestment of most things that will distract the aspirant through their senses (food, luxury), emotions (sex, intoxication), and minds (mundane knowledge, concern about worldly affairs); it is also for this reason that most Mystical systems do not even bother with “magical powers” (known as *siddhis* in India) even though they are naturally acquired by many along the Path.

Some may (rightfully) argue that Magick and Mysticism are not as opposed as stated here. It is true that Magick and Mysticism both terminate at the same Truth. It is a certain perspective of Magick that is opposed to Mysticism. Magick is sometimes divided into “thaumaturgy” and “theurgy.”

- *Thaumaturgy* – literally “miracle work” – involves causing changes in the world based on magical knowledge and skill including but not limited to divining the future, obtaining money,

obtaining love, seeing remote places, virtually any psychic phenomena, or even various ways of improving or perfecting the body, mind, emotions, and will of the individual. This is the type of Magick that is distinguished from and opposed to Mysticism.

- *Theurgy* is the magical practice of achieving union with the Source, the Divine, the Godhead, the One (*et cetera*). Insofar as Magick is “theurgic,” its aims are identical with those of Mysticism. This is the Magick that is only different in Path but not Goal from Mysticism. The “theurgic” perspective on Magick is the one Crowley takes when he writes at the beginning of *Magick in Theory & Practice*, “There is a single main definition of the object of all magical Ritual. It is the uniting of the Microcosm with the Macrocosm. The Supreme and Complete Ritual is therefore the Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel; or, in the language of Mysticism, Union with God.”

To the Magician, works of thaumaturgy are useful to help expand the power and dominion of the individual’s sphere of influence. To the Mystic, works of thaumaturgy are distractions at best and delusions that perpetuate falsehood at worst. Thaumaturgy involves most or all of those things that Mysticism is NOT as explained previously. Mystics are concerned with the Mystic Goal and nothing else, and all other things – magical or otherwise – are distractions from that Goal.

## Summary

- As a Goal, Mysticism is the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual goal/truth.
- The Mystic Goal is ultimately ineffable or unnameable. All cultures have various languages of describing this Mystic Goal, but

all Mystics of all times and places attain to the same Truth despite the variety of ways of speaking about it.

- As a Path, Mysticism is the Science and Art of achieving the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual truth or goal.
- Anyone who walks this Mystic Path and/or achieves this Mystic Goal is a “Mystic.”
- Mysticism is a direct experience, or a state of being, that is available to anyone through the right attitude and efforts. This direct experience is not something outside of the world in another realm or beyond death: it is an experience available to each individual while they are consciously aware and alive.
- Direct experience means that we experience the Mystic Goal in our own awareness, through an intimate and unmistakable change/shift in our perception itself, rather than merely hearing about the Mystic Goal, thinking about it, or conceptualizing it.
- Mysticism is only the attainment of the Mystic Goal. It is NOT the senses, the intellect, the emotions, having visions, being a moral paragon, or even causing change in the world in any way.
- Insofar as Magick is “thaumaturgic,” dealing with changes and powers within the world, it is distinct from Mysticism. Insofar as Magick is “theurgic,” seeking union with the Divine, it is identical with Mysticism.

Despite these definitions and clarifications, it is still yet to be seen exactly what the Mystic Goal really is and what the Mystic Path really involves. The next two parts of this essay will delve further into (a) the

Mystic Goal and (b) the Mystic Path – that is, they will deal with (a) Mysticism in Theory and (b) Mysticism in Practice.

## **MYSTICISM IN THEORY**

Conceived as a Goal, Mysticism is the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual goal/truth.

### **The Essential Nature of the Mystic Goal**

What is the basic, essential nature of this spiritual “Truth” or spiritual “Goal”? The Mystic Goal involves transcending our normal consciousness of multiplicity and duality to attain the Mystic Consciousness of Unity.

Our normal consciousness is called “Many” or “Two.”

• Many: We are usually aware of many “things” in the world, including the multiplicity of objects of our awareness. Trees are different from tables which are different from birds which are different from clouds, *et cetera*.

*“This Abyss is also called 'Hell,' and 'The Many.' Its name is 'Consciousness,' and 'The Universe,' among men.”*  
-The Book of Lies, chapter 10

• Two: Our normal awareness or consciousness is sometimes called “Two” or “duality” because there is a fundamental split in our awareness between (a) our self and (b) the world. This is sometimes expressed as the opposition between subject and object or the opposition between ego and non-ego.

**The Mystic Goal involves transcending our normal consciousness of Many/Two and achieving the consciousness of Unity/One.**



- The Goal is called Unity because it refers to unification of consciousness: this is the unification of the multiplicity of objects of awareness as well as the more fundamental unification between the subject and object(s) of awareness.

- Since the awareness of a “self” or “ego” requires some kind of distinction between it and something else, the self/ego is said to “die” or “dissolve” or “merge” in this Unity.

*“Understand now that in yourselves is a certain discontent. Analyse well its nature: at the end is in every case one conclusion. The ill springs from the belief in two things, the Self and the Not-Self, and the conflict between them. This also is a restriction of the Will... Ultimately, therefore, the problem is how to destroy this perception of duality, to attain to the apprehension of unity.”*  
–De Lege Libellum

- Since there is no distinction between anything, including self and other, this Unity is sometimes called “Non-duality.” In defining the Mystic Goal by what it is *not* (i.e. not duality), the name “non-duality” avoids defining the Mystic Goal by what it *is*. Defining things “negatively” in this way is a common method for Mystics. This is often useful because asserting something “positive” about the Mystic Experience (e.g. “it is One”) allows for the introduction of various metaphysical propositions (e.g. “The One is Kether” or “The One is God” or “The One is separate from the Many”), theories, and beliefs, yet these theories and beliefs are forms of rational-intellectual mind that the Mystic attempts to transcend in directly penetrating to the Mystic Goal that is beyond rational-intellectual thinking. Also, asserting something “positive” about the Mystic Goal allows for distinctions to begin to be made – (e.g. “If the One is infinite, it does not include the finite”; “If the One is Good, it does not include the bad”; “If the Goal is powerful, it

does not include weakness,” *et cetera*) – yet the Mystic Goal is beyond distinctions. Nonetheless, defining the Mystic Experience negatively or positively is still defining it, and – as will be seen repeatedly – the Mystic Experience is ultimately ineffable.

**In Thelema, this Unity is often said to be “None” instead of “One.”** This “None” is also called “Naught,” “Zero,” or “0.” This has its basis in *The Book of the Law* (I:27) where it is written, “O Nuit, continuous one of Heaven, let it be ever thus; that men speak not of Thee as One but as None; and let them speak not of thee at all, since thou art continuous!”

- It is understood that even this term “None” is not ideal. Ideally, we should “speak not of thee at all” because of the ineffability of the Mystic Goal as mentioned previously.

- One reason the idea of “None” is used instead of “One” is because the number 1 implies a “deviation” insofar as it is a positive number (in opposition to and balanced by negative numbers). Therefore, the “union of opposites” (one term for the Mystic Goal) can be seen to be between the “X” of ego and the “-X” of non-ego; when they combine,  $X+(-X)$ , we get Zero or None.

- This “None” is not a lack of something, it is That which contains all things and That into which all things would cancel out if they united. Further symbolism of this None/Naught/0 can be studied in *The Book of Thoth* regarding Atu 0: The Fool.

- In the end, we must remember that “None” – just like every other name, title, or description – is ultimately inadequate to describe the

*“The Quintessence [of Life] is pure Light, an ecstasy formless, and without bound or mark. In this Light naught exists, for It is homogeneous: and therefore have men called it Silence, and Darkness, and Nothing. But in this, as in all other effort to name it, is the root of every falsity and misapprehension, since all words imply some duality.”*  
–De Lege Libellum

ineffable nature of the Mystic Goal.

## Characteristics of the Mystic Goal

**The primary characteristic of the Mystic Goal is its undifferentiated Unity.** There are also a few other characteristics of the Mystic Experience that are universal among all Mystics from across different times and different cultures. The characteristics of the Mystic Goal are:

**1. Undifferentiated Unity** – This is the fact that the Mystic Experience confers this direct experience of the Unity of all things, and one’s ultimate identity therewith. Whether this Unity is called “Non-duality,” “One,” “None,” “All,” “Infinity,” “God,” “The Absolute,” “Krishna,” “Brahman,” “Emptiness,” “Buddha-nature,” “Silence,” “Darkness,” or “Light,” it is the same fundamental idea of an undifferentiated, undivided It. There are two types of Unity that are actually two sides of the same coin, so to speak: Introvertive Unity and Extrovertive Unity.

a) *Introvertive Unity* – The undifferentiated unity beyond all sense, thinking, forms, and images. There are no “things” or differentiation; there is simply undifferentiated unity. It is called “introvertive” because the mystic “looks within,” beyond all sensuous and intellectual contents of

consciousness to penetrate to the undifferentiated Unity at the ground of all things. It is often spoken of as being “beyond senses,” “beyond images,” “beyond space,” “beyond time,” and “beyond

• *“All is dissolved in formless Light of Unity.”*

–De Lege Libellum

• *“They beheld not God; they beheld not the Image of God; therefore were they arisen to the Palace of the Splendour Ineffable.”*

–Liber LXV, V:35

causality.”

b) *Extrovertive Unity* – The undifferentiated unity as seen *within* the world, typically phrased as “All things are One.” The Extrovertive Unity “looks outward” into the world of senses and sees Unity permeating the apparent diversity and multiplicity. The sensuous

world (the world as experienced through the senses) is transformed or transfigured, not in that anything has changed in the sensory world, but one’s very way of perceiving the sensuous world is altered so that Unity is perceived rather than multiplicity.

• “*All is One.*”

–Liber Aleph, chapter 187

• “*No two faces are identical, still less are two individuals. Unspeakable is the variety of form and immeasurable the diversity of beauty, but in all is the seal of unity.*”

–New Comment to *AL*, I:52

## 2. Sense of Objectivity/Reality –

The Mystic Goal, the undifferentiated unity, is sensed or intuited to be objective and real. It is often said to be “more real”

than our normal “dualistic” awareness which is therefore labeled as “illusion.” It is the intuitive insight that is normally said to be “gnosis,” the direct experiential “knowledge” that the undifferentiated unity is true; this is the non-rational “certainty” that is given by the Mystic Experience.

“*Samadhi [has] an authenticity, and confer[s] an interior certainty, which is to the experience of waking life as that is to a dream.*”

–Eight Lectures on Yoga

## 3. Deeply felt Positive Mood –

This is the “peace” and “bliss” spoken of by virtually every

“*Then the adept was rapt away in bliss, and the beyond of bliss, and exceeded the excess of excess. Also his body shook and staggered with the burden of that bliss and that excess and that ultimate nameless.*”

–Liber LXV, II:45-46

Mystic throughout history (called “ananda” in Sanskrit). It is sometimes referred to as “love” or “joy” or virtually any other positive emotion raised to an exponential degree, e.g. “Perfect Happiness” as is stated in *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

**4. Sense of Sacredness** – This is an intuitive, direct sense of the sacredness or divine nature of this Mystic Experience. Its characteristic reactions involve awe, humility, and reverence. It is called “numinous” by Otto Rank, which he describes as referring to a sense of a tremendous mystery that is simultaneously both (a) awful/terrible (causes trembling and reverence; the “fear of God” of Judaism) and (b) fascinating/entrancing. This sense of sacredness is generally related to various Mystics interpreting their experience as relating to God or the Divine. Also, this is somewhat related to the ‘deeply felt positive mood’ but not necessarily identical with it; one can feel blissful without the sense of sacredness and vice versa.

**5. Ineffability** – This refers to the fact that the Mystic Experience is universally said to be “ineffable.” This means the Mystic Experience is ultimately beyond words; it is impossible to describe. One of the most classic formulations of this idea comes from the *Tao Teh Ching*, “The Tao that is spoken of is not the Tao.” Although the Mystic Goal is ineffable,

Mystics tend to write endlessly about it. For example, the previously mentioned line from the *Tao Teh Ching* is followed by 80 more chapters about the nature of the Tao. Although silence would most accurately portray the ineffable nature of the Mystic Goal, Mystics often feel the need to communicate about the Truth they experience and so they must resort

• “*Little by little, as your eyes grow stronger, will we unveil to you the ineffable glory of the Path of the Adepts, and its nameless goal.*”

–Liber Porta Lucis, line 14

• “*I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD.*”

–Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass

to words, metaphors, and symbols regardless of their inadequacy. The ineffability of the Mystic Experience is why Mystics universally assert that the Mystic Goal is “beyond words,” “beyond reason” or “supra-rational,” or “beyond definition.”

**6. Paradoxicality** – This refers to the logical contradictions that appear if the various definitions and descriptions of the Mystic Experience are analyzed rationally. Paradoxicality is the natural result of the identity of opposites that occurs in the Mystic Experience by virtue of the fact that it transcends the normal duality of perception and speech. Mystics use many terms to refer to the Mystic Experience that appear to be blatant contradictions. There are innumerable examples of this throughout Mystical literature:

*“And this is the great Mystery of the Supernals that are beyond the Abyss. For below the Abyss, contradiction is division; but above the Abyss, contradiction is Unity. And there could be nothing true except by virtue of the contradiction that is contained in itself.”*

–The Vision and the Voice,  
5th Aethyr

- “It stirs and It stirs not” (Isa Upanishad)
- “dazzling darkness” (Henry Suso)
- “dark brightness” (*Tao Teh Ching*)
- “The One is everything and not everything” (Plotinus)
- “I am the first and the last; I am the honored one and the scorned one; I am the whore and the holy one” (“Thunder: Perfect Mind”)
- “I am light, and I am night, and I am that which is beyond them; I am speech, and I am silence, and I am that which is beyond them; I am life, and I am death, and I am that which is beyond them” (*The Vision and the Voice*, 1st Aethyr)
- “there is no subject, and there is no predicate; nor is there the contradictory of either of these things” (*The Book of Lies*)
- “a light undesired, most desirable” (*Liber AL*, II:61), *et cetera*.

Therefore, there are several characteristics that can be seen to be true of the Mystic Experience regardless of time period or culture. The primary characteristic is the experience of an undifferentiated unity – this is the defining characteristic of the Mystic Goal and it is always present in some form. The other characteristics include an intuitive sense of objectivity or reality (the Mystic Experience is understood as true and with supra-rational certainty), deeply felt positive mood (joy, bliss, peace), a sense of sacredness (holy, sublime, numinous, divine), ineffability (beyond words and description), and paradoxicality (descriptions are logically contradictory).

It should be noted that expressions of the Mystic Experience do not necessarily – or even usually – include all 6 of these characteristics at once. Sometimes the ineffability is emphasized, sometimes the bliss of positive emotion is emphasized, sometimes paradoxicality is emphasized, *et cetera*. Certain cultures emphasize different qualities – for example, Sufism tends to stress the positive emotion of bliss and love while Buddhism tends to stress ineffability. Some Mystics write with much more clarity while others write with much more romantic poeticism; some try to speak rationally while some speak in parable or metaphor. Nonetheless, they all refer to the same Mystic Experience. When the various utterances of a Mystic are brought together, they usually encompass most or all of these characteristics. Thelema in particular is a system that has instances of all of these characteristics of the Mystic Experience.

## **The Various Symbols of the Mystic Goal**

For as many Mystics have existed, there are at least as many different symbols, names, titles, and metaphors to describe the Mystic Goal. Each of these symbols implies a view about the world or various metaphysical propositions, which is one of their shortcomings. Every symbol is an image and, since the Mystic Goal is ultimately beyond all

images, names, forms, and all other partial phenomena, there is no symbol that can be “true” as opposed to all others; they are all ultimately “degradations” of the Truth. They can only be signposts – fingers pointing to the moon, so

to speak – and they must be taken as such. Nonetheless, symbols are also helpful in that they can aid us in understanding the nature of the Mystic Goal, or at least the language and ideas surrounding this within a particular system.

It will be seen very quickly that these symbols overlap. Sometimes an individual will use many of these metaphors/symbols at once. In the end, these all refer to the same Mystic Goal.

In general, the West tends to explain the Mystic Goal as some kind of ultimate Being whereas the East tends to explain the Mystic Goal as some kind of ultimate State of being (although there are examples where the opposites are true).

**The One** - The Goal is sometimes explained numerically as “the One.” “One” implies something that is single, undivided, and complete.

- In the Qabalah, this “One” is Kether, the 1st Sephirah on the Tree of Life, which literally means “Crown.” In Qabalistic terms, “All numbers [are] Veils of the One, emanations of and

*“If we are in any way to shadow forth the Ineffable, it must be by a degradation. Every symbol is a blasphemy against the Truth that it indicates.”*

–“The Big Stick” in Equinox I:4

*“THE AUGOEIDES.*

*Lytton calls him Adonai in 'Zanoni', and I often use this name in the notebooks. Abramelin calls him Holy Guardian Angel. I adopt this: (1) Because Abramelin's system is so simple and effective. (2) Because since all theories of the universe are absurd it is better to talk in the language of one which is patently absurd, so as to mortify the metaphysical man. (3) Because a child can understand it..*



therefore corruptions of the One.”<sup>618</sup>

- The same term is often used by Neoplatonists such as Plotinus who says, “It is the simple unbroken Unity” (*Enneads*, I:1:9).
- This “One” is – in the West – identified with God as in one of the central prayers of Judaism, “Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD is one” (Deuteronomy, 6:4), in Christ’s statement that, “I and the Father are One” (John 10:30), and in the Quran, “Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him” (Surah 112).

**None** – The Goal is sometimes, as mentioned previously, explained as “None” (or “Naught,” “Zero,” or “0”). “None” implies no division, no distinction, no opposition, no separation, and other similar negatives.

- In the Qabalah, this “None” is the Negative Veils of Existence that “pre-exist” Kether. The three Negative Veils are “Ain,” “Ain Soph,” and “Ain Soph Aur,” which can be translated as “Nothing,” “No Limit,” and “Limitless Light,” respectively.
- Numerically, “None” can be expressed as  $0 = X + (-X)$ , which implies that it contains opposites as well as that it is the “result” of uniting opposites.

*...Theosophists call him the Higher Self, Silent Watcher, or Great Master. The Golden Dawn calls him the Genius. Gnostics say the Logos. Zoroaster talks about uniting all these symbols into the form of a Lion – see Chaldean Oracles. Anna Kingsford calls him Adonai (Clothed with the Sun). Buddhists call him Adi-Buddha – (says H. P. [Blavatsky]) The Bhagavad-Gita calls him Vishnu (chapter xi). The Yi King calls him 'The Great Person.' The Qabalah calls him Jechidah...*

–“The Temple of Solomon the King” in Equinox I:1

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618 777.

- The same idea also appears in Zen, as when Shunryu Suzuki writes, “True being comes out of nothingness, moment after moment. Nothingness is always there, and from it everything appears.” Similarly, Joshu Sasaki Roshi says, “The whole universe is one: equality holds difference and discrimination within it. The activity of equality includes plus and minus. Therefore, it is zero... Inevitably, the state in which you no longer claim yourself will be manifested. Buddhism concludes that this is the true self, true love, and the ultimate truth. Zen’s view is that words cannot point out the ultimate truth. It is utterly, completely zero.”

**God** – In the West, God is the ultimate goal of union. God is conceived as the ultimate Being who is omnipotent (contains all forces), omnipresent (contains all forms), and omniscient (contains all knowledge or all relations); God is therefore said to be “infinite.” The examples from every single Western Mystic are too innumerable to even begin to list.

- Because of the Western notion that each individual has or “is” a soul that is separate from God, the Mystic Goal is seen as “union with God” (called “henosis” in Neoplatonism which literally means “oneness”).
- God is the ultimate Good, the ultimate Truth, and philosophers equate their notion of the Absolute with that of God.
- Alternate ways to refer to this same idea include “the Divine,” “the Lord,” and “Godhead” as well as the innumerable names of God from various systems (“YHVH,” “Adonai,” “Christ,” “Allah,” “Tetragrammaton,” “Elohim,” “El,” *et cetera*).

**The Absolute** – In Western philosophy, the concept of the Absolute is the unconditional, infinite, ultimate Reality.

- While it is a way that Westerners have pointed to the same Mystic Goal, religious people inevitably equate this philosophical concept of the Absolute with God.

- The Absolute is equivalent to the “Ain Soph” of Qabalah, the “Pleroma” of Gnosticism, the “Tao” or the “Wu Ji” of Chinese philosophy, the “Brahman” of Hinduism, *et cetera*.

**The Sun** - The Sun is one of the most ancient symbols of the Mystic Goal. In the West, it is endlessly associated with God in various ways.

- The Sun is the source of light in the world, and therefore makes us able to “see” reality. Light is constantly associated with knowledge or awareness (as in “enlightenment”) whereas darkness is constantly associated with ignorance or delusion.
- The Sun is the source of life in the world, so it is understood as a symbol of being the source of creative power/force of this Absolute/God, i.e. omnipotence.
- The Sun is the “eye of the world,” so it is understood as seeing or being aware of all things, i.e. omniscience.
- The Sun rules the ordering of days, seasons, and years, so it is understood as a symbol of order, harmony, law, and the “Architect” (source of all rules/laws and all forms) of the Cosmos.
- In the New Aeon, we know (a) the Sun is the center of our system, and (b) the Sun never “dies.” Therefore, it is a symbol of being (a) the central, ordering principle of the universe and

*“The main idea is that the Infinite, the Absolute, God, the Over-soul, or whatever you may prefer to call it, is always present; but veiled or masked by the thoughts of the mind, just as one cannot hear a heart-beat in a noisy city.”*  
 –Liber ABA: Book Four, Part I

*“Thou that art One, our Lord in the Universe, the Sun, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery, uttermost being whose radiance, enlightening the worlds, is also the breath that maketh every God even and Death to tremble before Thee.”*  
 –Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass

therefore the center or “soul” of ourselves, and (b) eternal, immortal, infinite, deathless, *et cetera*.

- Horus in His various forms – Ra-Hoor-Khuit, Ra-Hoor, Hoor-Apep, Hoori, Heru-Ra-Ha, *et cetera* – is a symbol of this “Sun.”

The common symbol of the Sun, the point in the circle, is itself a symbol of the union of opposites: in this context, the Sun represents the Whole, the One, the All, *et cetera*. Sometimes the Sun (Sol) is seen as a complement to the Moon (Luna): in this context, the Sun is represented as one half of the whole, the Bridegroom as opposed to the Bride, the Male as opposed to the Female, the God as opposed to the Soul, *et cetera*.

**Union of Opposites** – Since the Mystic Goal involves transcending duality, all symbols that involve the union of opposites in some way are symbolic of the Mystic Goal. These are innumerable as well but some examples include the Union of:

*“The true Magick of Horus requires the passionate Union of opposites.”*  
–Little Essays Toward Truth, “Glossary”

- Soul and God (virtually all Western Mystics)
- Heaven and earth
- Bride and Bridegroom (many Christian and Sufi Mystics)
- Male and Female
- The Child as the union of Father and Mother (Horus as Crowned and Conquering Child)
- Sun and Moon (Planetary)
- Microcosm and Macrocosm; Pentagram and Hexagram; 5 and 6 (Hermetic)
- Lingam and Yoni (and virtually all sexual symbolism; Hindu)
- Lance and Cup/Chalice/Grail (Parsival; the Gnostic Mass)
- Cross and Rose (Rosicrucian)
- Lion and Eagle (Alchemical)

- Cross & Circle; Point & Circle; Square & Circle (Geometric)
- Square and Compass (Masonic)
- Heart and Serpent (*Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente sub figura LXV*)
- Egg and Serpent (Orphic Mysteries)

**Reality** – The Mystic Goal is sometimes equated with “Reality.” This implies that normal understanding or awareness is “illusion,” i.e. the “Fall” of Western religion or the “illusion” (“Maya”) of Eastern philosophies. Virtually all Mystics equate the Mystic Goal to the ultimate Reality in some way or another. It is also called “Truth.” This emphasizes the “Sense of Objectivity/Reality” aspect of the Mystic Goal mentioned previously.

*“The Ultimate Reality... the Unthinkable Reality.”*  
–The Book of Lies

**True Self** – The “True Self” is sometimes used to distinguish from the “false self” of the dualistic and limited ego-self. This emphasizes that the Mystic Goal is not something separate from oneself.

*“...The knowledge of his infinite Will, his destiny to perform the Great Work, the realization of his True Self.”*  
–De Lege Libellum

- The True Self is sometimes called “True Nature,” the “pure soul,” or the “Oversoul.”
- In Hinduism, it is the “Atman” in Hinduism that is understood to be identical with “Brahman,” the infinite, boundless Reality, i.e. the “Absolute” of Hindu philosophy.
- In Buddhism, the “True Self” is sometimes called the “Adi-Buddha” (“primordial Buddha”) in Mahayana/Vajrayana Buddhism, and the “True Nature” is sometimes called the “Buddha-dhatu” (“Buddha-nature”).
- In the Qabalistic system, this is the “Yechidah” (or “Jechidah”), the primal individuality attributed to Kether on the Tree of Life.
- The Golden Dawn and others call this the “Genius” or “Daimon”

or “Augoeides.” It can, in certain ways, be identified with the Holy Guardian Angel of Thelemic mysticism.

**Enlightenment** – In Eastern systems there are various terms that are essentially equivalent to our English term “enlightenment.” The term implies insight into one’s True Self or True Nature or into the true nature of Reality. Various scholars and philosophers have introduced distinctions between these terms and various other sub-sets of these terms, but they all ultimately refer to the same Mystic Goal. There are various terms for this in different systems:

- *Samadhi* – In the Hindu system, the term “Samadhi” is used to refer to the union of subject and object of perception in meditation. This brings “liberation” (“moksha”) from the Wheel of Samsara, i.e. of birth, death, and rebirth.
- *Nirvana* – In the Buddhist system, the term “Nirvana” is used to refer to the cessation of the sense of self or of “desire” that frees one from the First Noble Truth of suffering (“dukkha”). It is equivalent to the Muslim “fana” (“to pass away/cease”).
- *Kensho/satori* – “Kensho” and “satori” are words used in Zen Buddhism that essentially mean “seeing into one’s true nature.”

## The Various Symbols of the Mystic Goal

As we can see, there are more ways to symbolically express the Mystic Goal than can possibly be listed in this short essay. There are two main points to remember:

1. All of these symbols refer to the same Mystic Goal of transcending our normal consciousness of

*“We shall bring you to Absolute Truth, Absolute Light, Absolute Bliss. Many adepts throughout the ages have sought to do this; but their words have been perverted by their successors, and again and again the Veil has fallen upon the Holy of Holies...”*

Many/Two and achieving the consciousness of Unity/One. The diversity of the symbolism veils its ultimate Unity.

2. The difference of these symbols enables us to not get dogmatically “stuck” in any one of them to the exclusion of others. One of the virtues of Thelemic Mysticism is the explicit awareness of these many different names and forms of expressing the same Mystic Goal, so we are particularly on guard against asserting one to be “more true” than another.

*“To you who yet wander in the Court of the Profane we cannot yet reveal all; but you will easily understand that the religions of the world are but symbols and veils of the Absolute Truth. So also are the philosophies. To the adept, seeing all these things from above, there seems nothing to choose between Buddha and Mohammed, between Atheism and Theism.”*  
–Liber Porta Lucis

The question still remains: “How do I achieve the Mystic Goal?” or “What is the Mystic Path?” This will be explained in the next section, *Mysticism in Practice*.

## **MYSTICISM IN PRACTICE**

Conceived as a Path, Mysticism is the Science and Art of achieving the direct experience of the ultimate spiritual truth or goal. There are many ways of conceptualizing this Path and of treading this Path. These will be explored in turn.

### **The Conceptualizations of the Mystic Path**

The Mystic Path refers to the process of achieving the direct experience of the Mystic Goal. There are two fundamental ways of

conceiving or conceptualizing this Path:

1. **The Journey:** The Goal is something we do not have but must attain, obtain, or achieve. We must therefore go on a “journey” (or “pilgrimage,” “quest,” “sojourn,” *et cetera*) to get what we do not yet have
2. **The Transmutation:** This Goal is something we already have but are not aware of it. We must therefore undergo a process of transmuting ourselves into one who is capable of perceiving this Goal, of “uncovering” or “discovering” it

The labels of “The Journey” and “The Transmutation” are for convenience, though the reasons for choosing these names will become apparent. Both of these conceptions of the Path are essentially identical, although using different metaphors. Sometimes both labels are intermingled with each other in a single metaphor. In a way, they are just reflections of one another: Transmutation may be considered as a Journey inwards until the Goal is perceived, and the Journey may be considered as a series of Transmutations until the Goal is reached. The use of one metaphor over another often implies or is the result of the particular metaphysical and/or theological views of

*“Even as wood and coal and iron burn up together in one great flame, if only that furnace be of transcendent heat; so in the alembic of this spiritual alchemy, if only the zelator blow sufficiently upon his furnace all the systems of earth are consumed in the One Knowledge. Nevertheless, as a fire cannot be started with iron alone, in the beginning one system may be suited for one seeker, another for another. We therefore who are without the chains of ignorance, look closely into the heart of the seeker and lead him by the path which is best suited to his nature unto the ultimate end of all things, the supreme realization, the Life which abideth in Light, yea, the Life which abideth in Light.”*

–Liber Porta Lucis, lines 14, 20-22



whomever is speaking, but some Mystics – including Aleister Crowley – can operate within both the “Journey” and “Transmutation” metaphors.

We should always remember “the map is not the territory.” A certain type of map may be more useful to a certain type of person over another type – for example, a map using Buddhist terminology would probably be less useful to a Christian and a map using Jewish symbolism may obscure the Path more than reveal it for a Hindu. One of the natural outgrowths of Thelema’s syncretism of various traditions is its ability to fluidly move between different “maps” without getting caught in any one particular way of thinking about the “territory” of the Mystic Path. We must remember that the Mystic Goal always was and always will be, by its very nature, ultimately ineffable; it is truly incommunicable in the language of Reason and therefore the “secret of secrets.”

The Mystic Path, because it deals largely with the practicalities of the Work, is more amenable to language but still liable to confusion since it deals with the “inner life” of the individual of which we can only speak using symbols and metaphors. The Mystic Path also is highly variable depending on the constitution of the individual and their culture, yet there is a unity in the Mystic methods of attainment that certain individuals like Crowley were able to perceive beyond the variety of language used to describe the methods. Before looking into these methods, we will look further into the different conceptualizations of the Path: the Journey and the Transmutation.

### **The Journey**

Included in this category are all “Journeys” from a state that is “low” or “bad” to a state that is “high” or “good,” including:

- The Journey from the Darkness of ignorance toward the Light of Truth.
  - The Journey from the lowest sphere of Malkuth toward the highest sphere of Kether, often called “climbing the Tree of Life.”
- Likewise, all “emanationist” theories that involve the emanation of

the One into the Many, involve the “Journey” back to the Original One, sometimes called “The Path of Return.”

- The Journey or Climbing of “Jacob’s Ladder” from Earth to Heaven, or upward through the various “hierarchies” of the Divine (e.g. through the hierarchies of Dionysius or the “Ten Heavens” of Dante).
- The Journey from the realm of Samsara “across the stream” toward the realm of Nirvana.
- The Journey from home to some sacred place – for example, John Bunyan’s “Pilgrim’s Progress” where one travels from one’s home in the “City of Destruction” to the “Celestial City,” or – alternatively – the search for the Lost Paradise such as The Garden of Eden, El Dorado, Shangri-la, or Shambhala.
- The Journey of the Lover to find and unite with the Beloved.

All “Quests” for holy, sacred, or rare objects fall under this category of the Journey including:

- The Quest for the Holy Grail.
- The Quest for the Elixir of Immortality / Potion of Eternal Life /

• *“I shoot up vertically like an arrow, and become that Above. But it is death, and the flame of the pyre. Ascend in the flame of the pyre, O my soul!”*

–Liber VII, I:37-39

• *“Verily and Amen! I passed through the deep sea, and by the rivers of running water that abound therein, and I came unto the Land of No Desire.”*

–Liber LXV, III:1

• *“...They abode in the Land that the far-off travellers call Naught.”*

–Liber LXV, V:59

• *“...the thread where-with I guide you to the heart of the groves of Eleusis.”*

–Liber Tzaddi, line 23

• *“At the end, be the end far distant as the stars that lie in the navel of Nuit...”*

–Liber A’ash, line 38

Fountain of Youth.

- The Search for the “buried treasure,” as in Matthew 13:44, “The Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure that a man discovered hidden in a field.”
- The Search for the “Lost Word.”

There are several characteristics of the Path that are implied by using the metaphor of “The Journey”:

- One begins in an un-enlightened or “un-initiated” state. In the language of Magical Orders, one’s Path begins as one of the “profane.” This often involves understanding oneself as full of ignorance, dominated by the senses and instincts, and without any knowledge of one’s true Path. The “Journey” is from this state to the “perfected” state of achieving the Mystic Goal.
- One is now on a difficult Journey, which will be full of hardships or obstacles (the “ordeals”), and there will be great uncertainty, even regardless of the fact that many “maps” have been made of the “Path” to guide one on one’s Journey.
- There will be several “landmarks” along the Way (the “stages” or “grades”), both marking one’s progress as well as directing one further along the Path.

### **The Transmutation**

The “Transmutation” is a metaphor that essentially implies that we already are in possession of the “Goal” – we are already enlightened, already divine – but, because of our “imperfection” or “ignorance,” we are unaware of it. “Transmutation” therefore involves changing, perfecting, or “transmuting” the self in various ways in order that one may come to a clearer awareness thereof. All metaphors that involve altering, changing, or “perfecting” oneself are included in this category, including:

- The Great Work of Alchemy, transmuting the “dross” of the self

into “gold”

- Progressively “seeing” one’s inherently “pure” or “perfect” nature, as when it is said in Mahayana Buddhism, “People should realize that the buddha-nature is something they have always had”

- The process of “building the Temple of Solomon,” or – similarly – the process of working upon the crude “rough ashlar” in order to form it into the “perfect ashlar.”

- The transmutation of the Kundalini serpent, bringing it from the lowest *chakra* at the base of the spine (*Muladhara*), all the way up the spine, to rest at the “third eye” (*Ajna*).

- The “Journey to the Center” as seen in images of labyrinths and mandalas, which combines the ideas of the Journey and the Transmutation.

• “*There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was.*”

–*Liber AL, II:58*

- “*We are not to regard ourselves as base beings, without whose sphere is Light or 'God.'* Our minds and bodies are veils of the Light within. The uninitiate is a 'Dark Star,' and the Great Work for him is to make his veils transparent by 'purifying' them.”

–New Comment to Liber AL, I:8

- “*Initiation means the Journey Inwards: nothing is changed or can be changed; but all is trulier understood with every step.*”

–Little Essays Towards Truth, “Mastery”

The metaphor of Transmutation implies several things. Primarily, Transmutation implies that we already “have” the Goal but our consciousness has not been “perfected” in order to become consciously aware of it. The “Path” is therefore a process of Transmutation that involves subjecting oneself to various processes – disciplines, purifications, *et cetera* - that enable this inherent Truth to become available to our

conscious awareness.

Again, it should be remembered that both “The Journey” and “The Transmutation” are two sides of the same coin. As can be seen by the quotations above, both metaphors are used within Thelema even within the same text. The purpose of this section is to show the various manifestations of these two ways by which the Mystic Path is understood and to show that they are, in fact, two ways of understanding the same Path.

## The Stages or “Grades” of the Path

There are as many ways to conceptualize the various stages of the Mystic Path as there are Mystics. Some Mystics even use several “maps.” In the end, the Path is infinitely varied but maintains a near-identical essence in all cases. There are three fundamental stages of the Mystic Path that correspond with the Three Grades mentioned in *The Book of the Law*. Each stage or “Grade” is characterized by a certain “ordeal” that leads one to enter the Grade, and a certain “work” characteristic of the Grade. This loosely corresponds to the beginning (ordeal) and middle (work) of the particular “Grade.”

*“Who calls us Thelemites will do no wrong, if he look but close into the word. For there are therein Three Grades, the Hermit, and the Lover, and the man of Earth. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”*  
–Liber AL, I:40

### 1) The Man of Earth: The Beginning of the Path

The first stage can be likened to the Grade of “Man of Earth.” This is the beginning of the Path where one is a “neophyte,” which literally means “newly planted.”

## The Ordeal

Everyone is drawn to the Path for the same, basic reason: Discontent.

Without some form of discontent (or “dissatisfaction” or “dis-ease”), there would never be any reason to seek or to strive for anything. Everyone begins with a discontent in some degree. Some begin with the impetus that amounts to realizing “There must be something more than this.” At the extreme, this same discontent approaches what is called “The Trance of Sorrow,” which amounts to realizing that all material things are finite, temporal, and subject to death. In Buddhist language, the First Noble Truth that “Existence is suffering” becomes overwhelmingly evident. The Path is then understood as “transcending suffering,” “transcending the temporal/finite,” or even “mastering myself and my environment.”

Conversely, one may be drawn to the Path by the opposite or complement of discontent, which amounts to being drawn to the Path by having some kind of perception of the possibility of one’s “higher development.” One may realize that there is

“something more to this” in the sense that one comes to believe that there is a possibility of life that involves greater wisdom, understanding, power, truth, beauty, and/or peace. At the extreme, this same “hope” approaches what is called “The Vision of Adonai,” becoming aware of the Mystic Goal in some way, even – in some cases – catching an experiential “glance” of what the Goal is like (sometimes called “higher states of

*“The Aspiration to become a Master is rooted in the Trance of Sorrow.”*  
–Little Essays Toward Truth,  
“Sorrow”

*“It is the Trance of sorrow that has determined one to undertake the task of emancipation. This is the energising force of Law; it is the rigidity of the fact that everything is sorrow which moves one to the task, and keeps one on the Path”*  
–Eight Lectures on Yoga, “Niyama”

consciousness” from which one “comes down”).

The Trance of Sorrow and the Vision of Adonai are really two sides of the same coin. If one perceives the unsatisfactoriness of all temporal things in the Trance of Sorrow, one will therefore conversely seek the possibility of a type of life that transcends these sorrows. If one perceives the joy and beauty of catching a glimpse of “Truth” (or “the Divine,” or “Reality,” *et cetera*), one will therefore conversely look at one’s life and see – by contrast – its finiteness, sorrow, and imperfection. These things can happen suddenly (as in a “flash”) or they can dawn gradually – each individual’s Path is unique, but each one begins with this perception of discontent or the perception of the possibility of transcendence.

## The Work

The Work at this stage or “Grade” is called many names but essentially involves severe self-discipline in order to transform one’s character from the old habits – both old “vices” and old “virtues” – to a new way that is conducive to the achieving the Goal. There are generally “negative” and “positive” aspects of this that amount to clearing away the old habits (“vices,” which used to be called “sins”) that are in the way of one’s Path and building up new habits that are conducive to the Path (“virtues”). It is a stripping-away or rooting-out of the bad and a cleansing of the good (“good” and “bad” being relative terms to each individual as well as to the particular Purpose of achieving the Mystic Goal). They correspond exactly to the process of Purification and Consecration in Magick, and they may also be understood as the process of “balancing the Elements.” This Work is based on severe and persistent discipline: it is an incredibly difficult part of the Path, but we may be assured that – as with all habits – the process begins in a difficult way, becomes easier, and then becomes almost natural and effortless.

**Purification** – The self must be purged of all those parts of the self – body,

senses, thoughts, emotions, and desires – that stand in opposition to the attainment of the one object of the Mystic Goal. This process has been called many things by different Mystics including “asceticism,” “detachment,” “poverty,” and “purgation.” These practices can often be harsh, but they are always used as a means to an end. All the “purifications” are a means to strip away all forms of egoism – of the sense of separateness that is the root of our discontent – to allow for the Truth (or “God” or “Reality” or “the Absolute”) to dawn in our awareness.

Why do we need Purification? We are slaves to our desires, our cravings, and our habits. We run after things including wealth, fame, and pleasure, but we are always left dissatisfied. This is because the only true satisfaction comes from the achievement of the Mystic Goal: we are assured of this by the ordeal of the Trance of

*“Now then let us suppose that you have come to the Master, and that He has declared to you the Way of this attainment. What hindereth you? Alas! there is yet much Freedom afar off. Understand clearly this: that if you are sure of your Will, and sure of your means, then any thoughts or actions which are contrary to those means are contrary also to that Will... For see, what hindereth you? It is either from without or from within, or both. It may be easy for the strong-minded seeker to put his heel upon public opinion, or to tear from his heart the objects which he loves, in a sense: but there will always remain in himself many discordant affections, as also the bond of habit, and these also must he conquer. In our holiest Book it is written: 'Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay.' Write it also in your heart and in your brain: for this is the key of the whole matter... Search yourselves cunningly, I pray you, analysing your inmost thoughts. And first you shall discard all those gross obvious hindrances to your Will: idleness, foolish friendships, waste employments or enjoyments, I will not enumerate the conspirators against the welfare of your State.”*

–Liber CL: De Lege Libellum



Sorrow, although it can even be appreciated intellectually. Purification, then, is the process whereby we break down the habits of striving after and resting in things that are less than the Mystic Goal: Purification is renunciation. This is why the basis of Buddhist training is to release attachments from all the aspects of oneself, right down to the attachment to the sense of “self.” This is why Christ said, “Blessed are they who are poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.” This is why, in Thelema, it is repeatedly said that True Will is not one’s wishes, whims, likes, or desires – it is the strictest possible bond. This is why the process of “the stripping of self-will” of Christian mystics is virtually identical to the process of attainment in the New Aeon: we must strip away the false layers of ego-driven desires in order to perceive the True Will.

What are the things we are purifying? The subjects of our purifying amounts essentially to anything within oneself that says “I want” or “I have.” We must give up all those things which we claim as our own, and we must give up all those desires which are not the One Desire of achieving the Mystic Goal. Though there are many intense phrases and images used when describing this

*“Thou then, who hast trials and troubles, rejoice because of them, for in them is Strength, and by their means is a pathway opened unto that Light. How should it be otherwise, O man, whose life is but a day in Eternity, a drop in the Ocean of time; how, were thy trials not many, couldst thou purge thy soul from the dross of earth? ... Rejoice therefore, O Initiate, for the greater thy trial the greater thy Triumph.”*

–Liber Librae

Purification, the essential fact is a *change of attitude*, not certain acts. That is, when we say one must renounce all one’s possessions, that means that one must release all attachment thereto, not literally give away everything that one possesses (although there may be many things that one might literally give away that are unnecessary, the attitude in giving things away is exactly the one required for the release of attachment). Giving away

things does not mean one has released attachment from them, just as putting on the robe of a Buddhist monk does not mean one is a Buddhist monk: again, it is the attitude or “way of being” that is altered.

Therefore, the process of Purification is a process of detachment from all things. One must analyze every aspect of one’s being, searching for all attachments we have, and progressively and completely renounce them for the Quest of achieving the Mystic Goal and nothing else. Purification is, in a way, ruthless in its abandonment and it must reach all aspects of one’s being. All sensory pleasures must be renounced. All relationships must be renounced. All one’s cherished beliefs and preferences must be renounced. All one’s aspirations and desires must be renounced. The only pleasure for the Mystic is the achievement of the Mystic Goal, the only relationship is that with God, the only belief is the necessity to achieve Truth, the only aspiration is the ultimate Union with the Absolute. Each individual’s path must be different by necessity, but all bear this hallmark of Purification or “renunciation.” The study of the seven deadly sins (lust, gluttony, greed, sloth, wrath, envy, and pride), the *yama* of Yoga (non-violence, non-falsehood, non-stealing, non-lusting, non-possessiveness), the five precepts of Buddhism (abstaining from violence, stealing, sexual misconduct, false speech, and intoxicants), and other similar systems will give any earnest aspirant a good idea of what is necessarily involved in this process of Purification. The end result is a profound humility and detachment, yet the process is obviously one of the most difficult tasks that can be conceived insofar as one is changing one’s character by fighting against and releasing attachment to virtually everything that pushed and guided oneself until now. Suffering is the steam released by the fire of Purification, but the result is a humble, purified self that is ready to strive toward the next step on the Path.

*“Now therefore that thou mayest achieve this ritual of the Holy Graal, do thou divest thyself of all thy goods.”*

–Liber Cheth, line 7

Consecration – If Purification involves removing the “bad,” then Consecration involves strengthening the “good.” Again, this “good” is relative to each individual and relative to the particular End of achieving the Mystic Goal; Consecration is, like Purification, a means to an end. Failing to see this and, instead, perceiving the disciplines of Purification and consecration as Absolutes, is the foundation for endless superstition and dogmatism.

Purification involves disentangling ourselves from all

the things which impede the achievement of our sole Object and Goal on the Path, and Consecration involves gathering together the various threads of our life in order to devote them to the achievement of this Goal. This involves the strengthening of “virtues” that are conducive to achieving the Goal. A study of the seven virtuous complements to the seven deadly sins (chastity, temperance, charity, diligence, patience, kindness, humility), the *niyama* of Yoga (purity, contentment, spiritual effort, study of holy texts, surrender to God), the *paramitas* of Buddhism (generosity, proper conduct, renunciation, wisdom, energy, patience, honesty, determination, kindness, calmness), or the Eightfold Path (right views, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration) will give the earnest aspirant an understanding of what this Consecration may entail for them. In *Eight Lectures on Yoga*, Crowley enumerates the qualities of *niyama* that he believes are useful including endurance, patience, selfless love, willfulness/strength, courage,

*“To obtain Magical Power, learn to control thought; admit only those ideas that are in harmony with the end desired, and not every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself. Fixed thought is a means to an end. Therefore pay attention to the power of silent thought and meditation. The material act is but the outward expression of thy thought, and therefore hath it been said that ‘the thought of foolishness is sin.’ Thought is the commencement of action, and if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?”*

–Liber Librae

energy, acceptance of all experience, equilibrium, indifference, and pure aspiration. We may also include the mysterious and terrible Four Powers of the Sphinx: to Know, to Will, to Dare, and to Keep Silence.

In general, every aspect of one's life must be closely and consistently knit together to have everything be devoted toward the accomplishment of the Great Work, the achievement of the Mystic Goal. All actions, words, and thoughts must be devoted to the end of this Mystic Goal.

This work of "transmuting" the various things in one's life into the single Purpose of achieving the Mystic Goal is seen in the practice of "saying Will." At meals we say, "What is thy Will? It is my Will to eat and drink. To what end? That I may fortify my body thereby. To what end? That I may accomplish the Great Work." This same process of asking "To what end?" must be done for every single aspect of one's life, and the answer must always terminate in "To accomplish the Great Work." If you cannot see how it relates to the accomplishment of the Great Work, the achievement of the Mystic Goal, then it is probably

*"Find the minimum of daily time which is in good sooth necessary to your natural life. The rest you shall devote to the True Means of your Attainment. And even these necessary hours you shall consecrate to the Great Work, saying consciously always while at these Tasks that you perform them only in order to preserve your body and mind in health for the right application to that sublime and single Object. It shall not be very long before you come to understand that such a life is the true Liberty. You will feel distractions from your Will as being what they are. They will no longer appear pleasant and attractive, but as bonds, as shames. And when you have attained this point, know that you have passed the Middle Gate of this Path. For you will have unified your Will."*

-De Lege Libellum

something that must be "purified" from your life. The process of devoting all things, all actions, all speech, and all thoughts to this single End is the

essence of Consecration.

Therefore, the primary virtue beyond all others and to which all others attend and aid is that of one-pointedness. The primary skill of one-pointedness is concentration. Con-centration is developed through meditation.

Meditation involves holding a single object of concentration in mind, throwing all one's force into being aware solely of that object, and discarding all distractions from this one object. This is the essence of the method of all Mystics, and the process of becoming more and more engrossed in the object of meditation is also the process of progressing through the stages, steps, or "Grades" of the Mystic Path. The difficulties of meditation reflect the work of one's "Grade" and the successes reflect one's progress on the Path. It can be

*"Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will. (2) Do that Will with (a) one-pointedness, (b) de-tachment, (c) peace. Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God's will, Thou art That."*

—Liber II

seen that this particular practice of meditation is in the microcosm, so to speak, what one must do with one's entire life in the macrocosm. At this "Grade," one must simply strive to maintain the object of one's meditation in mind, whether this is a mantra, an image, one's breath, or whatever else. This corresponds to the first "stage" of meditation in Yoga known as *dharana*. The process is difficult: the mind will find every possible excuse to stray from the one purpose of the meditation, which is a reflection of one's current stage of the Path as a whole. Remember why you are on this Path, the ordeal of the Trance of Sorrow. Be persistent. Be one-pointed. One will then inevitably come to the next stage of the Mystic Path.

## 2) The Lover: Communion with the Holy Guardian Angel

If one persists in the work of the first Stage, continuing one's meditation/devotion with increasing fervor and dedication, one will inevitably come to this second Stage. The second Stage can be likened to the Grade of "Lover." This is the middle of the Path where one communes with the Divine, the Absolute, the One, *et cetera*, as a Lover with the Beloved.

In Thelemic Mysticism, this Love or Communion is understood under the figure of "the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel," and it is often

symbolized by a heart encircled by a serpent or the Rose-Cross. This is appropriate to the Grade of "Lover" because this stage is often described as the meeting or union between Lover (the Mystic) and Beloved (the Object of aspiration); this is the "Spiritual Marriage" spoken of by many Mystics.

"Union": It should be clearly understood that "union" has two related but distinct meanings that are often conflated.

1) **Two united but distinct**: At this second Stage of the Mystic Path, "union" refers to two things uniting but remaining distinct. In the language of Thelemic Mysticism, the Adept and the Holy Guardian Angel are united like lovers, they meet and interact and enjoy one another but they remain separate as Adept and Angel. "Love" requires the interaction and union of "Lover" and "Beloved," though they are united. "Communion" may be a more

• *"O my Lord, my beloved!  
How shall I indite songs,  
when even the memory of the  
shadow of thy glory is a thing  
beyond all music of speech or  
of silence?"*

–Liber LXV, II:48

• *"And the Beloved shall  
abide with Thee."*

–Liber Stellae Rubeae, line 32

• *"He shall await the sword of  
the Beloved and bare his  
throat for the stroke."*

–Liber VII, III:47

accurate term. The persistence in this Love so that it becomes complete and perfect, so to speak, leads to the next stage.

2) **Two united into One (or None) without distinction:** In the third Stage of the Mystic Path (which we will explore later), “union” refers to these two things uniting so completely that there is a dissolution of separateness, leaving only One Thing (or “No-Thing”). “Absorption” or “annihilation” may be more accurate terms.

The distinction between these two notions of “union” is important because, as mentioned previously, they are often conflated by both readers and writers of Mysticism. For now, it should be understood that “union” in the second Stage of the Lover refers to the first definition, where two things are united that still remain distinct (soul & God, subject & object, ego & non-ego, *et cetera*).

## The Nature of the Second Stage

This second stage of the Mystic Path is often called Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel in Thelemic Mysticism. In Christian Mysticism, it is often called “Illumination.”

The primary characteristic of this Illumination is the distinct and immediate perception of the “presence” of the Divine (or God/Absolute/Lord/Truth, *et cetera*).

This “presence” is not a mere metaphor or artistic flourish: it is a distinct, direct, experiential certainty

of the presence of the Absolute, though this is expressed in various ways by various Mystics. This distinct, direct, experiential certainty is one aspect of the “Sense of Objectivity/Reality” mentioned in the previous section on

*“And again I was caught up into the presence of my Lord Adonai, and the knowledge and Conversation of the Holy One, the Angel that Guardeth me.”*

–Liber LXV, V:41

## Mysticism in Theory.

This “presence” is often felt as the Divine “intruding” into the consciousness, so metaphors often involve “piercing” and “penetrating.” The use of the metaphor of the Divine as the Bridegroom and the Mystic as the Bride consummating their Spiritual Marriage should therefore come as no surprise.

This “Spiritual Marriage” corresponds to the second step of concentration in the Hindu system of Yoga: *dhyana*. In the first step of Yoga, *dharana*, one concentrates all

of one’s thought upon a single Object, and there is much difficulty; this corresponds with the first Stage of the Mystic Path, the Man of Earth. This second step of concentration is called *dhyana*. In this second Stage of the Mystic Path, the Lover, there come times where the “subject” appears to disappear and only the Object remains, often co-occurring with a sense of *ananda* (bliss). *Dhyana* also can be felt as a union of subject and object but not a complete union where both are annihilated. *Dhyana* represents a powerful and distinct stage of meditation, that is often said to be a lesser form of *Samadhi*, the total union of subject and object that is the Goal of Mysticism, characteristic of the third Stage of the Mystic Path, the Hermit.

The are various secondary characteristics of this Illumination:

1) “Joy,” “bliss,” or “ecstasy”: Joy, bliss, and ecstasy are not the primary factors of Illumination, they are Illumination’s natural by-products. That is, they do not constitute Illumination itself, but they often accompany Illumination. Crowley often likens Illumination to

• “*Even as evil kisses corrupt the blood, so do my words devour the spirit of man.*”

–Liber LXV, I:14

• “*I was stricken as a bird by the bolt of the thunderer; I was pierced as the thief by the Lord of the Garden.*”

–Liber LXV, IV:40

• “*All this while did Adonai pierce my being with his sword...*”

–Liber LXV, V:14



the union of chemical elements, which naturally gives off light and heat. The “union of chemical elements” is analogous to Illumination itself, while the “light and heat” refer to the joy, bliss, and ecstasy that are by-products of the union. This feeling is felt as a joy that transcends one’s normal likes and dislikes, one’s typical pleasures and pains. Conversely, many of the

anxieties, worries, and fears that plague the Mystic will fall away or seem petty in contrast to this Mystic communion.

*“Then the adept was rapt away in bliss, and the beyond of bliss, and exceeded the excess of excess. Also his body shook and staggered with the burden of that bliss and that excess and that ultimate nameless.”*

–Liber LXV, II:45-46

2) *Passivity*: The Mystic will often feel a sense of “surrender” or “passivity.” The achievement of this Stage requires great will and endurance, but it culminates in a surrender of that will. This is the surrender of the “personal will,” the volition or will-power of the individual, which allows for the Divine Will to take its place; it is the difference between one’s personal wishes/whims and the True

Will. This release of “personal will” is virtually universal across all Mystics, especially Christian Mystics. It is because of this “surrender” or “passivity” that the image of a virgin is often used to describe the Mystic at this point: the virgin is “pure” insofar as her

*“Having attained the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel (by a male effort so to speak) the Adept becomes receptive, feminine, patient, surrendering his will wholly to that of his Angel... The aspiration towards Him is masculine. At the moment of achievement it is replaced by passivity...”*

–Commentaries to Liber LXV, II:45-46

desire is only for One Thing, the Object of the Mystic Goal. In Western terms, the “virgin” is chaste except for God, and she passively awaits the coming of the Lord, so to speak. In the New Aeon, we understand this Divine Will to be nothing other than our own True Will, a more perfect expression of ourselves, rather than being something from “outside” of the self. We might say, “Let Thy Will, which is mine, be done.”

3) *Increased intuition*: The term “intuition” means many things, but it seems to be the best word to describe this sense. Upon achieving the Stage of Illumination, the Mystic may receive many intuitive glimpses, whether through dreams, fantasy, certain thoughts, visions, *et cetera*. These are distinct from the normal “conscience” that Freud describes as the “super-ego,”

• “*Neschamah: This is the faculty of understanding the Word of Chiah [True Will]. It is the intelligence or intuition of what Jechidah [True Self] wishes to discover about itself.*”

–Little Essays Towards Truth, “Man”

• “*The intuitions of the Neschamah are guaranteed by interior certainty.*”

–Confessions, chapter 64

which is essentially that little voice in your head that tells you what is right or wrong based on what you have been taught by your family, peers, and society. These intuitions – sometimes heard as voices but not necessarily – are a “voice” that represents the promptings of one’s “deeper Self,” a truer, more holistic sense of Self represented by the Holy Guardian Angel in Thelema. One may also start to see the deeper, more symbolic meanings of things, perceiving “divine truths” in the most mundane affairs; psychologically, this relates to the fact that the Mystic has opened

channels to her Unconscious mind, which innately perceives the various interconnections and relations between things just as the conscious mind sees their differences. In Qabalistic terms, this is the “Neschamah” (the “spiritual intuition” or “divine intelligence”) that is attributed to Binah on the Tree of Life.

4) *Flow*: Related to passivity and increased intuition, there is often a sense that life “flows” much more freely and naturally. Things seem to fall into place without much or any effort. This is

the result of “unifying the Will,” specifically the harmony between conscious mind and the Unconscious. The immense inertia that is felt in the first Stage, where one is fighting against the world and one’s lower nature, seems to temporarily give way to a sense that one is flowing with the momentum of the world.

*“A Man who is doing his True Will has the inertia of the Universe to assist him.”*

–Magick in Theory and Practice, “Introduction and Theorems”, III:9

5) *Light*: The metaphor of this stage is almost invariably one of Light, hence the name “Illumination.” This is sometimes literally perceived by the Mystic at the moment of Illumination. It sometimes involves blinding light or an increasing light like a “Golden Dawn.” The Light may also be used by some Mystics as a metaphor for their sudden sense of clarity, of seeing beyond the normal ego-self and perceiving a much greater “presence.” Sometimes the Light is used as metaphor for the

*“In this Light naught exists, for It is homogeneous: and therefore have men called it Silence, and Darkness, and Nothing. But in this, as in all other effort to name it, is the root of every falsity and misapprehension, since all words imply some duality...”*

joy/bliss/rapture itself.  
Sometimes the Light is a metaphor for the “Creative energy” with which one feels one is infused in this Illumination or Communion (or “Knowledge and Conversation”). Nonetheless, this Light – sometimes called LVX – is virtually always present in some form or another in this second Stage of “Illumination,” whether literal or metaphorical. This “Light” is one reason among many that this stage is typically related to Solar imagery; Qabalistically, this is Tiphareth on the Tree of Life.

*“...Therefore, though I call it Light, it is not Light, nor absence of Light. Many also have sought to describe it by contradictions, since through transcendent negation of all speech it may by some natures be attained. Also by images and symbols have men striven to express it: but always in vain.”*

–De Lege Libellum

6) *Beauty*: Typically, the Mystic will perceive a certain sense of beauty in all things. This is sometimes called the Beatific Vision by Crowley. The term “Beatific Vision” originally comes from Christianity, used by people like Thomas Aquinas, and it was used to refer to the immediate knowledge of God that souls enjoy in Heaven. The Mystic naturally and effortlessly sees the Divine permeating all things in the world. This is

*“I was also granted what mystics describe as ‘the Beatific Vision’ which is the most characteristic of those attributed to Tiphereth, the archetypal idea of beauty and harmony. In this vision one retains one’s normal consciousness, but every impression of daily life is as enchanting and exquisite as an ode of Keats. The incidents of life become a harmonious unity; one is lost in a rosy dream of romantic happiness...”*

sometimes expressed as Unity-in-Diversity, where there are distinct things seen in the world but one intuitively grasps their underlying unity in the One/Absolute/God. This is often described by Christian Mystics as Earth being “transfigured” into a new Heaven, or Heaven (or “New Jerusalem”) descending to Earth, or realizing the Kingdom of Heaven is all around. As one example, Blake

*“...One may compare it to the effect produced by wine on some people. There is, however, no unreality in the vision. One is not blinded to the facts of existence. It is simply that the normal incoherence and discrepancy between them has been harmonized.”*  
–Confessions, chapter 78

describes this Beatific Vision when he writes, “To see a world in a grain of sand, / And a heaven in a wild flower, / Hold infinity in the palm of your hand, / And eternity in an hour.” Similarly, Henry Vaughan wrote, “Each bush and oak doth know I AM.” One can see that Infinity is perceived, yet “Finity” or duality remains; there is still multiplicity but there is Unity perceived therein. Mystics who remain at this stage are typically pantheists, meaning they see all things as identical with God/Absolute and themselves as part thereof. If one persists to the third Stage, one comes to identity with the Absolute itself rather than being simply a part thereof.

Because many of these by-products of Illumination are overwhelming and enrapturing, the Mystic is liable think this is the end of the Path. It is helpful to remember that this is only the middle pylon along the Path, and that the true Unitive Life has still not been achieved. This is why Crowley calls this stage “The Next Step” and not “The Last Step.”

### **Uniqueness of this Experience**

It should be noted that this particular Stage is often very personal

and unique, regardless of the underlying unity of various Mystics' descriptions.

The way in which one understands or perceives the Presence of this Mystic Object depends entirely on one's own history, make-up, development, intelligence, and understanding.

One may see this as becoming the Bride of Christ, and another may see this as being pierced by a Divine sword; one may see this as a blinding Light, and another as a joyful Darkness. One may see this as an obliteration of one's reality, and another may see this as awakening to Reality.

To set up expectations as to what Illumination (or Knowledge and Conversation) may entail is, in a sense, an impediment to being open and surrendering to what truly is.

The descriptions of these Mystic states are, therefore, simply to be used as guideposts along the Path, not as absolutes to construct an intellectual system around. The sole rule in all cases is "Invoke often."

### **Perfection isn't immediate**

Even if one has experienced the most blindingly exalted and ultimate version of this Illumination, one is not suddenly purged of all "bad" qualities (meaning, in the New Aeon, all aspects of oneself that are detrimental to or inhibiting of the True Will).

Although some habits may be "blasted" out of one's system by the Illumination, some habits remain or return shortly after the experience of Illumination. There is further work to align the various aspects of oneself – body, emotions, thoughts, desires, *et cetera* – under the "guidance" of this

*"It is impossible to lay down precise rules by which a man may attain to the knowledge and conversation of His Holy Guardian Angel; for that is the particular secret of each one of us; a secret not to be told or even divined by any other, whatever his grade. It is the Holy of Holies, whereof each man is his own High Priest, and none knoweth the Name of his brother's God, or the Rite that invokes Him."*

–One Star in Sight

Divine Presence, of the Holy Guardian Angel.

It is typical of a Mystic at this Stage to think that she will never again see herself as separate from the Divine, that she will always be one with her True Will, that she is perfected, but the time always comes where this Illumination slowly fades away. This is a “non-abiding” union, and one inevitably “comes down” from it. The “abiding union” comes if one persists to the third Stage of the Mystic Path.

One must therefore be always vigilant to bring oneself to live more and more in this Light of Illumination, continuing the work of Purification and Consecration until All is One.

## The Work

To a Mystic that has achieved this second Stage of the Path and entered through the Middle Pylon of Illumination or the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, there is still the final “crisis” of the Path. This final Crisis is known as the Crossing of the Abyss, the dissolution of a sense of a separate self, and a successful “Crossing” means that one has attained the third Stage of the Path.

To Cross the Abyss, one must surrender all that one has and all that one is. In order to surrender all that one has and is, though, one must first build oneself into a Whole.

If one has not performed the Purification of all “adverse” elements from oneself and Consecrated all other elements of oneself to one’s Single Goal, the surrender will not be complete or total. The Work of the Lover, after having achieved Knowledge and Conversation, is therefore one of Equilibrium: one must build up all opposites (or

*“The Self surrendered must not be less than the All-Self; one must not come before the altar of the Most High with an impure or an imperfect offering. As it is written in Liber LXV, ‘To await Thee is the end, not the beginning.’”*

–Liber ABA: Book 4, Part II

“complements”) within oneself to become Whole, not being attached or obsessed by anything incomplete or partial.

This Work of achieving Equilibrium or Wholeness of the self is the idea in Magick that is understood as becoming a perfect Microcosm of the Universe (or “Macrocosm”). This means that all aspects of the self must be balanced, especially the moral and intellectual aspects of the self. If one clings to the light and ignores the darkness, one is not equilibrated; if one clings to virtues and ignores vices, one is not equilibrated; if one clings to one belief and ignores its opposite, one is not equilibrated.

This is the reason that the “Higher Self” is a misleading term: this is often taken to mean that one’s “Higher Self” includes all of one’s best and noblest qualities elevated to the highest degree. In fact, one is seeking the Whole, both upright and averse, and not simply the Highest.

This is what is generally said by Mystics to be the necessity of having a Love of All. This “Love” is not a sentimental or romantic kind of attitude which most people mean by the term. In the broadest sense, this Love is acceptance. In the emotions, a lack of Love or acceptance shows itself in the feeling of disgust. This is why *Liber LXV* instructs us to “Go thou unto the outermost places and subdue all things. Subdue thy fear and thy disgust. Then—yield!” One must fully embrace all aspects of Nature, both the Nature of the Universe and one’s own Nature. The way to destroy demons is through Love.

This is the basic work of Equilibrium so that one may become a perfect Microcosm, the “All-Self,” in order that one may fully surrender all that one has and is. This why St. Francis of Assisi visited lepers, the sight of which disgusted him. This is why Buddhists meditate in the presence of decaying corpses. This is why Aleister Crowley deliberately ate Leah Hirsig’s

• *“The Adept is not a perfection of what he feels to be the noblest part of him, but a Microcosm. He [must] complete the formation of himself as an image of the All.”*

—Commentaries to Liber LXV, II:45-46



feces to show he was indifferent to all material differences (Yes, that really happened). In short, we must confront everything that makes us squeamish, all that brings us a sense of disgust, all that we consider Evil... and unite with it in “love under will” so that no element of the Universe is not also part of ourselves. As perfect and complete microcosms of the Cosmos, we can then truly proclaim what is said in the Gnostic Mass, “There is no part of me that is not of the gods.”

Crowley lays out the essence this practice in *Liber V vel Reguli* when he writes, “The Magician should devise for himself a definite technique for destroying 'evil.' The essence of such a practice will consist in training the mind and the body to confront things which cause fear, pain, disgust, shame and the like. He must learn to endure them, then to become indifferent to them, then to analyze them until they give pleasure and instruction, and finally to appreciate them for their own sake, as aspects of Truth. When this has been done, he should abandon them, if they are really harmful in relation to health and comfort.”

• *“For Perfection abideth not in the Pinnacles, or in the Foundations, but in the ordered Harmony of one with all.”*

–Liber Causae, line 32

• *“The microcosm is an exact image of the Macrocosm; the Great Work is the raising of the whole man in perfect balance to the power of Infinity.”*

–Magick in Theory & Practice, chapter 0

• *“[There is] the Necessity of extending constantly thy Nature to new Mates upon every Plane of Being, so that thou mayst become the perfect Microcosm, an Image without Flaw of all that is.”*

–Liber Aleph, chapter 44

• *“Imagine listening to Beethoven with the prepossession that C is a good note and F a bad one; yet this is exactly the stand point from which all uninitiates contemplate the universe. Obviously, they miss the music.”*

–Confessions, chapter 86

## **The Ordeal: Crossing the Abyss**

### **The Dark Night of the Soul - The Babe of the Abyss**

One might think that such light, love, and bliss has no ordeal, but there is a distinct ordeal that awaits the Mystic at this second Stage of Illumination. The Ordeal of this Grade is a crucial one, known as the Crossing of the Abyss. As mentioned previously, the Mystic is united with the Object of her devotion in this Stage but still remains separate therefrom. If this Illumination is continued through the Mystic's persistent devotion and meditation, the by-products of this Illumination – especially the sense of overwhelming joy, bliss, and rapture – eventually “settle down.” The initial Illumination is like an explosion and if one remains in it, the clouds slowly disperse and one can see clearly.

At a certain point, the Mystic may realize that – despite all the joys and encouragements that Illumination has brought – she is still not completely united with her Beloved. In other words, a sense of distinction, separateness, or duality still remains. The opposition between self and not-self, between ego and non-ego, has not been completely transcended. Upon achieving this insight, the Mystic must re-engage with the Art of meditation with renewed vigor in order to know the Absolute so intimately and completely that there is no duality that can remain. This brings the Mystic to the final “crisis” of the Path: the ordeal of Crossing of the Abyss.

### **The Nature of the Ordeal of Crossing the Abyss**

The crossing of the Abyss is a metaphor that essentially correlates to Saint John of the Cross' term “the dark night of the soul.” A similar metaphor is given in Buddhism where one has “crossed the stream” to the other side, from *Samsara* to *Nirvana*. It is sometimes referred to by Christian mystics as “Dryness” or “aridity.” This term is adopted by

Crowley when, for example, in *De Lege Libellum* he writes, “But this Dryness hath its virtue, in that thereby the Soul is purged of those things that impeach the Will: for when the drouth is altogether perfect, then is it certain that by no means can the Soul be satisfied, save by the Accomplishment of the Great Work. And this is in strong souls a stimulus to the Will. It is the Furnace of Thirst that burneth up all dross within us.”

In Thelemic terminology, in this process of “crossing,” one becomes a “Babe of the Abyss.” After the period of Illumination which is characterized – as mentioned previously – by joy and beauty, there is a corresponding darkness and blankness that occurs. This shift may go back and forth repeatedly but ultimately, if there is persistence, the Mystic comes to the Abyss, the dark night of their soul. This is characterized by various things:

- The loss of a sense of “presence” of the Absolute/Divine.
- Intense feelings of stagnation, impotence, solitude, fatigue, and difficulty. They are essentially opposite of that which is felt in the midst of Illumination; it is the withdrawal of the ‘Beatific Vision’ characteristic of the grade of Lover.
- There may even be physical trials of illness and weakness, a sense of oppression by circumstance.

• “*Verily and Amen! I passed through the deep sea, and by the rivers of running water that abound therein, and I came unto the Land of No Desire.*”

–Liber LXV, III:1

• “*...they abode in the Land that the far-off travellers call Naught.*”

–Liber LXV, V:59

• “*...the Land of No-Thing.*”

–Liber A’ash, line 32

“*[He then] is stripped of all his attainments and of himself as well, even of his Holy Guardian Angel, and becomes a babe of the Abyss...*”

–One Star in Sight

All this serves as a great purification, a great trial by fire, by which the Mystic is purged of attachments. It is the purgation that breaks apart the life of the Mystic, allowing a new stage of attainment to arise from its destruction. It is as if all those darkest corners of the self that were not purged in the initial purification find their way to expression in the Mystic, and this is because the whole individual – the microcosm of the Mystic – must be transmuted in this ordeal. As the Alchemists might say, there is no transmutation without fire. It “cures” the aspirant of being able to settle in any lesser satisfaction than the achievement of the final stage or grade, that of the Hermit.

In order to Cross the Abyss successfully, one must be purged of all that one has and all that one is. This is what, in Thelema, is metaphorically stated as the draining out of one’s blood into the Cup of Babalon. This is called the “Universal Life” insofar as one has drained out the blood of one’s “individual life,” the separate self, to be merged with the Universal Life. That is, one

must release all attachment to everything that one possesses and to everything with which one identifies. This is why this phase is often called “annihilation,” “dissolution,” “cessation,” “self-naughting,” or “self-surrender.”

The Holy Book of Thelema, *Liber Cheth*, lists in particular the discarding of wealth (attachment to all possessions), health (attachment to the body), and love (attachment to others). These can be simply taken as three symbols that, together, refer to all of one’s attachments.

Failure to do this results in what Thelema calls a “Black Brother,”

• *“Thou shalt mingle thy life with the universal life. Thou shalt keep not back one drop.”*

–Liber Cheth, line 3

• *“...It is attained by the resolve of the Adeptus Exemptus to surrender all that he has and is for ever. It is an annihilation of all the bonds that compose the self or constitute the Cosmos, a resolution of all complexities into their elements...”*

–One Star in Sight

one who has attained this far yet refuses to give up the self in dissolution; the “Black Brother” is one who insists on retaining a sense of individuality or selfhood and does not drain the blood of their individual life into the Universal Life. However, if one succeeds in persisting to the end, one achieves the final stage.

*“[There] are the Black Brothers, that cry: I am I, they that deny Love, restricting it to their own Nature.”*  
–Liber Aleph, chapter 157

### 3) The Hermit: The Arising of Nemo

The complete dissolution of the sense of separate self, of the ego, constitutes the attainment of the third grade, the Hermit. One is then, in Thelemic terminology, a “Magister Templi” or “Master of the Temple.”

*“The essential Attainment is the perfect annihilation of that personality which limits and oppresses his true self.”*  
–One Star in Sight

One is an *arhat* or *buddha* in Buddhist terminology, and one has achieved *moksha*, or “liberation,” in Hindu terminology; it is equivalent to *Samadhi* in the terms of Yoga, the total union of subject and object. Since one is stripped of one’s identity, any sense of self, then one also may be called “Nemo,” which is Latin for “no man” (see *The Vision and the Voice*, 13th Aethyr for more on this symbolism).

Aside from this attainment being characterized negatively by a total dissolution of the sense of self or ego, it is also characterized positively by awakening to the ultimate reality, the transcendence of duality, the complete union of subject and object, or the total identification with the Absolute. These are really two sides of the same coin, so to speak, and lead Mystics to make pronouncements such as “My eye and God’s eye are one eye” (Meister Eckhart) and “I am the Truth” (Mansur al-Hallaj). Characteristics of this grade include:

- *Peace*: The dissolution of the self means a complete identity with

the Infinite and therefore with nothing partial. No event can trouble the individual who has perceived this Reality, for there can be no anxiety or fear of death if there is no one there to die, so to speak. The identification with any partial, component thing has been transcended and therefore any occurrence to these things does not disturb the Hermit. It represents equanimity of the mind raised to highest possible degree.

- *Energy*: New creative powers are conferred upon attaining this grade, for the Mystic has unified her entire self, feeling oneself to be an agent of divine vitality. The superabundant energy of Mystics can be seen historically with those who have had this Mystic experience including St. Paul's many letters and evangelizing efforts, St. Joan of Arc's leading the armies of France, St. Ignatius Loyola leading the Jesuits, let alone the histories of figures like Christ or of Buddha who taught for 40 years after his attainment.

## The Task

The complete dissolution, as previously said, leads to what one metaphorically may say is the birth of a New Man, the Master of the Temple or "Nemo." The mind and body are not destroyed in this attainment, but they are purged of a sense of ego or self.

Although the trance itself may involve the obliteration of consciousness itself, there is consequent to this the inevitable re-formulation of awareness. This is symbolically called

*"Those other parts of me that I had left for ever below the Abyss must serve as a vehicle for the energies which had been created by my act. My mind and body, deprived of the ego which they had hitherto obeyed, were now free to manifest according to their nature in the world, to devote themselves to aid mankind in its evolution."*  
-Confessions, chapter 66

being “cast out from the Abyss.” The symbolism at work is that one has attained the Supernal Triangle of the Tree of Life and then one is “cast out” from it back into the lower Sephiroth of the Tree of Life. One then “re-occupies” one’s body and mind but free of ego.

This is essentially equivalent to the Bodhisattva Vow to “come back to the world” to aid others in enlightenment, and it is found in symbolism of people returning from a remote or isolated place to teach humanity (e.g. Jesus returning from the wilderness, Mohammed returning from a cave, Buddha returning from the Bodhi-tree, *et cetera*).

Thelema uses the symbolism of a “Star that is cast forth to give light to the Earth... [One] appears 'as a morning star, or as an evening star, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death.' This is then the man himself, save that his separate individuality is no longer present; it is replaced by this single passion to rescue mankind.”<sup>619</sup>

*“From the Abyss comes No Man forth, but a Star startles the Earth...”*

*–One Star in Sight*

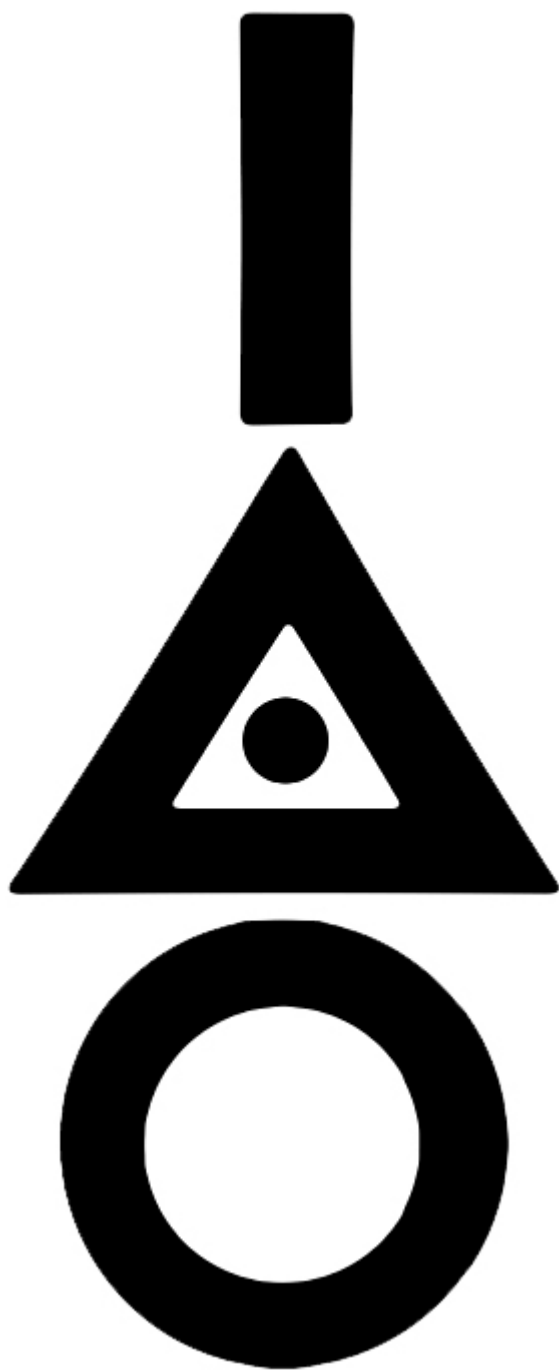
In short, one becomes conscious once again, devoid of ego, to do one’s Work in the world, to accomplish one’s Will purified from the elements of separateness and the sense of self. In Thelema, the symbolism used is that of Nemo “tending his garden.” In the 13th Aethyr it is stated, “Know thou that every man that is called NEMO hath a garden that he tendeth,” and Crowley comments on this by saying, “Every Magister Templi has a Work to do for the world.”<sup>620</sup>

This Work is the Will of the individual, purified by the Mystic path of imbalance and egotism, invigorated by a reconnection to one’s deepest creative wellspring of power stemming from one’s own Godhead.

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619 *The Vision and the Voice*, 18<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

620 *The Vision and the Voice*, 13<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.





**PART III**  
**The Thelemic**  
**Magician**



## CHAPTER 24

# THE THELEMIC MAGICIAN

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*Some of these next essays were originally prepared as notes for various lectures I gave in 2013 and 2014 e.v. as an Adjunct Instructor for the International College of Thelema. The general thrust of these articles is two-fold: First, there is an emphasis on seeing Magick and being a magician as a way of life rather than a set of tools. Second, there is an emphasis on being very concrete and down-to-earth rather than focusing on metaphysics or the many occult ideas, correspondences, figures, diagrams, and such that predominate the majority of the literature on Magick. Because of this, I focus more on what it means to be a magician more than any kind of advice on how to do any particular ritual.*

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What is a Magician?

It is written, “Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay.”<sup>621</sup> This True Will is obviously important.

Magick is a spiritual science which has the potential to help us in learning to know our True Wills, and to cause Change effectively in accordance with that True Will.

The knowledge and practice of Magick makes us into a Magician – an Adept, an Initiate – one who has mastered the Elements of Existence and who can move among them and interact with them so as to manifest, effect, enact, or accomplish her True Will.

Magick is the pursuit of the same thing as the old spiritual pursuit to “Know Thyself,” written over the temple at Delphi.

Also, as Buddha said, “It is better to conquer oneself than to

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<sup>621</sup> *Liber AL*, I:42-43.

conquer 10,000 armies.”<sup>622</sup> Magick is therefore also the pursuit to Conquer oneself.

Further: A Magician is one who has taken the “raw materials” of the self and, through the process of working on them, comes to Perfect these materials. Magick is therefore the pursuit to Perfect oneself as well.

With Magick, we have the tools – the theory and the practice – to come to know ourselves deeper, to perfect ourselves into instruments of our True Wills, and to conquer the four Elements, to conquer the Universe, which is to say: to conquer our Selves.

A Magician is someone who has made a conscious, deliberate choice to perform the Great Work of coming to Know, Perfect, and Conquer the self with great discipline to obtain true Freedom.

To say the same thing another way, we can look at the old adage “As above, so below.”<sup>623</sup> The One, the All, the Tao, Horus, or whatever we choose to call it works in accordance with its Divine Law. This Law is reflected into the Macrocosm in the perfect Order of the Heavens, and it is reflected into each one of us in the Microcosm in the Order of Earth. The Great Work of the Magician is to align one's own Nature with the Divine Nature, the personal Will with the Universal Will... and one finds that they are not two laws but simply an expression of the One Law in Heaven and on Earth.

This means that Magick isn't about glamor or “cool stuff” (although it may be your Will to indulge in those things to some extent). Magick is the ultimate existential pursuit, the attainment of one's True Motion, one's True Purpose. It is the ultimate spiritual pursuit, the attainment of the Truth of one's being, one's Divine Nature. This necessarily requires sincerity, and sincerity is the mark of a true Magician; not necessarily seriousness, but always sincerity. This is a real earnestness or genuineness to learn, grow, and expand in accordance with our Wills. I hope to impress upon you that Magick is realistic and important, and not simply a hobby. I am interested in true Magicians, individuals who truly cause

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<sup>622</sup> *The Dhammapada.*

<sup>623</sup> *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes.*

Change in themselves and the world around them in conformity with Will... Not magicians who simply read books or collect ritual implements or even do rituals but never actually change themselves or the world.

To the Magician, a god will not indwell a temple poorly prepared. The Magician believes their task to properly prepare their Temple so that their Godhead “may indwell”; this is why it's said the Body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit. We probably shouldn't soil it too badly then! This is why there is a distinct placement of the “furniture” and objects in a Temple: it reflects that properly prepared Self which enables the higher principles – represented by the individuals in the ritual – the proper space to work their Magick.

In order to fashion this Temple of the Self to be the most complete expression of the God of its True Nature, the Magician seeks to discover, purify, strengthen, and devote the nature and powers of her own Being to the accomplishment of her Will.

Magick, on one level, offers a host of tools that will enable to discover “hidden” or latent aspects of being's nature and powers. To the true Magician, Magick is not simply a set of tools, it is a way of life.

Magick is driven by a guiding principle, not a set of techniques. This principle is the constant pursuit to Know, to Perfect, and to Conquer the Self so as to Do one's Will with the utmost of one's free will, full awareness, balance, and wholeness. When we do our Will's, we are in harmony with the Divine Law, and we work with the momentum of the Universe.

## CHAPTER 25

# THE WORLD OF THE THELEMIC MAGICIAN

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*This chapter was written specifically for this book in mid-2014, e.v.. It attempts to re-orient the focus of Magicians from an intellectual understanding of symbols toward one where they viscerally represent lived experience or some aspect thereof.*

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### What is a Symbol?

When talking about symbolism, it is all-too-easy and all-too-common for us to remain content with having an intellectual understanding of symbols. For example, we know that Nuit represents infinite space and infinite stars, and Hadit represents the core of every star. This is worthwhile knowledge insofar as it helps us intellectually navigate a symbolic world-view, yet symbols are something much more than this.

If we say a symbol means “this” or “that,” we are essentially relegating it to the status of a sign. A sign merely conveys information. For example, treated as a sign, “red” means Geburah which means strength. “E” means energy and “M” means mass. **A true symbol is more than this: it is imbued with a visceral vitality**, from which many meanings may arise but which none in particular may fully exhaust.

Consider the difference between a stop sign and the American flag. A stop sign is a sign: it has a specific meaning which it is intended to communicate. It means “stop your vehicle here.” The actual potency of a symbol is not contacted; we remain on an intellectual level of meaning, and that is really its only function. The American flag, however, conveys

something much more visceral to someone who perceives it. It may evoke feelings of patriotism, solidarity, hope, militarism, hedonism, or many other things – all of these reactions come out of the symbol but none of them exhaust its meaning. One might say that, **magically, this symbol is “charged,” it has a potency which can cause Change:** consider how this “mere image” has the potential to unite a people, give hope to the hopeless, or start wars.

Unfortunately, many of us never make real contact with our symbols. At best, many times we understand its intellectual implications and references, which can easily act as a further obstacle to accessing and experiencing the true potency contained within a symbol. How do we access this?

One avenue is to look at the nature of when symbols arise spontaneously. When this occurs – as in, for example, dreams or in psychedelic trips or magical work – there are some identifying features. Firstly, as already mentioned, symbols carry a subtle sense of being “charged” with a vitality; another way to say it might be that there is an emotional and perhaps even bodily response to, or resonance with, them. In this way, **a symbol is not simply an image but a felt experience in itself.** Secondly, when these symbols arise spontaneously, they are experienced as immediate: they are felt in the “now.” It has a sense of immediacy and urgency which is lacking when simply talking about them intellectually. It is the difference between hearing about Bob and running into him while turning a corner, between knowing a flame is hot and being burnt by touching it.

## Our Realities

So what does all this mean for us as Magicians? Again, we want to be able to contact the true potency of our symbols, beyond or deeper than the grasping of their intellectual import. The key to accessing this “charge” is in another aspect of symbols as just discussed: their immediacy. This

means a symbol must refer to something in the lived experience of the individual, in the world as felt in the now.

For this, we have to look at the world, or reality, in a way that is often different from the way we are trained. The tendency is to look at what is “real” from a place of intellectual understanding, knowing that the universe is constituted by various forms of matter that interact through various forces, that we are bodies on the planet Earth which revolves around the Sun, and that we are composed of cells forming various systems such as the nervous, respiratory, and circulatory systems, *et cetera*.

While all that may very well be true, our interest here is in a different understanding of reality, the reality of the world *as experienced* by each individual. Most magicians intuitively know that this is the reality with which we primarily work in our Magick. In this way we don't speak about *the* world, but we must speak about each individual's “world,” the unique world of their own experience. Each star is not one star in the midst of many in *the* world; **every star is its own world**, overlapping and interacting with other worlds in various ways. As Crowley wrote, “We are all free, all independent, all shining gloriously, *each one a radiant world*”<sup>624</sup> (emphasis added).

The more technical term for this approach is “phenomenology,” meaning the study (*logia*) of things as they appear (*phainomena*). From a phenomenological perspective, we do not care about notions of what is “objectively” true but, rather, we care about what is experienced as true for each individual. The focus is on how things are perceived and felt by the individual. True symbols point to this phenomenological, or experiential, approach to reality.

## Our Radiant World

Consider everything of which you are aware at this moment. You are aware of a world disclosed through your senses: an environment, the

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624 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty*.



various objects around you, and your body. This world is spatially extended, meaning that it is perceived within the three dimensions of space. Mathematically, we might say that all things are experienced as being on an x-axis (horizontal), y-axis (vertical), and z-axis (depth). This world of which you are aware also includes your “internal” world of thoughts, feelings, images, intentions, and so on.

In what follows, we will identify various Thelemic symbols with aspects of direct, lived experience. It must be stated again for emphasis that no words can ever truly communicate the inner meaning and potency of these symbols; each individual must locate the symbol in their own experience and feel the immediacy of it in their own “world.” Further, symbols have many layers and many meanings; only the most obvious of these will be discussed to give an intimation as to the way in which our symbols relate to immediate experience.

Nuit is “Infinite Space, and the Infinite Stars thereof”<sup>625</sup> and so She is the very space in which the world exists. The “Infinite Stars thereof” may be taken to refer to any cluster of matter and energy, any and all objects within one's experience, and so She is both everything that has extension in space and space itself. We might say She is Space itself and all Matter within that Space. **The body of Nuit is the very stuff of your world.** Be aware of everything around you and know that it is all the body of Nuit. Nuit also represents infinite possibilities insofar all this “stuff” is the precondition for any and all experience.

Hadit is “the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star”<sup>626</sup> and so **He is the center of our awareness, the Perceiver or the Point-of-View.** Identify all things of which you are aware with the body of Nuit and that which perceives all of them, the point at the center of awareness, with the flame of Hadit. Hadit says of himself, “I am not extended.”<sup>627</sup> Hadit is “not extended” as Nuit represents all things in extension; mathematically, Hadit is the point which has no length,

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625 *Liber AL*, I:22.

626 *Liber AL*, II:6.

627 *Liber AL*, II:2.

breadth, or depth but only position, only a Point-of-View. Further, Hadit is “Life”<sup>628</sup> itself. Hadit is the Motion of all things, and since all motion is by virtue of Time, we might identify the motion of Hadit with Time itself.

Hadit is “the complement of Nu,”<sup>629</sup> so together – the Motion of the Point-of-View of Hadit and the Space of Nuit – they are the two united and inseparable preconditions of all Events, of all experience. Each moment or “point-event” of experience is the union between the core of your awareness, the Point-of-View, and the infinite possibilities inherent in Space; they represent our experience of Space-Time itself.

The union of Nuit and Hadit creates all Experience, and we might call this union, their “child,” Ra-Hoor-Khuit. **Ra-Hoor-Khuit is all things**, as the unions of Space and Motion, which we may Qabalistically represent by the Tree of Life itself. Crowley speaks to this when he writes, “I proclaim Blessing and Worship to Nuit Our Lady and Her Lord Hadit, for the Miracle of the Anatomy of the Child Ra-Hoor-Khuit, as it is shewn in the Design *Minutum Mundum*, the Tree of Life.”<sup>630</sup> In this sense, Ra-Hoor-Khuit is our “All,” our god of our own radiant world. Crowley writes, “Ra-Hoor-Khuit is the Crowned and Conquering Child. This is also a reference to the 'Crowned' and Conquering 'Child' in ourselves, our own personal God.”<sup>631</sup>

There are many symbols that overlap in certain ways, are interchangeable, or can be seen as different layers or “levels” of the same essential idea. For example, Chaos – or the Beast – can be seen as that within us which strives for continual experience, and Babalon is the seduction of the world into which we plunge to have our varied experiences. Chaos can therefore be seen as identical to Hadit and Babalon to Nuit, except at a “lower” plane, which means at a less abstract or “ultimate” level. One might say that Nuit and Hadit are symbols that essentially operate at a completely non-dual level, whereas Chaos and

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628 *Liber AL*, II:6.

629 *Liber AL*, II:2.

630 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 207.

631 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:22.

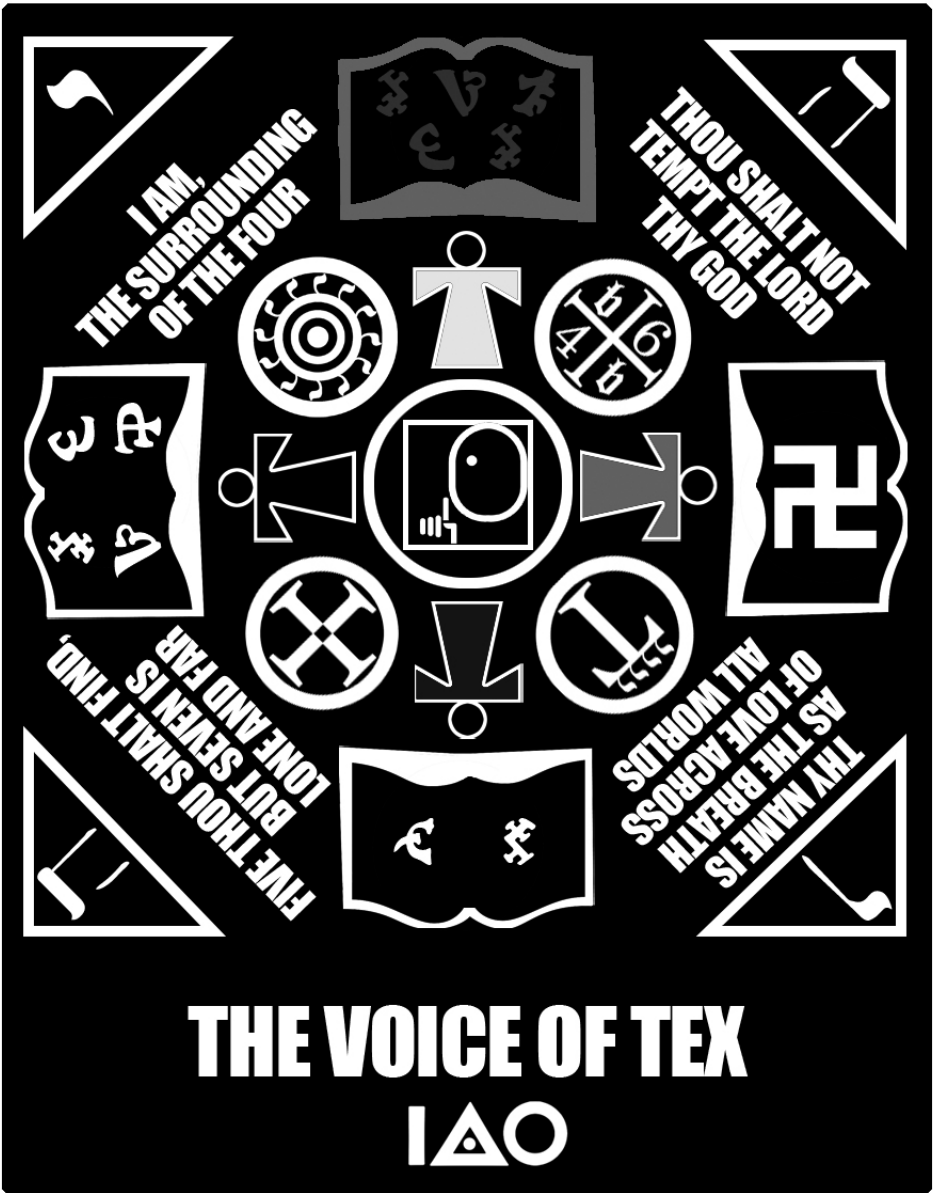
Babalon require at least some semblance of duality. Then again, we might say that there is no duality between Chaos and Babalon either, leading us to realize the difference between the experiential and the intellectual approach to symbols: there are no qualms or arguing when dealing with the direct experience of symbols. They simply *are*. It is only when the intellect comes in and tries to categorize, explain, organize, and perhaps place on the Tree of Life that we “fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason.”<sup>632</sup>

This reinforces the necessity to *experience* these symbols and not simply think about them: we must find them in our immediate experience, and this may be difficult to do until we have an experience of the “emergence” of these symbols in a spontaneous or natural way.

The essential point is that these symbols are not mere intellectual playthings; they refer to the world of the Magician *as experienced*. In order to truly become versed in our symbolism, one must not simply know it but live it.

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632 *Liber AL*, II:27.



*The Voice of TEX*  
 is based on the 30<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*

## CHAPTER 26

# THE PRIMARY ACT OF MAGICK

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*This essay was written in mid-2014 e.v. as a way to clarify what is the fundamental practice at the basis of all Magick. There is a sublime simplicity to this idea of the “primary act” of remembering, which cuts across the immense and multitudinous amounts of various practices which are typically said to encompass the field of Magick.*

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The Will is the dynamic motion of your Being, and your sole right and duty is to do that Will.<sup>633</sup> Most of us go about our lives in a state of darkness: there is ignorance about who we really are and we are not in touch with our Will. Battered about by thoughts, emotions, and circumstance, we can be like a rudderless boat adrift in the sea. Really, we are all like this to a certain extent, sometimes more so than at other times, but **we have all been “wandering in the Darkness”** as it is said in the Neophyte initiation ceremony of the Golden Dawn.

Although not all individuals are called to the Path of striving to do one’s Will, there are those of us – most likely including yourself if you are taking time to read this – who have perceived that there is something more to life than merely being a victim of circumstance, of simply eating, working, sleeping, and then dying. **There is a greater purpose awaiting, a fuller way to live: there is the possibility of Light.**

Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change in conformity with Will. This means that **Magick is essentially the science and art of Life.** Those of us who are called to the Path engage in some form of Magick in order to try to find the Light of Will, whether through meditation, ritual, or whatever else. No one would engage in any form of Magick if they did not

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633 *Liber AL*, I:42.

believe in the possibility of improving themselves and their lives; the very act implies a conscious desire to change. Since we perceive the possibility of the Light and don't want to live in darkness, **the most basic form of Magick involves altering the way we act in the world**, trying to become more conscious and intentional in the way we engage with circumstance. That is, we don't want to just stumble about the world through the darkness; we want the light and freedom of conscious intent. This involves, in some way or another, the discipline of not reacting to things in our typical, conditioned, habitual ways. We – for example – try to eat better, think in new and different ways, not be carried away by emotions, and not follow out every passing whim or desire. We do these things when we remember to do them, and we fail when we forget ourselves and our Path.

**This is then the primary act of Magick: remembering.** If you do not remember to do something, you will not do it, regardless of whether you have the strength and skill to carry it out or not. For the sake of example, if you are trying not to insult people out of anger, there are two possibilities: you will either forget and insult someone out of anger again or you will feel angry and you will remember your Path. Only then is the possibility of change open to you. Your discipline allows for the possibility of choice: without remembering you will simply react in the same habitual way. **Remembering is the possibility of liberty, and forgetting is the resignation to slavery.**

**The most important thing to remember is who you really are.** So who are you really? You are not the physical stuff of your body, the thoughts that pass through your mind, the emotions that well up, or your desires. You are not your personality or your career or your possessions. In the language of Hermeticism, you are not the four Elements: you are Spirit. You are the Light of consciousness itself, the “Khabs”<sup>634</sup> or star, and every aspect of experience is merely “the dance of the Veil of Life upon the Face of the Spirit.”<sup>635</sup> Actually, you are even beyond consciousness. Consciousness is simply the vehicle of the expression of That which you

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634 *Liber AL*, I:8-9.

635 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

really are: boundlessness. Call it infinity, Godhead, Dharmakaya, the Absolute, True Self, Atman, the Truth, or whatever else you like, but this is ultimately what we are. This is what every mystic, yogi, and *buddha* who has ever lived has tried to express and this is also what Thelema expresses.

In a sense, *The Book of the Law* is a text telling you to remember who you really are. Crowley wrote, “There are many ethical injunctions of a revolutionary character in the Book, but they are all particular cases of the general precept to realize one’s own absolute God-head and to act with the nobility which springs from that knowledge. Practically all vices springs from failure to do this.”<sup>636</sup>

Well, what does *The Book of the Law* have to say about remembering? There are two instances of the word “remember” and they both essentially say the same thing: **Remember that you are Hadit**. In the second chapter where Hadit is the speaker it says, “But remember, o chosen one, to be me; to follow the love of Nu in the star-lit heaven; to look forth upon men, to tell them this glad word.”<sup>637</sup> Remember to be me, to be Hadit. You are the inexhaustible, procreative life-will, the expression of Energy through Possibility, the “love of Nu.” **From this Hadit-perspective, every Experience is a sacrament**, a Fulfillment of the union of Hadit with one of the infinite possibilities of Nuit. Where are your petty quarrels, your resentments, and your fears when you remember you are Hadit? “Dost thou fail? Art thou sorry? Is fear in thine heart? Where I am these are not.”<sup>638</sup>

Also in the second chapter the Book says, “Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.”<sup>639</sup> If you remember that you are Hadit, you will naturally know that existence is pure joy: **if you are All, then every Event is the fulfillment of your Will, every Experience is a new**

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636 *Confessions*, chapter 49.

637 *Liber AL*, II:76.

638 *Liber AL*, II:46-47.

639 *Liber AL*, II:9.

**note in the music of your rapturous love-song to Nuit.** Insofar as we identify with those things that pass and are done, we fall back into darkness, we become shadows and sorrow is naturally our lot. Crowley wrote, “For in each Man his Inmost Light is the Core of his Star. That is, Hadit; and his Work is the Identification of himself with that Light.”<sup>640</sup>

This is the primary act of Magick, the foundation upon which all other acts should be based: Remember.

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640 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 1.



## CHAPTER 27

# THE 4 WEAPONS OF THE TRUE MAGICIAN

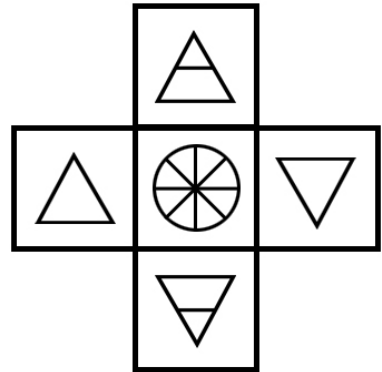
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*This piece was also adapted from notes for a lecture given in 2013 e.v. The idea behind this article is to focus on the four Elements of the Magician and how they represent real, tangible qualities of the self with which one can work in the continual process of self-knowledge, self-conquering, and self-perfection.*

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In traditional Hermeticism, there are 5 Elements: Earth, Air, Water, Fire, and Spirit. Spirit is the 5th Element, the Quintessence: literally, the “fifth essence.”

It is important to understand that, ultimately, the Magician is not Earth, Air, Water, or Fire. The Magician is Spirit. Spirit works through the four Elements but is not limited by them. We may imagine the Cross of the Elements with Spirit in the Center and the four Elements on the sides.



The four Elements represent all things in the Universe. It is the One/Whole divided into four aspects. Spirit is that which contains them all and binds them together, the One among the Many.

Every man and every woman is a star, and each individual is a microcosm of the entire macrocosm of the Universe. In the Microcosm, the Magician herself, there are the four Magical Weapons that correspond with the four Elements:

- 1) Earth: Disk/Pantacle
- 2) Air: Dagger/Sword
- 3) Water: Cup/Chalice
- 4) Fire: Wand

There is also Spirit, which is simultaneously the Lamp at the center of the Temple on the ceiling as well as the Altar, which is at the center of the Temple on the ground. These reflect that Spirit is understood as the Sun in the macrocosm and the Phallic-Generative powers in the microcosm.

The four Weapons are those Elements within oneself that a Magician comes to know, perfect, and conquer. The “right” or wise ordering of them allows for Spirit to manifest fully. In the microcosm of the Magician these Weapons are:

- 1) Earth: the body
- 2) Air: the intellect, conceptual mind
- 3) Water: the emotions, and also intuition
- 4) Fire: the desires, and also willpower/volition itself
- 5) Spirit: True Will. The four others are the Weapons on the Altar, the four-fold extension of the Will of the Magician.

When these Weapons are in harmony – when they are purified, strengthened, and dedicated to One Object (the Will) – the Magician can work her True Will. I believe that *Liber Librae*, also known as “The Book of Balance,” gives all the secrets necessary to accomplish this Work. The most fundamental point is given in the first line:

*“Equilibrium is the basis of the Work. If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?”*<sup>641</sup>

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641 *Liber Librae*.

That is, each Weapon must be balanced in itself, and balanced with one another. This is further reinforced in other lines from the same text:

*“Remember that unbalanced force is evil; that unbalanced severity is but cruelty and oppression; but that also unbalanced mercy is but weakness which would allow and abet Evil...”*

*Establish thyself firmly in the equilibrium of forces, in the centre of the Cross of the Elements, that Cross from whose centre the Creative Word issued in the birth of the dawning Universe.”*<sup>642</sup>

## **Earth: The Body – The Pantacle or Disk**

### **Worship and Neglect Not the Body**

Regarding the Weapon of Earth, the body, *Liber Librae* states, “Worship, and neglect not the physical body which is thy temporary connection with the outer and material world.” We can break this down further to see what is really taught in this deceptively simple line.

“Worship”: In the New Aeon, we do not see the body (microcosm) or the material world (macrocosm) as Evil. The Body is the Temple of the Holy Spirit, so it should be treated as a Temple, i.e. with care and reverence. As I have said elsewhere, the Earth is not a prison, but a Temple where the sacrament of Life may be enacted; the body is not corrupt, but a pulsing and thriving vessel for the expression of Energy; sex is not sinful, but a mysterious conduit of pleasure and power as well as an Image of the ecstatic nature of all Experience. Also, *The Book of the Law* says, “Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this.”<sup>643</sup>

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642 *Liber Librae*.

643 *Liber AL*, II:22.

“Neglect not”: Make sure to take care of the needs of the body. These needs are not evil; they are necessities and they need to be attended to and taken care of. The body is the foundation of the Pyramid of the Self: If you don't have a firm base, everything will crumble.

Since we are seeking equilibrium, we can also look at the opposite of “neglect” which is vanity. Obsession over one's body, appearance, and health is just as destabilizing as neglecting the body. To take care of the body, we must purify and strengthen our Weapon of Earth.

In order to purify the body, don't overindulge in things that make the body unhealthy such as junk food or drugs. In order to strengthen the body, get adequate exercise. Crowley gives the recommendation, “It is important that he should strive to excel in some sport, and that that sport should be the one best calculated to keep this body in health.”<sup>644</sup> We should “strengthen and control the animal passions.”<sup>645</sup> If we strengthen but do not control them, they will control us; our Liberty is actually increased through our discipline. Further, *The Book of the Law* counsels us, “Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy.”<sup>646</sup> This strength is as necessary on the physical plane as it is on the mental. I would also add that some discipline that is physical is important; for example, the discipline of learning to play a musical instrument. This develops awareness of the body as well as the control of the body, which is essentially cultivating the capacity to direct the body in accordance with Will.

### **The Equilibrium of Earth**

As “Equilibrium is the basis of the Work,”<sup>647</sup> each Element must be balanced. The Element of Earth can be unbalanced or balanced. According to *Liber Librae*, we tend toward “grossness and avarice” when the Element of Earth is unbalanced in us.

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644 *Liber ABA*, Part 2.

645 *Liber Librae*.

646 *Liber AL*, II:70.

647 *Liber Librae*.

“Grossness” essentially means sloth and gluttony. When the body is not taken care of – that is, when we neglect the Element of Earth – we have sloth or laziness. This can be seen as a lack of energy or a lack of sensual desires. The other side of the coin of imbalance is gluttony or overindulging. This can be seen as filling up the body or an excess of sensual desires. Note that sensual desires – food, drink, sex, *et cetera* – are not bad, except when unbalanced. *The Book of the Law* advises us, “Be not animal; refine thy rapture! If thou drink, drink by the eight and ninety rules of art: if thou love, exceed by delicacy; and if thou do aught joyous, let there be subtlety therein!”<sup>648</sup>

“Avarice” refers to greed and hoarding; the word comes from a root that means “craving, longing for.” This shows itself in our materialistic culture and our materialistic desires. While wanting material things is not inherently bad in any way, craving or longing for material things is often for their own sake rather than expressions of Will. For example, it is good to have shelter and money for food but seeking to have a grandiose house or always eating filet mignon is unbalanced.

In addition to grossness and avarice, we might also add “vanity” (as mentioned previously) which is the opposite of neglecting the body; it is obsession over appearances. In order to balance Earth within us, we must be mindful of our tendencies toward grossness, avarice, and vanity.

When the Element of Earth is balanced within us, *Liber Librae* says we are “laborious and patient.” “Laborious” doesn't mean “tedious” in this context; it refers to being industrious and hardworking. The opposite, of course, is sloth or laziness. “Patient” is difficult to pin down but basically means a sense of peacefulness, of not obsessing over getting results instantly. Crowley's motto “Perdurabo,” meaning “I shall endure to the end” capture the spirit of patience nicely. As *The Book of the Law* explains, “Pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result.”<sup>649</sup> This being “delivered from the lust of result” means we need to cultivate non-attachment to expectations, results, and the fruits of our

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648 *Liber AL*, II:70.

649 *Liber AL*, I:44.

labor.

In addition to laboriousness and patience, we might also add “worship” as the reverent attitude that is balanced between the extremes of neglect and vanity.

### **The Impermanence of Earth**

Another characteristic of Earth is impermanence, the fact that everything is in flux and nothing is permanent. A symbol of the Weapon of Earth is the Disk, and “the Disk is always spinning.”<sup>650</sup> Everything earthly is temporary, including your body. Thelema walks the Middle Path between attachment and neglect: we take care of the body but we are not overly attached to it. This requires an awareness that the body is “thy temporary connection with the outer and material world.”<sup>651</sup>

The Magician works with the forces of Nature, not against them: the Magician acknowledges the temporary, constantly changing, impermanent nature of the body. Our needs are constantly changing as well: the needs of an infant are not the same as the needs of a youth, adolescent, adult, or a senior.

The body will eventually perish: the Magician faces Death with eyes open, head erect,<sup>652</sup> embracing it as the seal of his age-long love with Existence. As it says in *The Book of the Law*, “If the body of the King dissolve, he shall remain in pure ecstasy for ever.”<sup>653</sup> The body is like a talisman: prepared with great care but ultimately discarded. Attachment to the body is one of the first things attacked in Eastern traditions, and we acknowledge this while also acknowledging that it is our Temple.

### **Summary of Earth**

- Worship the body: This is a reverent attitude that is neither neglectful nor vain or obsessive. The body and the material world

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650 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 74.

651 *Liber Librae*.

652 This is the attitude taken during the Collect of “Death” in the Gnostic Mass.

653 *Liber AL*, II:21.

are neither evil nor something to be avoided, but things to be embraced with Balance. “Lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture.”<sup>654</sup>

- Neglect not: Take care of the body's needs including food, water, exercise, and sleep. “Wisdom says: be strong!”<sup>655</sup>
- Be wary of imbalance: Laziness, overindulgence, and greed are all the result of not being balanced. “Refine thy rapture!”<sup>656</sup>
- Cultivate balance: Being hardworking and patient or peaceful are both results of attaining equilibrium.
- Non-attachment and adaptation: Everything material is impermanent. We must recognize this, especially the impermanence of our own bodies, while also working our Wills within the constant flux of existence.

## **Air: The Intellect or Reason – The Dagger or Sword**

### **Mental Equanimity**

The Weapon of Air is the Dagger or Sword, which represents the intellect or “Reason.” It generally refers to our relationship with our thoughts. Traditionally, the Kerub of Air is a man since humanity is a particularly intellect-heavy animal compared to the rest. There is therefore a great deal to say on this particular Weapon in our arsenal.

*Liber Librae* gives the important counsel to “let thy mental Equilibrium be above disturbance by material events.” This is the power of “indifference” or mindfulness: We need to train our minds to react elastically to all events, not allowing any event – good or bad – to knock us off our balance. By “bad” events, I mean things such as sickness, poverty, insult, and blame; by “good” events, I mean things such as health, wealth, praise, and flattery.

It also says in *Liber Librae*, “Be sure that thy soul is firm and

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654 *Liber AL*, II:22.

655 *Liber AL*, II:70.

656 *Liber AL*, II:70.

steadfast; for it is by flattering thy weaknesses that the Weak Ones will gain power over thee.” The Magician stands firmly in the Center of the Temple, in the place of Balance, and is not swayed by praise or blame, flattery or critique. This means that the Magician is the creative causal principle in her own Universe: the Magician acts, not reacts. The Magician is the source of her own Power: she does not give power to other people or to circumstance to determine her State of Being. If we let people get a reaction out of us when they insult us, we give them power – we react instead of act. If we let people get a reaction out of us when they praise us, we give them power – we react instead of act. If we let circumstance get a reaction of us when the world throws us trouble, we give away our power and we lose our equilibrium. If we let circumstance get a reaction out of us when the world throws us good things, we give away our power and we lose our equilibrium.

Our mental Equilibrium is therefore cultivated to be above disturbance by material events. This is a sense of power and of peacefulness, but our power and our peace derive from our selves, not from the outside.

### **Think Rationally**

*Liber Librae* gives the succinct advice to “think rationally.” To “sharpen the dagger” is to “sharpen the mind.” In this case, we must learn and strive to master the various forms of thought and communication. Crowley wrote that, “All magicians ought to be grounded solidly in Formal Logic.”<sup>657</sup> Logic represents the rules of the intellect (and are applicable only to the plane of the intellect. Learning logic means learning clear thinking, which is the basis of thinking rationally. Crowley also recommends having a ground in the classics, mathematics, and science.<sup>658</sup> Being grounded in the classics of literature means one develops an understanding of the major influences of human thought, and it increases the breadth of one's knowledge. Being grounded in mathematics means,

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657 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 23.

658 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 72.



similarly to logic, learning the rules of manipulating numbers. Being grounded in science is especially important as the scientific method is the basis of Magick: we proceed by experimentation rather than taking anything on faith.

If the virtue of the body is to be healthy, it is the virtue of the mind to be clear and concise. Being unable to think clearly and concisely is, on the plane of intellect, the same thing as being unable to coordinate one's muscles on the plane of the body. We think poorly of people who clumsily blunder about the world, so why should we not regard sloppy thinking similarly?

## **Humility**

There is a danger in becoming vain and prideful if one gains a lot of knowledge without a proportionate increase in wisdom. *Liber Librae* says, “let thy victories bring thee not Vanity, for with increase of Knowledge should come increase of Wisdom. He who knoweth little, thinketh he knoweth much; but he who knoweth much has learned his own ignorance. Seest thou a man wise in his own conceit? There is more hope of a fool, than of him.”

The realm of Magick is replete with eggheads who lord their knowledge over others, and it can easily become a route to aggrandized self-superiority. What is needed with increase of knowledge is an increase of understanding of one's ignorance, and a humility to understand that knowledge is not worthwhile in itself but only as a guide to or an aspect of Will. One must “Humble thyself before thy Self.”<sup>659</sup>

## **The Equilibrium of Air**

The Element of Air can be unbalanced or balanced. According to *Liber Librae*, when the Element of Air is unbalanced within us we tend toward “frivolity and caprice.”

“Frivolity” essentially means paying attention to things of little

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659 *Liber Librae*.

value. The mind must know what is valuable and what is not. Oscar Wilde once made this point with his typical satirical wit when he wrote, “Nowadays people know the price of everything and the value of nothing.”<sup>660</sup> Frivolity includes frivolous pursuits, which would include frivolous goals, frivolous activities, frivolous friends or relationships, *et cetera*. The Magician must be mindful of the way her time and energy is spent, making sure to redirect mental energy to meaningful pursuits. In Thelemic terms, the Magician must constantly ask herself: What can I be doing to know and do my True Will? Chances are that things like watching television or being in a draining relationship are not high on the list. Crowley spoke to this point very clearly when he wrote:

*“Search yourselves cunningly, I pray you, analysing your inmost thoughts. And first you shall discard all those gross obvious hindrances to your Will: idleness, foolish friendships, waste employments or enjoyments, I will not enumerate the conspirators against the welfare of your State. Next, find the minimum of daily time which is in good sooth necessary to your natural life. The rest you shall devote to the True Means of your Attainment. And even these necessary hours you shall consecrate to the Great Work, saying consciously always while at these Tasks that you perform them only in order to preserve your body and mind in health for the right application to that sublime and single Object. It shall not be very long before you come to understand that such a life is the true Liberty.”*<sup>661</sup>

“Caprice” means impulsive changes of the mind or indecision. Steadiness of mind is a virtue for a Magician. As *Liber Librae* says, “To obtain Magical Power, learn to control thought; admit only those ideas that are in harmony with the end desired, and not every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself. Fixed thought is a means to an end.

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660 Wilde, Oscar. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

661 *De Lege Libellum*.

Therefore pay attention to the power of silent thought and meditation. The material act is but the outward expression of thy thought, and therefore hath it been said that 'the thought of foolishness is sin.' Thought is the commencement of action, and if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?"

The control of thought through various techniques of concentration, in meditation and in magick, is a large part of the Work of the Magician. Consider how many thoughts occur during the day. One study estimated we have an average of 60,000 thoughts every day. How many of these are indecisive and frivolous? How many are turned toward the Great Work? How many are dedicated toward finding one's True Will or accomplishing it? How many are reactive to environment and circumstance rather than active and creative? If "Magical Power" is based on control of thought, every Magician must strive to use their thoughts in a harmonious and productive way.

Other than frivolity and caprice being the results of imbalance of thought, we may add lopsidedness or one-sidedness. The mind works in dualities: X and not-X, black or white, true or false, up or down, tall or short, fat or skinny, stupid or smart, *et cetera*. The Magician's mental equilibrium is above the disturbance of any one-sided thought or belief. This is a pervasive theme running through Crowley's writing:

*"Now every Thought is a Separation, and the Medicine of that is to marry Each One with its Contradiction, as I have shewed formerly in many Writings. And thou shalt clap the one to the other with Vehemence of Spirit, swiftly as Light itself, that the Ecstasy be Spontaneous. So therefore it is expedient that thou have travelled already in this Path of Antithesis, knowing perfectly the Answer to every Glyph or Problem, and thy Mind ready there with."* <sup>662</sup>

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662 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 180.

*“Balance against each thought its exact opposite! For the Marriage of these is the Annihilation of Illusion.”*<sup>663</sup>

*“Of the methods of destroying various deep-rooted ideas there are many. The best is perhaps the method of equilibrium. Get the mind into the habit of calling up the opposite to every thought that may arise. In conversation always disagree. See the other man's arguments; but, however much your judgment approves them, find the answer. Let this be done dispassionately; the more convinced you are that a certain point of view is right, the more determined you should be to find proofs that it is wrong. If you have done this thoroughly, these points of view will cease to trouble you; you can then assert your own point of view with the calm of a master, which is more convincing than the enthusiasm of a learner. You will cease to be interested in controversies; politics, ethics, religion will seem so many toys, and your Magical Will will be free from these inhibitions.”*<sup>664</sup>

Since the Magician stands in the center in the place of equilibrium, one must consider the truth and falsity of every proposition and be able to see the truth and falsity of both sides. Consider, for example, these propositions about the philosophy of Thelema:

- Thelema encourages asceticism. Thelema encourage indulgence.
- Thelema is a doctrine of War. Thelema is a doctrine of Love.
- Thelema is democratic. Thelema is aristocratic.
- Thelema acknowledges your independence from others. Thelema acknowledges your interdependence with others.

These are just a few examples, all within the small sphere of the philosophy of Thelema. As Crowley wisely said: “the more convinced you

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663 *The Heart of the Master.*

664 *Liber ABA, Part 2.*

are that a certain point of view is right, the more determined you should be to find proofs that it is wrong.”<sup>665</sup> I believe it was Phyllis Seckler who once said something to the effect that if one is convinced *The Book of the Law* says one thing, you just haven't found the part in the Book that says the exact opposite. This is true of all thought.

Returning to the general qualities of the equilibrium of Air, *Liber Librae* states that balanced Air is “prompt and active.” “Prompt” means quick to act. The mind should be sharp and quick; the Magician responds elastically to every situation. This is greatly aided by a breadth and depth of knowledge (such as the previously mentioned suggestion of being grounded in logic, classics, mathematics, and science) as well as concentration, which is developed through meditation and ritual.

“Active” means not slothful, not dull or heavy. The Magician always abides by the dictum to “Strive ever to more!”<sup>666</sup> Exercising the mind is just as important as exercising the body. We can fall into a stupor from dull and repetitive tasks, from becoming passive to entertainment such as television, and many other avenues. The Magician is a natural learner and always seeks out new ideas and perspectives.

Aside from being prompt and active, we might also add the balance of viewpoints, seeing the truth and falsity of each, as previously mentioned.

### **Reason is a Lie**

In relation to the Weapon of Air, our thoughts and intellect, there is an important doctrine in *The Book of the Law*. It says:

*“There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason. Now a curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursèd for ever! If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will*

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665 *Liber ABA*, Part 2.

666 *Liber AL*, II:72.

*stops & does nought. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness. Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise. Enough of Because! Be he damned for a dog! But ye, o my people, rise up & awake!”*<sup>667</sup>

Reason must be honed and become the ruler of thought, but it must also stay within its own realm. Most people are dominated by their minds: their Dagger takes the place of Spirit rather than Air, so to speak. The mind constantly wants to be King when it is really merely a minister. The most common way this occurs is when one has strong beliefs about how things (especially about oneself and others) “should” or “should not” be a certain way. This is generally a clear case of thought usurping the Will in determining action. Crowley writes lucidly on this when he says:

*“We must not suppose for an instant that the Book of the Law is opposed to reason. On the contrary, its own claim to authority rests upon reason, and nothing else. It disdains the arts of the orator. It makes reason the autocrat of the mind. But that very fact emphasizes that the mind should attend to its own business. It should not transgress its limits. It should be a perfect machine, an apparatus for representing the universe accurately and impartially to its master. The Self, its Will, and its Apprehension, should be utterly beyond it... It is ridiculous to ask a dog why it barks. One must fulfil one’s true Nature, one must do one’s Will. To question this is to destroy confidence, and so to create an inhibition... We are not to calculate, to argue, to criticise; these things lead to division of will and to stagnation. They are shackles of our Going. They hamstring our Pegasus. We are to rise up – to Go – to Love – we are to be awake, alert.”*<sup>668</sup>

It should be noted that “awake, alert” is the same thing as “prompt

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667 *Liber AL*, II:27-34.

668 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:28-34.

and active.” The doctrine regarding Reason in Thelema is fairly clear: It must be strong, well-balanced, having both breadth and depth, but stay confined to its own sphere or plane. Crowley explains further elsewhere:

*“Here is the Key of Success, and its Name is the Skill to make right Use of Circumstance. This, then is the Virtue of the Mind, to be the Wazir of the Will, a true Counsellor, through Intelligence of the Universe. But o, my Son, do thou lay this Word beneath thine Heart, that the Mind hath no Will, nor Right thereto, so the Usurpation bringeth forth a fatal Conflict in thyself. For the Mind is sensitive, unstable as Air, and may be led foolishly in leash by a stronger Mind that worketh as the cunning Tool of a Will. Therefore thy Safety and Defence is to hold thy Mind to his right Function, a faithful Minister to thine own True Will.”*<sup>669</sup>

In short, make sure your dagger is sharp and one-pointed, able to cut through the complexities and lopsidedness of life, but make sure it does not usurp the Will.

### Summary of Air

- Indifference/Mindfulness: Let the mind be above the disturbance of material events, both of others and of circumstance, both for good or for ill. Do not give away your power by reacting; stay firm in one's center.
- Think rationally: Develop the rational powers of the intellect, its clarity and conciseness including but not limited to the study of logic, classics, mathematics, and science.
- Be humble: Let increase in knowledge bring increase in wisdom and humility. “He who knoweth much has learned his own ignorance.”<sup>670</sup>

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669 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 130.

670 *Liber Librae*.

- Be wary of imbalance: Be mindful of frivolity and indecisiveness. See the truth and falsity in all propositions, and rise above them as master of both sides.
- Cultivate balance: Cultivate promptness and activity of the mind. Always seek out new ideas, and hone the mind through concentration.
- Reason is minister of Will: Be mindful of rigid thoughts dictating action and how things “should” be. Work to not let the mind usurp the Will.

## Water: The Emotions or Intuition – The Cup or Chalice

### Disciplining Emotions

The Weapon of Water is the Cup or Chalice, and generally refers to our relationship to our emotions as well as our intuition.

*Liber Librae* says succinctly, “discipline the emotions.” The emotions must be controlled, or they will control you. This discipline creates Liberty, for if we have no choice about how we react to our emotions then we are their slaves.

The Cup must be solid and balanced, otherwise it will leak or let dirt and other influences in. This means we must have the strength to contain our emotions, to not let them throw us off our center, and to be able to direct them at Will. Just like the body, just like thoughts, the emotions are not evil: they are part of life; it is our job to learn how to work with them.

The basic emotions are anger, contempt, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness, and surprise. Imagine you are a boat on the ocean of life. Emotions are the waves that buffet the boat. Magicians are able to withstand these emotions and remain upright, still traveling on their Course, maintaining the direction of their True Will. In fact, the Magician can adapt to use the waves to aid in getting where they're going. Crowley writes regard this:



*“The majority of people will find most trouble with the Emotions, and thoughts which excite them. **But it is both possible and necessary not merely to suppress the emotions, but to turn them into faithful servants.** Thus the emotion of anger is occasionally useful against that portion of the brain whose slackness vitiates the control.”*<sup>671</sup> (emphasis added)

Consider the ability of emotions to obsess: We do not just feel emotions, we *become* them. Anger comes in and we don't “experience anger,” we say “I am angry!” and everything is colored by this anger. Fear comes in and we are afraid, we start acting out of animal instinct. Sadness comes in and we are sad, nothing is worthwhile! Disgust comes in and we are disgusted, there is nothing good or wholesome about that person!

Again, mindfulness is needed: Having emotions is not bad or evil, but our relationship to them determines whether we are a Magician or just a helpless victim of circumstance.

It is useful to distinguish between passions, which come from within, and emotions which come from without. Passions are the Energy of the Magician; emotions are demons attacking the Magician's Circle. Crowley writes:

*“Every emotion is an obsession; the most horrible of blasphemies is to attribute any emotion to God in the macrocosm, or to the pure soul in the microcosm. How can that which is self-existent, complete, be 'moved?' But if the point itself could be moved it would cease to be itself, for position is the only attribute of the point. The Magician must therefore make himself absolutely free in this respect. It is the constant practice of Demons to attempt to terrify, to shock, to disgust, to allure... There is no emotion which does not leave a mark on the mind, and all marks are bad marks. Hope and fear are only opposite phases of a single emotion; both*

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671 *Liber ABA*, Part 2.

*are incompatible with the purity of the soul. With the passions of man the case is somewhat different, as they are functions of his own will. They need to be disciplined, not to be suppressed. But emotion is impressed from without. It is an invasion of the circle.”*<sup>672</sup> (emphasis added)

In this work of the Cup, we need the help of the Dagger. That is to say: The mind helps to retain equilibrium and have clarity in the face of confronting the web of emotions. Crowley continues:

*“One may now go on to consider the use of the Sword in purifying emotions into perceptions. It was the function of the Cup to interpret the perceptions by the tendencies; the Sword frees the perceptions from the Web of emotion.... It is the constant practice of Demons to attempt to terrify, to shock, to disgust, to allure. Against all this he must oppose the Steel of the Sword. If he has got rid the ego-idea this task will be comparatively easy; unless he has done so it will be almost impossible. So says the Dhammapada: Me he abused, and me he beat, he robbed me, he insulted me; In whom such thoughts find harbourage, hatred will never cease to be..... It is also written [in Liber AL, III:11]: 'Let the woman be girt with a sword before me.' But this refers to the arming of Vedana [sensation] with Sanna [cognition], the overcoming of emotion by clarity of perception.”*<sup>673</sup>

So one important role of a sharp Dagger, a “prompt and active” mind, is to clear perception of the world from the distorting influence of emotions. We use the mind to maintain an equilibrium that is “above disturbance by material events.”<sup>674</sup> Crowley gives examples of how the emotions can cloud perception:

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672 Liber ABA, Part 2.

673 Liber ABA, Part 2.

674 Liber Librae.

*“A dagger may be sharp or blunt, straight or crooked; it is not 'wicked-looking,' or even 'trusty,' except in so far as the quality of its steel makes it so. A cliff is not 'frowning' or 'menacing.' A snow-covered glacier is not 'treacherous': to say so means only that Alpine Clubmen and other persons ignorant of mountain craft are unable to detect the position of covered crevasses. All such points you must decide for yourself; the important thing is that you should challenge any such ideas. Above all, do not avoid, or slur, unwelcome trains of thought or distressing problems. Don't say 'he passed on' when you mean 'he died,' and don't call a spade a bloody shovel!”*<sup>675</sup>

In this way, the mind helps clear away distortions of perception caused by emotions.

There is also the business of cultivating positive emotions such as gratitude, enthusiasm, and joy. These are the flowers that must be carefully maintained, watered every day (such as by consciously affirming things one is grateful for), and have weeds pulled out so as to not choke them (such as by maintaining the discipline of control over emotions).

### **The Equilibrium of Water**

The Weapon of Water, emotion and intuition, can be balanced or unbalanced. When Water is unbalanced, *Liber Librae* says we tend toward “idleness and changeability.”

“Idleness” means stagnation. Consider how a stagnant pool of water collects muck. This is the kind of emotion that involves “stuckness,” sadness, depression, and general lack of motivation or “passion.”

“Changeability” means not being firm and steadfast in one's actions, beliefs, opinions, or desires. This is water that simply moves wherever it is pushed, having no will of its own. Emotions buffet the boat

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<sup>675</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 11.

of the Magician and lead her where they will rather than where the Magician Wills.

When Water is balanced, *Liber Librae* says we become “flexible and attentive to images.”

“Flexible” relates to the idea that Water flows and adapts to changes, as in rivers where it bends around rocks. This balanced Water is elastic. This is the opposite of idleness in a way: the Magician is one who is flexible, adapting to change, not being stiff or stagnant.

“Attentive to images” refers to the fact that Water is related to intuition. Being attentive to images means being aware of the power of symbols and of the unconscious in general. This is an openness to fantasy, reverie, dreams, scrying, astral work, and generally anything where the unconscious comes more into consciousness. Crowley writes:

*“Deem not therefore that thy lightest Fancy is witless: it is a Word to thee, a Prophecy, a Sign or Signal from thy Lord. Thy most unconscious Acts are Keys to the Treasure-Chamber of thine own Palace, which is the House of the Holy Ghost... Neglect not simple Introspection, therefore; but give yet greater Heed unto those Dreams and Phantasies, those Gestures and Manners unconscious, and of undiscovered Cause, which betoken thee.”*<sup>676</sup>

The Magician is ideally in touch with her Unconscious through various methods of scrying, dream work, and astral work. The promptings of the Unconscious – wherein the True Will lies hidden waiting to be uncovered – come in the form of feelings and symbols, which can then be interpreted by the Dagger, the Sword of the Intellect. The cup is the Understanding or Intuition of the Magician in this way: it receives the impressions that are then clarified by thought.

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<sup>676</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 9.

## Summary of Water

- Discipline the emotions: Be centered and balanced, not reactive to emotions as attacks on one's Circle. Don't become obsessed by emotions but use them to effect and accomplish one's Will.
- Use of the Dagger: Use the mind to become free from the web of emotions and to clarify the import of perceptions.
- Be wary of imbalance: Be neither idle nor changeable, but adaptive and flexible.
- Cultivate balance: Be flexible and attentive to the Unconscious with its images.

## Fire: The Desires – The Wand

The Weapon of Fire is the Wand, and generally refers to desires or impulses in the Magician, although it is sometimes also attributed to willpower or volition.

*Liber Librae* says, “To obtain Magical Power, learn to control thought; admit only those ideas that are in harmony with the end desired, and not every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself.” If we substitute “thought” with “desire” and we have the doctrine of the Wand: “To obtain Magical Power, learn to control desire; admit only those desires that are in harmony with the end Willed, and not every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself.”

True Will is not the same as desire. Desires are wishes, whims, or impulses that arise and pass away. The True Will is the Motion of the Self, the fulfillment of your Nature's possibilities. Desires may or may not fulfill your Nature; it is our work to determine which desires or impulses fulfill and which thwart our Nature. Crowley writes:

*“This Book lays down a simple Code of Conduct. 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.' 'Love is the law, love under will.' 'There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.' This means that*

*each of us stars is to move on our true orbit, as marked out by the nature of our position, the law of our growth, the impulse of our past experiences. All events are equally lawful— and every one necessary, in the long run— for all of us, in theory; but in practice, only one act is lawful for each one of us at any given moment. Therefore Duty consists in determining to experience the right event from one moment of consciousness to another. Each action or motion is an act of love, the uniting with one or another part of 'Nuit'; each such act must be 'under will,' chosen so as to fulfil and not to thwart the true nature of the being concerned."*<sup>677</sup>

Consider the simple idea of self-control, of not indulging in short-term desires for the sake of the long-term. We may have a desire to eat that third cookie but we know it will give us a stomach ache so we don't. We may feel the impulse to relapse into shooting heroin but we know that it will sabotage the relationships we have built and our job. We may want to lie around but there is schoolwork to do. Consider also the impulses that arise in relation to the other three Weapons already discussed:

- Impulses of the body: Is it a desire or impulse whose end is to fulfill the body? Is the desire to sleep coming from being tired or being sluggish or lazy or slothful? Is the desire to eat coming from being hungry or being gluttonous or overindulgent? Is the desire to have sex a twisted way of validating yourself, making yourself feel loved, as a distraction from your worries, as a way to have power?
- Impulses of the mind: Are our thoughts clear and concise? Are they active and creative? Are they making our Way in the world, our Will, harder or easier? Are they making things clearer or more obscure? Are our thoughts tangled in the web of emotion? Are our thoughts malicious out of anger? Are they reactive to an insult? To praise? In response to a problem, are they decisive and clear or are they overly worried, preoccupied, constantly ruminating about

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677 Introduction to *Liber AL*.

something instead of seeing it clearly or doing something about it? Are they scattered or unified? Are our beliefs rigid and inflexible or adaptable?

- Impulses of the emotions: Is the emotion reactive? Is it an active passion? Are the emotions because of our unclear thinking? Are we tangled in our emotions, or are we receiving them as guests, letting them come in with hospitality and leave when they are done? Are we clinging to someone because we are attached instead of saying “O lover, if thou wilt, depart”? Are they constrictive or expansive? Does acting on them lead to harmony or unnecessary conflict?

A great deal of purification is needed for our desires before they become (at least mostly) aligned with our Will. All the desires that do not lead to our own growth, that do not lead to the fulfillment of our nature, should be lustrated. Are we slaves to our desires? Do we have no choice or free will in them? Then we must purify ourselves.

First, we must look to things that control us, that make us slaves: the impulses that we have little control over. We must bring awareness and attention to them. We must realize that impulses are only ever dominated by other impulses. The desire to not eat a third cookie is controlled by being overpowered by the desire not to have a stomach ache. The lesson is to direct one's energy elsewhere to something truly fulfilling rather than simply superficially fulfilling such as a cookie.

Next, the Magician must look to things that are convention or habit: the impulses we indulge because we are used to them. We must bring great mindfulness to our habits. We can challenge habits by doing things differently, even in very simple ways. Have you ever noticed that people always sit in the same place during class or even a Gnostic Mass? Sit in a different place. Do you usually talk to person X and avoid person Y? Talk to person Y. Take a different bus. Walk a different way. Eat a different meal. Read about a different topic. By challenging our habits,

however innocuous, we find the tendency of our inertia to fall into ways that are comfortable simply because we are familiar with them, regardless of how fulfilling or thwarting of our Nature they are.

We must also look to things that are serving imbalanced impulses:

*“For wert thou to summon the Gnomes to pander thine avarice, thou wouldst no longer command them, but they would command thee. Wouldst thou abuse the pure beings of the woods and mountains to fill thy coffers and satisfy thy hunger of Gold? Wouldst thou debase the Spirits of Living Fire to serve thy wrath and hatred? Wouldst thou violate the purity of the Souls of the Waters to pander thy lust of debauchery? Wouldst thou force the Spirits of the Evening Breeze to minister thy folly and caprice? Know that with such desires thou canst but attract the Weak, not the Strong, and in that case the Weak will have power over thee.”*<sup>678</sup>

Acting out of greed, hatred, debauch, caprice, laziness, and the like mean that we are slaves to the Elements rather than the Master thereof. If Spirit is not the crown of one's work, it will inevitably creak and topple.

To complement our purification of impulses, we must also consecrate or strengthen them through cultivating those that are beneficial to us. To use the metaphor of the garden once more: The Magician has to uproot the weeds, make sure the soil is fertile, and give the flowers water. Uprooting the weeds means the Magician must purify desires that are thwarting our nature (whether out of desire for immediate gratification, out of unbalanced emotions, or whatever else the Magician determines). Making sure the soil is fertile means changing one's environment to make the growth of helpful impulses more likely; for example, if you struggle with alcoholism, don't go to a bar, go to a meeting or somewhere that doesn't involve alcohol. If you want to study, go to a library; if you want to

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678 *Liber Librae.*



exercise, buy running shoes. Watering the flowers means attending to beneficial impulse repeatedly and putting energy into it. For example, if the desire is to learn, then read a book an hour every day. If the impulse is to draw, draw every day. If the desire is to calm and control the mind, meditate every day.

## **The Equilibrium of Fire**

The Weapon of Fire, our desires and impulses, can be unbalanced or balanced.

When one's Fire is unbalanced, *Liber Librae* says that we tend toward “irritability and ferocity.”

“Irritability” comes from a root meaning “easily excited.” In a normal everyday context, being irritated means one is being “easily excited” by something including getting easily upset when the bus is late, getting impatient when someone is taking too long, or whatever else.

“Ferocity” comes from a root meaning “wild” or out of control. Impulses can often seem “ferocious,” overwhelming and too powerful to fight.

In contrast, *Liber Librae* says that when Fire is equilibrated, we tend toward being “energetic and strong.” “Energetic” means that the excitement and “wildness” is directed, controlled, and balanced. The energy of desires and impulses gives us fuel to accomplish our Wills, but it must not be easily overwhelmed or out of control.

“Strong” means not easily swayed or having resolve. This is shown by the firmness of the Wand, its one-pointed nature that does not bend but extends and penetrates forward in a straight line.

## **Summary of Fire**

- True Will is not desire: Desires can fulfill or thwart the Will. It's our job to purify those that thwart and strengthen those that fulfill the Will.
- Be wary of imbalance: Be mindful of tending towards the

imbalance of irritability or ferocity.

- Cultivate balance: Bring attention to directing the energy of impulses and desires, and be strong and one-pointed in accomplishing them.

## Conclusion

We have investigated the 4 Weapons of the Magician in great detail while maintaining a focus on their down-to-earth practical realities. To recapitulate, the Magician is ultimately not any of the 4 Weapons: she is neither body, nor thought, nor emotion or intuition, nor desires or impulses. The Magician is Spirit, that which contains, moves among, and can utilize the 4 Weapons of the Elements. It is the Quintessence of Will that ideally is the Master of its Weapons, rather than any of the Weapons usurping its place.

There is one final idea that runs through *Liber Librae* and which is more general but nonetheless incredibly important. This is the Magician's attitude toward conflict and trials. It is written:

*“Know then, that as man is born into this world amidst the Darkness of Matter, and the strife of contending forces; so must his first endeavour be to seek the Light through their reconciliation. Thou then who hast trials and troubles, rejoice because of them, for in them is Strength, and by their means is a pathway opened unto that Light. How should it be otherwise, O man, whose life is but a day in Eternity, a drop in the Ocean of time; how, were thy trials not many, couldst thou purge thy soul from the dross of earth? Is it but now that the Higher Life is beset with dangers and difficulties; hath it not ever been so with the Sages and Hierophants of the past? They have been persecuted and reviled, they have been tormented of men; yet through this also has their Glory increased. Rejoice therefore, O Initiate, for the greater thy*

*trial the greater thy Triumph. When men shall revile thee, and speak against thee falsely, hath not the Master said, 'Blessed art thou!?'<sup>679</sup> (emphasis added)*

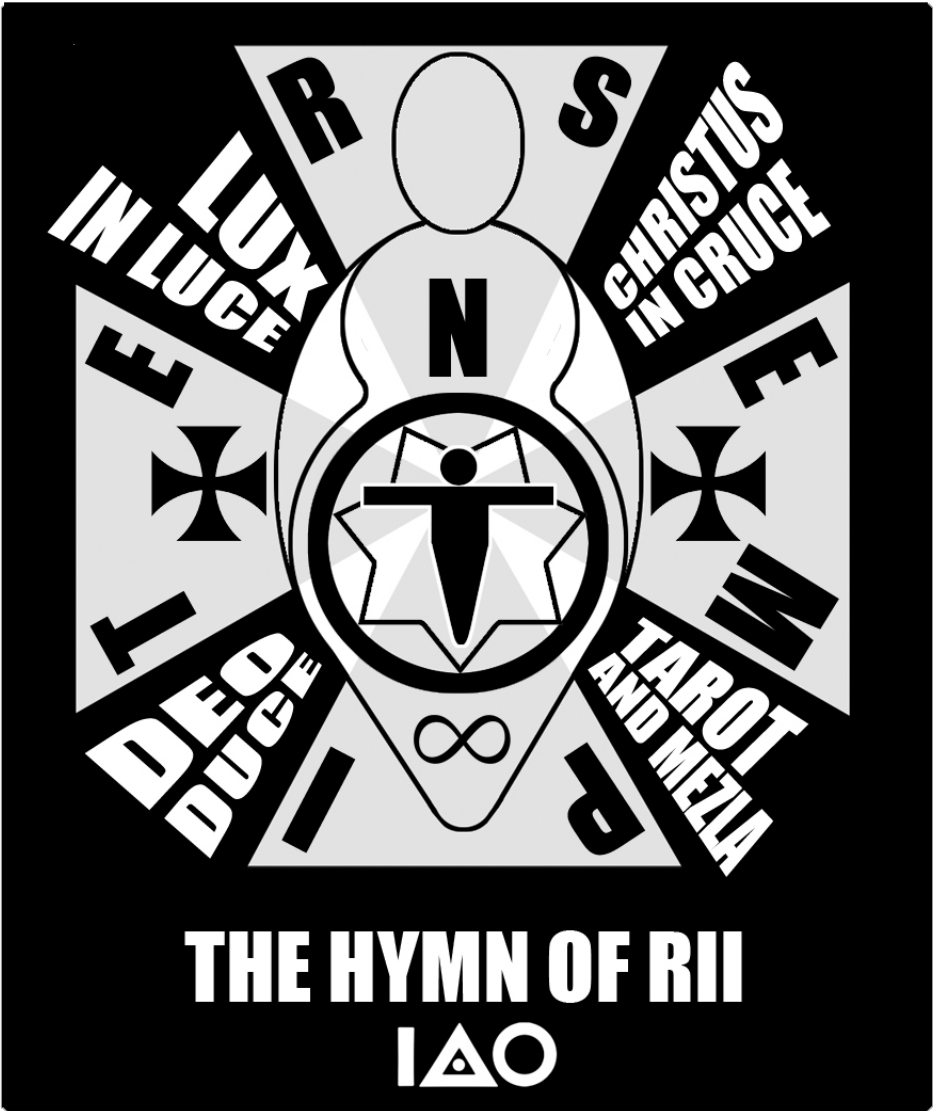
Much of this essay speaks about the Magician in ideal terms: the Magician achieves equilibrium of each Element within herself, and can utilize them to all accomplish her Will, fulfilling rather than thwarting her Nature. The reality is that this is neither easy nor something that is won and then never requiring attention again.

The entire process of becoming a true Magician is the “Great Work,” and it requires great amounts of resolve, patience, and adaptability. None of us are “perfect” insofar as we constantly are thrown off our Balance in many ways. It is the mark of a Magician with real potential when they see conflict, suffering, and difficulty as opportunities to learn and grow, as pathways to the Light, rather than as marks of their inadequacy or failure.

Great mindfulness is required to remember, especially in the midst of difficulty, that difficulty is always an opportunity to develop further, to become more centered in one's Will, to take another step on the ladder toward the accomplishment of the Great Work. Every day presents its own “trials and troubles,” and one has the mark of a great potential Magician if one can recognize these and proclaim “the greater my trial, the greater my Triumph!”

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679 *Liber Librae.*



*The Hymn of RII*  
is based on the 29<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*

## CHAPTER 28

# THE 3 POWERS OF THE TRUE MAGICIAN

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*This piece was also adapted from notes for a lecture given in 2013 e.v. The idea behind this article is to focus on the “three Powers” as complements to the “four Weapons,” making the lovely number of divinity and completion, 7. The basic idea is that the four Elements are the raw materials that we work upon with our three Powers. Again, the emphasis is on how these Powers represent real, tangible qualities of the self with which one can work in the continual process of self-knowledge, self-conquering, and self-perfection.*

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In the previous chapter, the 4 Weapons based on the 4 Elements were discussed. Now we turn to the 3 Powers which represent the ways we can work with the 4 Elements. If the 4 Elements are the “nouns” of our existence, the 3 Powers are the “verbs.” First we will investigate the 3 Powers more philosophically to give a theoretical foundation for understanding what is being discussed in general. Then we will look into what these 3 Powers – “the powers of thy soul” as *Liber Librae* says – are in the true Magician. Finally, we will look at these 3 Powers in more depth and give examples of how to develop them within oneself.

### Theory

There are three “processes” or “energies” at work in all things, and they are often called by different names. Again, these are the Verbs to the Nouns of the 4 Elements, the processes as opposed to the substances. These

3 Powers are the ways in which those substances or Elements interact.

In the Hindu system, these 3 Powers are called the three *gunas*: *rajas*, *tamas*, and *sattva*. They are, roughly, activity (*rajas*), inertia or heaviness (*tamas*), and balance (*sattva*). Crowley writes, “Tamas is darkness, inertia, sloth, ignorance, death and the like; Rajas is energy, excitement, fire, brilliance, restlessness; Sattvas is calm, intelligence, lucidity and balance.”<sup>680</sup> The *gunas* are present in all things, including even food. Hot foods that stimulate movement are *rajas* like chili peppers and coffee, very heavy foods like beef are *tamas*, and *sattvic* foods are balanced – they don't create energy or heaviness – like milk, almonds, most fruit, *et cetera*. This is just to show they are principles or Powers that appear in all things in the universe.

In the Hermetic system, these 3 Powers are the three “Alchemical Principles”: Sulphur, Salt, and Alchemical Mercury. They were associated with Fire, Water, and Air but in a different sense, so as to not be confused with the 4 Elements. Crowley writes:

*“Sulphur represents the energy of things, Mercury their fluidity, Salt their fixity. They are analogous to Fire, Air and Water; but they mean rather more, for they represent something deeper and subtler, and yet more truly active. An almost exact analogy is given by the three Gunas of the Hindus; Sattvas, Rajas, and Tamas. Sattvas is Mercury, equable, calm, clear; Rajas is Sulphur, active, excitable, even fierce; Tamas is Salt, thick, sluggish, heavy, dark.”*<sup>681</sup>

In “Atu X: Fortune” in the Tarot, we see the Alchemical Principles on the wheel of fortune: the sword-girt Sphinx is Sulphur, Hermanubis is Mercury, and Typhon is Salt.<sup>682</sup>

As forces of Nature, the 3 Powers (or *gunas* or Alchemical

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680 *The Book of Thoth*.

681 *Liber ABA*, Part 1.

682 *The Book of Thoth*.

Principles) always change and interchange. Crowley writes “One of the most important aphorisms of Hindu philosophy is: 'the Gunas revolve.' This means that, according to the doctrine of continual change, nothing can remain in any phase where one of these Gunas is predominant.”<sup>683</sup> As they are Verbs or processes, they are constantly shifting and moving into one another. It is the work of the Magician to obtain conscious control of them in order to direct them in accordance with Will.

This threefold symbolism of the 3 Powers is reflected into many different types of symbolism, including:

- Freemasonry (the Square, the Compass, and the Volume of Sacred Law)
- Family (Father, Mother, and Child)
- IHV (Yod, Heh, Vav), *et cetera*

	+	±	-
<b>Alchemical</b>	Sulphur	Mercury	Salt
<b>Gunas</b>	Rajas	Sattvas	Tamas
<b>Elements</b>	Fire	Air	Water
<b>Atu X</b>	Sphinx	Hermanubis	Typhon
<b>Freemasonry</b>	Square	V.S.L.	Compass
<b>Family</b>	Father	Child	Mother
<b>IHV</b>	Yod	Vav	Heh

### The 3 Powers in the Magician

In the previous chapter the 4 Elements were discussed as being reflected into the 4 Elemental Weapons of the Magician. In terms of ceremonial implements, the 3 Powers (or processes or *gunas*) are reflected into the Scourge, Dagger, and Chain. It should be noted that this is a

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<sup>683</sup> *The Book of Thoth.*

different Dagger than the Elemental Dagger of Air, at least symbolically.

Crowley explains very clearly, “The Scourge, the Dagger, and the Chain, represent the three alchemical principles of Sulphur, Mercury, and Salt... The Scourge is Sulphur. The Dagger is Mercury. The Chain is Salt.”<sup>684</sup> These have very detailed and complex symbolism which we won't discuss much because of our focus on the practical side of things.

If we imagine our consciousness as the Temple with the Circle as the boundary of our awareness, then these 3 Powers represent three processes of change in consciousness that we may call Concentration, Recollection, and Expansiveness.

	+	±	-
Alchemical	Sulphur	Mercury	Salt
Gunas	Rajas	Sattvas	Tamas
Weapons	Scourge	Dagger	Chain
Consciousness	Concentration	Recollection	Expansiveness

Magick is the Science and Art of causing Change in conformity with Will. Therefore mastery of these 3 Powers makes one a True Magician, an actual Master of the Temple of one's awareness. These 3 Powers are the muscles one needs to exercise in order to accomplish the Great Work most fully, effectively, and efficiently.

**Concentration** is the focus of awareness to a single point of attention. As it says in *Liber Librae*, “To obtain Magical Power, learn to control thought; admit only those ideas that are in harmony with the end desired, and not every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself.”



**Recollection** is the recalling to awareness of the Great Work, it is the re-collecting of one's thoughts to point back toward the Goal. The performance of Liber Resh and saying




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<sup>684</sup> *Liber ABA*, Part 1.



Will before meals taps into this particular Power.

**Expansiveness** is broad, non-attached awareness. This is the opposite or complement of concentration in a way: it is an awareness of all things in one's sphere of awareness without focusing on any one particular thing, whereas concentration is one-pointed focus. The most common practice of that exercises this particular Power is known as mindfulness.



These 3 Powers are the three basic ways that the Will can affect consciousness. Development of these powers is development of the Will. Going back to the Weapons, Crowley writes, “The Scourge keeps the aspiration keen: the Dagger expresses the determination to sacrifice all; and the Chain restricts any wandering.”<sup>685</sup> The Scourge represents our development of the power of concentration, keeping our awareness “keen” which implies both intensity/energy and sharpness like a blade.

The Dagger represents our development of the power of recollection, the “determination to sacrifice all.” Sacrifice comes from the Latin *sacer* (sacred) and *facere* (to perform), i.e. performing something sacred, i.e. the True Will. To sacrifice all can therefore mean devoting all of what one has and is to the Will, which is “the strictest possible bond.”<sup>686</sup>

The Chain represents our development of the power of expansiveness, resting in the non-attached broad awareness that is not affected or led around by any wandering thoughts.

## The Practices of the 3 Powers

If Concentration, Recollection, and Expansiveness are the three muscles of our Will (so to speak), then there are certain practices or exercises to strengthen them. There are obviously many methods for developing these Powers, some of which focus on different aspects of the Powers. In order to be pragmatic, we will discuss three specific practices

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685 *Liber ABA*, Part 1.

686 *Liber II*.

that have very practical purposes toward the end of changing the self, the Magician, into a more suitable and powerful vehicle of one's True Will. Each of these practices could be used for a more mystical purpose, “union with God” or *samadhi* or *nirvana* or *fana* or *satori*, or whatever you want to call it, but I am going to give certain exercises that have a more down-to-earth, practical end of strengthening these 3 Powers for use in all parts of life, from the sublime to the most mundane.

The three practices are called – for the sake of convenience and the aesthetic pleasure of alliteration – Meditation, Mantra, and Mindfulness. We will discuss each one briefly and why one might do them, and then we can go into more depth as to how one may perform them.

## **Meditation**

There are many, many forms of meditation that are worthwhile in developing concentration. The specific form of meditation we will discuss is called “passage meditation.” Passage meditation is essentially the repetition in one's mind of a certain passage, focusing on the words with concentration and not thinking about their meaning, for a specific period of time, approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

Why would one do passage meditation?

1. The utility of concentration is obvious in our work in an achievement-focused world – the development of concentration means the ability to focus on the task at hand without distraction, whether work or play, focusing on what is essential and cutting through the non-essentials.
2. In the very first lines of the *Dhammapada*, the Buddha says, “All that we are is the result of what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with an evil thought, pain follows him, as the wheel follows the foot of the ox that draws the carriage. All that we are is the result of

what we have thought: it is founded on our thoughts, it is made up of our thoughts. If a man speaks or acts with a pure thought, happiness follows him, like a shadow that never leaves him.” Therefore we are focusing our thoughts to change what we are. We are deliberately carving the channels of our souls through which we want the life force to flow. In the words of *Liber Librae*: “Fixed thought is a means to an end. Therefore pay attention to the power of silent thought and meditation. The material act is but the outward expression of thy thought, and therefore hath it been said that ‘the thought of foolishness is sin.’ Thought is the commencement of action, and if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?”

## **Mantra**

The specific form of mantra I am going to talk about is the repetition of a short phrase throughout the day. This is familiar to most individuals who have explored the spiritual marketplace of ideas as there are many forms of mantra traditions from the Hindu yogis to the use of a rosary by Christian monks.

Why would one practice a mantra?

1. The mantra serves as a reminder to oneself of the Great Work that all Magicians have set out to accomplish.
2. It serves to control distracting thoughts and emotions, to calm the self and remain centered and “re-collected.”
3. The repetition of a sacred phrase imbues the unconscious with the import of that phrase, even if the import is not focused upon, if it is in another language, or even if the phrase is not entirely able to be articulated in a logical way (such as if one uses the word “Aum”).

## **Mindfulness**

The specific form of mindfulness we will discuss is the cultivation

of a broad awareness that is capable of being non-judgmental of and non-attached to all thoughts and emotions that arise, done for a specific period of time, approximately 15 to 30 minutes.

Why would one practice mindfulness?

1. Mindfulness develops awareness of thoughts and emotions as they come up, rather than becoming entangled and identified with them.
2. Mindfulness therefore aids us in maintaining our center whenever distracting or difficult thoughts or emotions come up within us.
3. Mindfulness allows us to remain in the here-and-now so as to appreciate what is rather than what may be; that is, it provides an “inner space” for a fuller engagement in the world.

Meditation and Mindfulness are practices that require a specific time carved out of the day. Mantra can and should be done throughout the day. In practice the cultivation of each one of these will be found to aid the others. They are not 3 distinct Powers but three aspects of Power itself, divided for convenience – 1 in 3 and 3 in 1.

### **Practicing Passage Meditation**

Passage meditation requires a short time during the day where one is doing nothing else other than concentrating on the passage meditation. The practice essentially involves first memorizing the passage before beginning. Then, sitting in a relaxed but alert position – the *asana* of meditation – the passage is mentally repeated in a slow but rhythmic way, focusing on the words of the passage themselves rather than going off on thought-tangents about their meaning or symbolism. If one's attention wanders while repeating the passage, simply start from the beginning and continue until the allotted time period is up.

There are many passages from every tradition that are viable as passages for meditation. Passages which are uplifting and encouraging are

especially helpful as the repetition of a passage tends to infuse awareness with its import, whether focused upon consciously or not.

There are many passages from the Thelemic literary corpus in particular, and these are simply some examples that are offered to get one started on picking a passage and starting to meditate on it:

### **Liber AL I:40-45**

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse. Accurséd! Accurséd be it to the aeons! Hell. Let it be that state of manyhood bound and loathing. So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect. The Perfect and the Perfect are one Perfect and not two; nay, are none!

### **Liber AL II:6-9**

I am the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star. I am Life, and the giver of Life, yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. I am the Magician and the Exorcist. I am the axle of the wheel, and the cube in the circle. 'Come unto me' is a foolish word: for it is I that go. Who worshipped Heru-pa-kraath have worshipped me; ill, for I am the worshipper. Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.

### **Liber VII V:20-29**

O God of mine, Thou art like a little white goat with lightning in his horns! I love Thee, I love Thee. Every breath, every word, every thought, every deed is an act of love with Thee. The beat of

my heart is the pendulum of love. The songs of me are the soft sighs: The thoughts of me are very rapture: And my deeds are the myriads of Thy children, the stars and the atoms. Let there be nothing! Let all things drop into this ocean of love! Be this devotion a potent spell to exorcise the demons of the Five!

### **Liber XV**

Thou that art One, our Lord in the Universe, the Sun, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery, uttermost being whose radiance, enlightening the worlds, is also the breath that maketh every God even and Death to tremble before Thee— By the Sign of Light appear Thou glorious upon the throne of the Sun. Make open the path of and of intelligence between us and our minds. Enlighten our understanding. Encourage our hearts. Let thy light crystallize itself in our blood, fulfilling us of Resurrection. A ka dua Tuf ur biu bi a'a chefu Dudu nur af an nuteru!

### **Practicing the Mantra**

A mantra should be said throughout the day. Most things we do actually do not require a lot of verbal thought, and the mantra can be repeated during most of the day including doing menial tasks, driving, walking, or eating. The mantra should be repeated at a rate that is not too slow or too fast; the rhythm that works best will be found through experiment. One will find that the mantra has a tendency to almost repeat itself without awareness, and the mind will go off onto other things while the mantra is still repeating in the background. The mantra is intended to be the sole focus of one's attention, so whenever the mind wanders, bring it back gently to the mantra. Here are some examples of mantras that may be used:

**A ka dua tuf ur biu bi a'a chefu dudu nur af an nuteru**<sup>687</sup>: “Unity uttermost showed! I adore the might of Thy breath, Supreme and terrible God, Who maketh the Gods and Death to tremble before Thee: – I, I adore Thee!” Literally: “O High One! May he be praised! The one great of Power! The Spirit great of Dignity, who places fear of himself among the gods!” Crowley wrote of this, “This mantra is the holiest of all that are or can be. It is from the Stele of Revealing.”<sup>688</sup>

**En aat am-a shu-t em neter**<sup>689</sup>: “There is no part of me that is not of the gods.” Literally: “There is no member of mine devoid of a God.”

**IO IO IO IAO SABAO**<sup>690</sup>

**IO PAN IO PAN PAN**<sup>691</sup>

**In Nomine Babalon Amen**<sup>692</sup>: “In the name of Babalon, Amen.”

**Katharos fortis tan samajh**<sup>693</sup>: “pure, strong, merciful, understanding.”

**Omari tessala marax**<sup>694</sup>: “I am the harlot that shaketh Death”

**Al OAI rel moai**<sup>695</sup>: “To the God OAI be praise.”

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687 From the Stele of Revealing.

688 *Liber ABA*, Part 1.

689 From *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* and spoken in The Gnostic Mass.

690 From *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

691 From *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

692 From *The Vision & the Voice*, 10<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

693 From *The Vision & the Voice*, 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

694 From *The Vision & the Voice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aethyr.

695 From *The Vision & the Voice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aethyr.

**Se gu melai pe fu telai fu tu lu**<sup>696</sup>: “The kiss of Isis is honeyed; my own Will is ended, for Will hath attained.”

**Rosa Mundi est Lilium Coeli**<sup>697</sup>: “The Rose of the World is the Lily of Heaven.”

### **Practicing Mindfulness**

The subject of mindfulness is extensive and therefore is the topic of the proceeding chapter.

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696 From *The Vision & the Voice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aethyr.

697 From *The Vision & the Voice*, 19<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.



## CHAPTER 29

# MINDFULNESS FOR MAGICIANS

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*This piece was originally a class given in 2013 e.v. The intent behind this piece is to convey the sense that mindfulness is not simply an “Eastern” idea but rather one that is powerful and relevant to all Magicians.*

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Take a moment to think about your consciousness, your awareness. Your consciousness is, by definition, everything of which you are aware. This is called the “phenomenal field” because it is the field of phenomena of which we are aware.

This entire field – the awareness itself – is the Element or “Quintessence” of Spirit. Consciousness is Spirit. In the planetary scheme, it is the Sun – the Light of Awareness.

Within this field, there are many “modifications” – many things which, through their interplay, weave “the dance of the Veil of Life upon the Face of the Spirit.”<sup>698</sup>

Starting from outside and moving in, we are aware of a world around us. How are we aware of a world? Some stimulus interacts with our perceptual apparatus and we perceive something through one or a combination of our five senses. Everything you can see, even the farthest peak on the horizon, you are aware of by virtue of light bouncing off this object, entering your eye, being converted into an electric signal, traveling along some nerve channels into your visual cortex, and this raw signal is then interpreted and presented to consciousness as a “sight.” That is, everything you are aware of, even the farthest thing away, is already within you in some sense. It is already present.

We are not immediately aware of the physical substrates of

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698 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass.*

perception, only the perception itself. We do not “feel” C group fibers firing, we feel pain. We do not “feel” the raw stimulus of light being converted into electrical signals and then interpreted, we simply perceive “redness.”

This extends to all five senses. Your entire world is a construction of the nervous system – a useful one, but a construction nonetheless. Every sensation of sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound that is present in your awareness is part of this “field.”

That being said, this “phenomenal field,” called the “world of appearances” by certain Western philosophers, is the only world of which we are aware. As the physicist Schrödinger said, “The world is given to me only once, not one existing and one perceived.”<sup>699</sup> It is the only world we have, and it is the one we have to work with. It is the world that the Magician works her Will with.

Continuing inward, we perceive a world around us, and we experience a body at the “center” of this phenomenal field. This is the justification for many Renaissance Hermeticists placing Earth at the center of the Universe in their diagrams: It is not an objective map, it is a subjective or phenomenological map of experience where we do, in fact, experience Earth and the body as being in the center. The world and the body are experienced as solid, physical – they are the Element of Earth in our phenomenal field, in consciousness. The boundary between body and world is unclear because there is no real dividing line between the body and the world – there is a perceptual device that differentiates the body from its environment for very practical reasons – that is, nonetheless, a convenient falsity rather than a truth. Earth is really a World-Body.

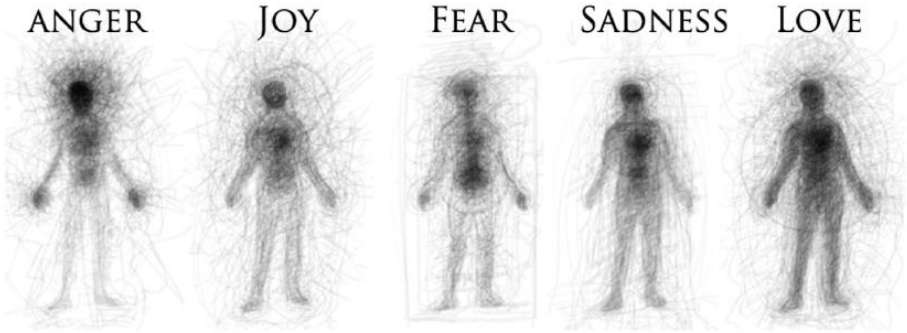
Within this body, we experience several things. For convenience, these are divided in this way:

Within our body, especially the head: We experience thoughts. This includes reasoning (logic, deduction, induction), beliefs, strategies (if I do X then Y will happen), reverie, memories, *et cetera*.

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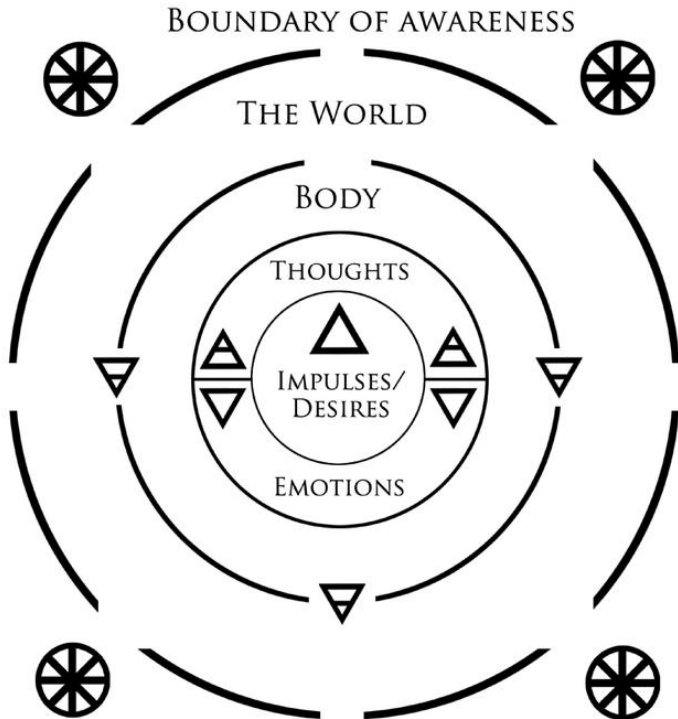
699 Schrödinger, Erwin. *Mind and Matter*.

Within our body, in different areas: We experience emotions. This includes fear, sadness, happiness, surprise, anger, *et cetera*.



Within our body, we experience impulses or desires. This includes the impulse to move, to eat, to speak, *et cetera*.

Within Spirit, or consciousness, there are various perceptions of Earth (body), Air (thoughts), Water (emotions), and Fire (impulses/desires).



Mindfulness is, in occult language, abiding in Spirit without becoming identified with any of the 4 Elements or their combinations. One might say that this is all fine but there is no basis for the practice of meditation within the Western tradition or Thelema in particular. In fact, there actually is a basis for this in Thelema's central literary corpus, the Holy Books of Thelema:

*“Even as the diamond shall glow red for the rose, and green for the rose-leaf; so shalt thou abide apart from the Impressions.”*<sup>700</sup>

Crowley comments on this line, “Impressions: *Vrittis*. The True Self is independent of all phenomena... The Magister Templi reacts with perfect elasticity to all impacts, appearing to be wholly passive to all alike, yet really uninfluenced in the slightest degree by any.”<sup>701</sup>

What are *vrittis*? This idea comes from Patanjali's *Yogasutras* of which Crowley was aware, at least through Swami Vivekananda. Delving into this text very briefly will be instructive in helping to understand both the line from *Liber LXV* as well as mindfulness in general. The very first line is: “Now is concentration explained.” The second line is: “Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (*Chitta*) from taking various forms (*Vrittis*).” Vivekananda comments on these lines:

*“The waves of thought in the Chitta are called Vrittis (literally 'whirlpools')... These Vrittis are our universe. The bottom of a lake we cannot see, because its surface is covered with ripples. It is only possible for us to catch a glimpse of the bottom, when the ripples have subsided, and the water is calm. If the water is muddy or is agitated all the time, the bottom will not be seen. If it is clear, and there are no waves, we shall see the bottom. The bottom of the lake is our own true Self; the lake is the Chitta and the waves the*

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700 *Liber LXV*, V:22.

701 Commentary to *Liber LXV*, V:22.

*Vrittis.*”<sup>702</sup>

The third line of the *Yogasutra* states, “At that time (after all waves have finished), the seer (*Purusha*) rests in his own unmodified state.” Vivekananda comments, “As soon as the waves have stopped, and the lake has become quiet, we see its bottom. So with the mind; when it is calm, we see what our own nature is; we do not mix ourselves but remain our own selves.”<sup>703</sup> The fourth line of *Yogasutras* states, “At other times (other than that of concentration) the seer is identified with the modifications [*vrittis*].”

Again, it says in our Holy Books, “Even as the diamond shall glow red for the rose, and green for the rose-leaf; so shalt thou abide apart from the Impressions.”<sup>704</sup> Crowley identifies these “Impressions” with *Vrittis*, the “whirlpools” that constitute our consciousness of the universe. To “abide apart” from them doesn't mean that one eliminates them entirely as in the case of intense concentration, but it means one simply is not affected by or attached to impressions as they arise in awareness. This is mindfulness in a nutshell, and Crowley attributes mastery of this to being a Master of the Temple (or “Magister Templi”) as we have already quoted, “The True Self is independent of all phenomena... The Magister Templi reacts with perfect elasticity to all impacts, appearing to be wholly passive to all alike, yet really uninfluenced in the slightest degree by any.”<sup>705</sup>

One might also make reference to mindfulness as “the formula of the Scarlet Woman” as it is expounded in *The Book of Lies*:

*“Soft and hollow, how thou dost overcome the hard and full! It dies, it gives itself; to Thee is the fruit! Be thou the Bride; thou shalt be the Mother here- after. To all impressions thus. Let them not overcome thee; yet let them breed within thee. The least of the*

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702 Vivekananda, Swami. *Raja Yoga*.

703 Vivekananda, Swami. *Raja Yoga*.

704 *Liber LXV*, V:22.

705 Commentary to *Liber LXV*, V:22.

*impressions, come to its perfection, is Pan. Receive a thousand lovers; thou shalt bear but One Child.*"<sup>706</sup>

Crowley comments, "The chapter is a counsel to accept all impressions; it is the formula of the Scarlet Woman; but no impression must be allowed to dominate you, only to fructify you; just as the artist, seeing an object, does not worship it, but breeds a masterpiece from it. This process is exhibited as one aspect of the Great Work." We might then see one-pointed concentration as the formula of the Beast and mindfulness as the formula of the Scarlet Woman: two processes or powers that can be cultivated within the secret Temple of each individual's awareness.

Now, let's be plain and clear and simple about what mindfulness really is and how to do it. Mindfulness comes in many forms. It is not exclusive to Buddhism, although it is important to most forms of Buddhism. Mindfulness is simply a human ability, just like concentration and visualization – it is even widely used in psychology nowadays for a multitude of purposes from stress reduction to emotional regulation to addiction counseling.

I am here defining mindfulness as: "Calm, broad awareness that is characterized by its here-and-now, un-attached and non-judgmental nature."

**Calm:** Not swayed by emotions; not intense or overly relaxed.

**Broad:** Not absolutely or very intensely focused on an object of awareness; aware of sensations, thoughts, and emotions.

**Here-and-now:** We are always here in this moment, how could we possibly be taken out of it? By all thoughts. Mindfulness is focused on the here-and-now, it is not swayed by thoughts but rests in its calm broad awareness.

**Un-attached:** Mindfulness means being "unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result."<sup>707</sup> Mindfulness just *is*, there is no

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706 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 4.

707 *Liber AL*, I:44.

lust of result; there is no attachment to any particular train of thought or emotional state. Attachment comes from clinging and mindfulness facilitates letting go.

**Non-judgmental:** There is a difference between discernment/discrimination and being judgmental. Discernment is to take one course of action from another based on some kind of choice. This is a form of “judgment” in certain cases; you are judging whether or not to do something, but there is no emotional charge. Being “non-judgmental” means not judging with that kind of judgment that often has a negative emotional charge to it. It's easy to see how we judge others – “That person is so idiotic, ugly, poor taste, *et cetera*” but we are focusing – in this context – on ourselves... Mindfulness is not judgmental – e.g., “I suck so bad,” “I'm such an idiot,” “I can't believe how many thoughts I'm having,” “I'll never be a success.” If and when thoughts and perceptions come up, they are acknowledged without judgment and they are left to fade away.

Why would anyone want to engage in the practice of mindfulness? Firstly, mindfulness decreases the amount of mental energy that gets wasted by becoming engaged with and attached to various trains of thought and emotions. It therefore increases mental energy, and makes it available for other tasks such as for concentration. In general life, this simply means more mental energy to focus on work that needs to be done, and less tendency to be mentally exhausted or caught up in distracting or wasteful thoughts and emotions. In terms of mysticism, mindfulness allows for mental equilibrium whereby we can focus on the mystical practice, whether of concentration, of devotion, or whatever else. In terms of Magick, thought is power. Diffused thought is weaker power, concentrated thought is stronger power. As it is said:

*“To obtain Magical Power, learn to control thought; admit only those ideas that are in harmony with the end desired, and not*

*every stray and contradictory Idea that presents itself. Fixed thought is a means to an end. Therefore pay attention to the power of silent thought and meditation. The material act is but the outward expression of thy thought, and therefore hath it been said that 'the thought of foolishness is sin.' Thought is the commencement of action, and if a chance thought can produce much effect, what cannot fixed thought do?"*<sup>708</sup>

Mindfulness essentially increases our awareness of these very “stray and contradictory Ideas,” allowing us to devote more of our thought to the intended end.

Another reason one would want to engage with mindfulness is that it decreases reactivity to thoughts and emotions. As it is said, “let thy mental Equilibrium be above disturbance by material events.”<sup>709</sup> This means that mindfulness increases your internal locus of control: Rather than the locus of control being outside of oneself where one is simply a victim to circumstance, mindfulness helps one to cultivate an internal “Equilibrium” that aids in not simply re-acting to situations but acting with intent from one's own self. In general life, this means gaining a center that doesn't have to have knee-jerk reactions to every emotion that comes up. It gives strength in the face of insult and blame as well as in the face of praise and flattery. In terms of Magick, mindfulness keeps a center that allows us to maintain our balance regardless of what we encounter in our work. “Learn first – Oh thou who aspiest unto our ancient Order! – that Equilibrium is the basis of the Work. If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?”<sup>710</sup> For example, consider if we are invoking a god that may belittle us and feel shame. Mindfulness helps us to not be instinctive and reactive but to stand firm in our own center. As another example, consider if we are evoking a demon who is flattering us and playing off of our pride, telling us what we

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708 *Liber Librae.*

709 *Liber Librae.*

710 *Liber Librae.*



want to hear so that we forget what we aimed to accomplish in the first place or think we have accomplished it when we have only further bloated our own egos. These are just some examples. You will find that, if you put these practices to use, you will find how they will work for you and what benefits you derive from them.

The practice of mindfulness itself is quite simple. First: find a position. This is one's "posture" or *asana*. I recommend simply sitting in a chair. Most of our bodies are used to sitting on chairs and that is a perfectly good position: it is called the "God" position because it is similar to how Egyptian gods (and others) are seen to be sitting on thrones. Regardless of position, your spine must be erect and your body must be balanced. It is not recommended to lie down as you will most likely fall asleep, and you can breathe easier and more fully while sitting erect. There are also more subtle, magical reasons for this, including the fact that one's body should be an image of balance itself.

To reiterate: Get comfortable, have your spine straight, and be in a symmetrical body position. Your body & mind are connected; your body is a symbol. Now, become aware of your chest. Your hands being too far forward will force your chest in which will make it more difficult to breathe freely. Similarly, your hands being too far back may place strain on your back or other parts of your body. Experiment with different placements of your hands in order to have your chest open and your body balanced. Further, one's body position is directly related to mental attitude: having your chest in evokes feelings of defeat and depression, while having your chest open and out evokes feelings of strength, confidence, and victory.

In the first couple of minutes, it is fine to adjust your body, but after that try to not move much at all. The only exception is if you feel a sharp pain somewhere in your body. Dull aches can and will happen, but you can usually push through them: simply be aware of the sensation and they will often go away in time.

Begin with a few deep breaths to relax the body. Let the breath be deep but calm: don't strain yourself. Scan your body for areas of tension – especially your face, shoulders, and thighs – and visualize them relaxing as you breathe deeply.

After a few minutes of relaxation, you can begin basic mindfulness. There are innumerable mindfulness practices, but this is the most basic.

Breathe naturally and gently through the nose, and focus your attention on your breath. Do not control your breath (making it longer or shorter), but be aware of the natural flow of breathing. Always bring your attention back to the breath gently whenever you notice you are not focusing on the breath. That is essentially the whole method.

If you find you are particularly distracted, you can bring your focus to the physical sensations of breath: on the inhale, feel air going in the nostrils, and on the exhale, feel it on upper lip. You can also, on inhaling, feel the sensation and mentally say “in”; on exhaling, mentally say “out.”

When attention wanders from anything but the breath (and the thought of “in” and “out” if you are utilizing that extra method), acknowledge the thought or emotion without judgment or attachment, and bring your attention back to your breath. You can simply note to yourself “thinking,” and then bring your attention back to breath. The goal is not to eliminate thoughts, feelings, or sensations; the goal is to notice when one's focus is distracted by them, and bring the focus back to the breath. Noises will occur around you – perhaps cars honking outside or people talking in another room – and this is not bad: it is actually helpful to use these things as part of one's practice. If you are distracted by them and find yourself thinking about them, simply note “thinking” and bring your attention back to the breath. Someone who can maintain mindfulness in a busy city can do so also in secluded mountaintops, but someone who can maintain mindfulness in secluded mountaintops doesn't necessarily have the ability to do so in a busy city. Be grateful of any distractions as aids to your practice.

Sitting for 15 to 30 minutes every day can markedly improve your

ability to focus, be non-reactive, and generally more calm. When you are done with formal mindfulness practice where one is holding a posture and focusing on the breath, one can start to bring this mentality into the rest of one's life. While one is active in the world, mindfulness involves focusing on whatever is occurring at the moment – the task at hand – rather than on the breath as in the more formal practice. In general, the focus can be the physical sensations that occur while one is moving about.

If you are driving, concentrate fully on driving including the physical sensations of the driver's wheel on your hands, the pedals on your feet, the sounds of the road, *et cetera*. If you find yourself wanting to listen to the radio or off in a train of thought, notice this and bring your attention back to the sensations of the present moment. If you are eating, bring your focus entirely to the texture and taste of your food. If you having sex, focus entirely on the sensations of sex. Essentially, do one thing at a time when possible and bring all of your attention into what is occurring in that here-and-now moment.

If you find you have forgotten to be mindful or that you are particularly distracted, there is no reason to be punitive. Just gently notice this and bring your attention back to what is occurring in the present. You will find that your experience of the various things you do during the day is greatly enhanced, as this “moving” mindfulness helps cultivate an acute sensitivity and appreciation of things we often experience but don't notice because of our highly active and distracting minds. You will also find that cultivating this at all parts of the day – not just the formal sitting practice – will greatly enhance the power and intensity of more traditionally ritualistic work of ceremonial magick. You do not have to believe me. Experiment and find out for yourself: Success is your proof.



**OM KALIKAYAI NAMAHA**  
**I Δ O**

*Om Kalikayai Namaha*  
*is based on a Vision as part of a Kali Working.*

## CHAPTER 30

# SPIRITUAL EXCUSES OF THELEMITES

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*This piece was originally a class given in 2013 e.v. The intent behind this piece is to talk about the many ways we get in our own way, making various excuses for not doing the work needed in order to do our Wills.*

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In Thelema, there is one goal: Do your True Will. Most people think of True Will in a digital way: it is either on or off. In other words, the thought is “Either I am doing my True Will or I am not doing my True Will.” I believe it is more accurate and more useful to think of True Will in an analog way: everything is a matter of degrees. You are always doing your True Will, but you could always be doing it in a way that is a little bit better or fuller. It is not that you aren't doing your Will, you are currently doing 40% or 50% of your True Will. It is in this sense that the term “pure will” makes more sense.

Pure will means “nothing but Will.” A pure will is 100% Will, just like pure juice is 100% juice and pure nonsense is 100% nonsense. To attain pure will, you therefore have to get from your 40% Will to 100% Will. In a sense, one can never reach 100% Will as it represents the asymptote that the curve of your Will-purity reaches toward but may not ever touch. I say this because there is always more to learn, more to grow, more to expand, more to live. Only when death sets the seal upon your life, you can hopefully expire with the words “100% Will attained.” This is mentioned as a guard against thinking possibly thinking you are at 100% and then failing to “strive ever to more.”

Another way to frame our goal of attaining 100% Will is the integration of Thelema into all aspects of our lives. That is, the Great Work must be sought and accomplished in every moment, not just in

heightened experiences, ritual work, or meditation. In a way, this should be obvious to most people who follow the basic logic of Thelema: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. Thou hast no right but to do thy will. If thou hast no right but to do thy will, then your only right and duty is to do thy will, and this means at all times and in all places.

Even without the inevitable human foibles of ignorance and laziness, this is an incredibly lofty goal, yet we are human, all-too-human. **We constantly make excuses that allow us to avoid our sole task in life of doing our Wills.** These excuses are sometimes said to others but they are really said to ourselves. Everyone does this: I am referring to myself and to you. The intention of this essay is to discuss the various spiritual excuses of Thelemites, meaning all of us, in order to (a) become aware of them, (b) be on guard against them, and (c) propose some solutions to avoiding these avoidances or getting through them to do the real work.

What is the basic nature of these excuses? **Avoidance.** In some way, with whatever excuse, we avoid actually doing the Work, avoid integrating Thelema into all aspects of our lives, and avoid our issues. These are enumerated below and will each be explained in depth.

<b>Avoiding the Work</b> (Magick & Yoga)	1) The Intentionality Cop-out, or <i>“All life is Magick!”</i>
	2) The Inadequacy Excuse, or <i>“But I don't know absolutely everything yet!”</i>
	3) Temple Perfectionism, or <i>“I can't do rituals until my Temple is completely set up.”</i>
	4) Analysis Paralysis, or <i>“I must do it the right way, knowing what, when, where, and how, before I practice.”</i>
	5) The Comparison Complex, or <i>“I will never be as good or as knowledgeable as X!”</i>

<b>Avoiding the Integration of Thelema</b>	6) Ritual Retreat, or <i>“I’ve done my rituals and I’m therefore done for the day.”</i>
	7) Sunday Best, or <i>“I went to Gnostic Mass so I am done for the week”</i>
	8) The Lesser Work, or <i>“but I have so much other stuff to be doing!”</i>
	9) Other-people Obsessiveness, or <i>“but they’re not good Thelemites!”</i>

<b>Avoiding our Issues (spiritual bypass)</b>	10) Emotion
	11) Sexuality
	12) Hyper-intellectualism

## **Avoiding the Work**

### **1) The Intentionality Cop-out, or “All life is Magick”**

Crowley once wrote that “Every intentional act is a Magical act,”<sup>711</sup> and this is certainly true. While I have nothing to say against the truth of this statement, it is often used as a cop-out. The typical thought process, which I will quote from my own brain, goes something like this:

“Every intentional act is a magical act.”

“I use intention all the time... to put on clothes, flip on a light switch, get a bus ticket, fill out my work paperwork, buy food, *et cetera.*”

“This means my whole life is already magical.”

“Since my whole life is already magical, why would I need to do any Magick? (meaning formal work such as ceremonial ritual and yoga).

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<sup>711</sup> *Magick in Theory and Practice*, “Introduction and Theorems,” III:1.

The problem is that we are actually not all that intentional in our lives. Our baseline is a kind of unconsciousness, and it requires a lot of work and discipline to become more intentional – think of how hard it is to maintain concentration on a single thought or image without intruding thoughts for more than a few seconds! **Only once we have done the work to become more and more intentional through ceremonial ritual and meditation can we then integrate that subtle intentionality into the coarseness of our regular lives.** And this must be done and re-done perpetually. Otherwise the coarseness will naturally overpower the subtlety, the inertia will overpower the momentum. This is spoken of in the Emerald Tablet of Hermes where its written:

*“Separate the earth from the fire, and you shall adhere more to that which is subtle than that which is coarse, through care and wisdom. It ascends from the earth to the heaven. It extracts the lights from the heights and then descends to the earth containing the power of the above and the below for it is with the light of the lights. Therefore the darkness flees from it. The greatest power overcomes everything that is subtle and it penetrates all that is coarse.”*

We have to first separate the earth from the fire, the coarse from the subtle, the unconsciousness from the intentionality. Only *then* can we then descend back to earth and bring the intentionality to the unconsciousness. Then the darkness of unconsciousness will flee... otherwise darkness will inevitably prevail. That is the lot of our lives on this material plane.

In other words, one must perform the alchemical *solve* before the next operation of *coagula*.<sup>712</sup> We must set apart parts of our lives and devote them to increasing intentionality, and then we may slowly integrate that back into the rest of our lives.

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712 *Solve* essentially means “separate” and *coagula* means “join together.”



Again, to emphasize the point, the solution to this problem of our unconsciousness is that we have to set apart parts of our lives and devote them to increasing intentionality and awareness. We then have to slowly bring this heightened sense into the rest of our worlds, returning again and again to the set-apart practices<sup>713</sup> to avoid falling back into darkness and obscurity. These practices are Yoga and Magick.

There are two major practices of Yoga or meditation that help with this process: (1) mindfulness, meaning the non-attached, non-judgmental awareness that recognizes but is not caught up in thoughts and emotions/feelings, and (2) focused attention, or concentration, which means fixing the attention on a single object of concentration and constantly bringing attention back to that object when there are “breaks” of attention. Both mindfulness and concentration aid us in increasing our awareness and intention.

In terms of Magick, absolutely every ritual involves some form of increasing awareness and intention. There are two broad categories of awareness and intention that are accessed in magical practices: background and foreground. “Background” means that the practices are done over and over again in order to generally increase vigilance, the awareness of one's intention to accomplish the Great Work. These include: Resh (the fourfold solar adoration that reminds us at four points in the day of our intention to attain 100% Will, so to speak), saying Will (bringing awareness and intention to food and drink), Jugorum (creating a “sentry” of vigilance at the gate of our minds in terms of thoughts, words, and actions), and our greetings (“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” and “Love is the law, love under will” every time we greet someone we bring our intention back to 100% Will, and acknowledge each person's right and duty to do this). On these “background” practices, Crowley writes:

*“What you need is a mind that will help rather than hinder your*

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713 “Sacred” literally means “set apart.”

*Work by its normal function. This is where these Greetings, and Will-sayings, and Adorations come in. It is not a concentration-practice proper; I haven't a good word for it. 'Background-concentration' or 'long-distance-concentration' are clumsy, and not too accurate. It is really rather like a public school education. One is not constantly 'doing a better thing than one has ever done'; one is not dropping one's eye-glass every two minutes, or being a little gentleman in the act of brushing one's hair. The point is that one trains oneself to react properly at any moment of surprise. It must become 'second nature' for 'Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law' to spring to the forefront of the mind when one is introduced to a stranger, or comes down to breakfast, or hears the telephone bell, or observes the hour of the adoration, (these are to be the superficial reactions, like instinctively rising when a lady enters the room), or, at the other end, in moments of immediate peril, or of sudden apprehension, or when in one's meditation, one approaches the deepest strata. One need not be dogmatic about the use of these special words. One might choose a formula to represent one's own particular True Will. It is a little like Cato, (or Scipio, was it?) who concluded every speech, whether about the Regulations of the Roman Bath or the proposal to reclaim a marsh of the Maremma, with the words: 'And moreover, in my opinion, Carthage ought to be destroyed.' Got it?"<sup>714</sup>*

Got it? “Foreground” means that one is using one's time and energy to do a specific practice such as the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, Star Ruby, Hexagram rituals, Mass of the Phoenix, or whatever else. Both background and foreground are necessary in training or disciplining oneself to remain vigilant and aware.

Only through these practices do we gradually bring more and more of the subtle intention into the rest of our lives rather than saying

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714 *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 18.

“every intentional act is a magical act” and forfeiting any possibility of training ourselves to actually do work.

## **2) The Inadequacy Excuse, or “But I don't know absolutely everything yet!”**

One of the most common hangups in learning Magick is the intense desire to want to know everything about a ritual, both in theory and practice, before doing it.

**The secret of Magick is that you learn by doing.**

It is tempting to think “Once I know the correct Divine name, then I can start vibrating” or “Once I understand its Qabalistic significance, I can start the ritual” or “I haven't memorized it entirely, but when I do, then I can start on it.” The power of Magick is a function of your Will, not a function of using the “right” word or having the “right knowledge”

There is an apocryphal story that a hermit had heard the mantra “Om Mani Padme Hum” incorrectly and was repeating an incorrect phrase. An experienced meditator came upon this hermit who had the sole practice of the mantra. When the meditator heard the hermit speak the mantra aloud, he became distressed and told the hermit that he had been saying it incorrectly for years. The hermit asked how he should be saying it and the meditator corrected him. The meditator comforted himself that the hermit could at least use the rest of his life to say the mantra correctly, and he walked off to cross a river. He was shocked to see the hermit standing on top of the water, and the hermit asked him, “I am sorry, I have forgotten the correct pronunciation of the mantra, could you repeat it to me again?” The meditator was stunned and admitted, “Obviously, you don't need it.”

The point of the story is that it is the practice and not the correct phrase or pronunciation that brings the desired effect. While it is legitimate to want to have the accurate pronunciations of names and not be doing the ritual completely wrong, it is the practice thereof that bestows benefits,

not the correct names. No Qabalistic knowledge will ever make your rituals suddenly “work.” They make them better, more concise, and encompassing, but ultimately your practice makes your rituals work.

### 3) Temple Perfectionism, or “I can't do rituals until my Temple is completely set up.”

There is a similar tendency that people want to have a perfect Temple before they start their work. On a smaller scale, some people believe they need ritual implements before they start practicing.

Ritual implements do not suddenly make your Magick effective. The implements themselves gain power through their repetitive use and “consecration” towards a specific task. Crowley wrote about not needing “proper” magical tools:

*“As some of your daily practices are ceremonial, it should not come amiss to vouchsafe a few hints of practical service. For in ritual Magick, it will of course be the first care to get everything balanced and tidy. If you propose to erect a regular Temple, the most precise instructions in every detail are given in Book 4, Part II. (But I haven't so much as seen a copy for years!) There is a good deal scattered about in Part III (Magick, which you have) especially about the four elemental weapons. But if circumstances deny you for the moment the means of carrying out this Ædification as the Ideal would have it, you can certainly do your best to create a fairly satisfactory – above all, workable – substitute. I was often reduced to such expedients when wandering in strange lands, camping on glaciers, and so on. I fixed it workably well. In Mexico, D.F. for instance, I took my bedroom itself for the Circle, my night-table for the Altar, my candle for the Lamp, and I made the Weapons compact. I had a Wand eight inches long, all precious stones and enamel, to represent the Tree*

*of Life; within, an iron tube containing quicksilver—very correct, lordly, and damsilly. What a club! Also, bought, a silver-gilt Cup; for Air and Earth I made one sachet of rose-petals in yellow silk, and another in green silk packed with salt. In the wilds it was easy, agreeable and most efficacious to make a Circle, and build an altar, of stones; my Alpine Lantern served admirably for the Lamp...”*<sup>715</sup>

There are implements almost anywhere that can be used as ritual implements. Consider a dinner table: Your table is your Altar; your plate is your Disk; your knife is your Dagger; your glass of water is your Cup; your fork is your Wand; your salt and pepper are the two Pillars; your napkin is your Robe or Apron. The point being that you can always improvise with ritual implements.

Further, you do not need any implements for Magick to work. “True ritual is as much action as word; it is Will.”<sup>716</sup> You therefore need intention and focus for Magick to work, and **all those ritual implements, vestments, and Temple furniture are simply so many aids to help that Will.** That is, it is the Will of the individual that is primary; all of the external implements and vestments and such are secondary and intended to aid that primary focus of the Will.

A person who is in their street clothes who practices and performs a Star Ruby with focus and intention is going to be many times more efficacious than someone who has a full, decked-out Temple set-up but never practices or performs their Star Ruby without focus or intention.

**4) Analysis Paralysis,  
or “I must do it the right way, knowing what,  
when, where, and how, before I practice.”**

Seeing as how most people come to Magick through reading and

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<sup>715</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 23.

<sup>716</sup> *Liber Librae*.

often a fetish of bibliophilia, it is no surprise that many magicians, at least nowadays, are particularly heady and over-cognitive.

**We are *all* prone to analysis paralysis, which is the paralysis that we self-induce by thinking and talking overmuch about our Magick and Yoga.** This is explained in a Parable of the Strong Brown Reaper and the Wise Man from a Holy Book of Thelema:

*“Then said Adonai [to the Adept]: Thou hast the Head of the Hawk, and thy Phallus is the Phallus of Asar. Thou knowest the white, and thou knowest the black, and thou knowest that these are one. But why seekest thou the knowledge of their equivalence? And he [the Adept] said: That my Work may be right. And Adonai said: The strong brown reaper swept his swathe and rejoiced. The wise man counted his muscles, and pondered, and understood not, and was sad. Reap thou, and rejoice!”<sup>717</sup>*

This parable contrasts “the strong brown reaper” with the “the wise man.” The strong brown reaper is an image of an individual who acts without over-thinking things. He is “strong” because physical strength implies an ability to act and the actual use of one’s muscles. He is “brown” because the fertile earth is brown and able to bear harvest; also, his skin is tanned from being exposed to the sun, showing that he actively toils and works. He is a “reaper” because he reaps the harvest of the earth, i.e. he does his work and reaps the reward. This strong brown reaper simply “swept his swathe and rejoiced.” That is, the strong brown reaper is characterized by action, not over-thinking.

This strong brown reaper is contrasted with the “wise man” who is focused on rational calculations. Over-thinking and hyper-rationalism is seen under the figure of the wise man counting, pondering, and not understanding: this leads to sorrow. The wise man has muscles but does not use them; instead he tries to understand them through counting and

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<sup>717</sup> *Liber LXV, I:54-56.*

pondering. The moral of the story: **Be the reaper.**

This parallels the curse against Reason in *The Book of the Law* where it is written:

*“There is great danger in me; for who doth not understand these runes shall make a great miss. He shall fall down into the pit called Because, and there he shall perish with the dogs of Reason. Now a curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursed for ever! If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought.. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness. Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise. Enough of Because! Be he damned for a dog! But ye, o my people, rise up & awake!”*<sup>718</sup>

We are to be the strong brown reaper who acts and does not over-think things. We must “rise up & awake” rather than being stuck in “the pit called Because” with “the dogs of Reason.”

The first word of the Law of Thelema is “Do,” and we must do what we will, not be mired in the minutiae of the mind. This also parallels what is said in *The Book of the Law*, “Success is thy proof: argue not; convert not; talk not over much!”<sup>719</sup>

Ultimately focusing on the “correct,” interpretation and knowledge of things leads us to become bogged down in unnecessary calculations and doubt that impede the free and full expression of the Will. A good place to start getting over this is not letting this perfectionism impede or stagnate ritual work. One should be the “strong brown reaper” who acts freely without over-thinking or excessive doubtfulness. One should do the work – sow – and you reap what you sow, not what you think about.

What's the solution? Tell your mind to shut up and just do it. Realize you will never be perfect at whatever ritual or meditation you are attempting, especially if you are simply thinking about it rather than

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718 *Liber AL*, II:27-34.

719 *Liber AL*, III:42.

practicing it.

### 5) The Comparison Complex, or “I will never be as good or as knowledgeable as X!”

It's a natural human tendency to compare yourself to others, whether to look down on them to feel better about yourself or to look up to them to feel inadequate.

Especially in Thelemic circles where many of us have grotesque aberrations of brains filled with incomprehensible amounts of trivia, it can be easy to feel like you will never be as knowledgeable as someone else. In terms of ritual practice, there are always going to be people who have been doing it for decades when you start learning. Everyone was a newbie at some point in their lives and they started the same way as everyone else: by doing it.

There are also people who have been studying this material for decades but actually aren't particularly proficient at magick – our classic armchair magicians – or they simply made some progress early in their magical careers and have stagnated since then. A lot of our idealistic projections onto people aren't warranted for several reasons, this being one of them.

Another reason is that Magick is partly science and can be taught to others, but there is a huge element of Art. Each person needs to find their own talents, proclivities, and idiosyncrasies in order to find not only *what* rituals work best for them but also *how* to do each ritual so that it works for them. No one can ever bestow this knowledge upon you; it comes from experiment, from trial and error, from falling on your face and picking yourself up so that you will fall on your face a little better next time.

Also, no matter how knowledgeable someone is, the Great Work is never accomplished by obtaining a piece of intellectual knowledge. Reading a book will never make you accomplish the Great Work, it can



only be a “finger pointing to the moon” to get you to actually do the Work. It's not called the Great Reading Marathon or the Great Library or the Great Knowledge Acquisition for a reason. It's the Great Work because it is a great or huge task and it requires work, not necessarily in the trudging along bearing a burden type of work – although that's necessarily part of any kind of Path – but also in the sense of simply needing to put things into practice, to put it to work.

On the flip side, being more knowledgeable than someone will never automatically make them a better magician, a better Thelemite, or a better person. Lording it over someone actually makes you a worse magician because you are basing your own self-worth in response or reaction to someone else rather than standing firm in your own center.

What is the solution? Learn things on your own terms at your own pace. Learn from other people but realize it's virtually never useful to compare yourself to them, for better or for worse. Take people telling you things, whether bits of knowledge or how you're doing a ritual wrong, with a huge grain of salt. Everyone has their own Path, you are on your Path, and that is all that matters for your work.

## **Avoiding the Integration of Thelema**

### **6) Ritual Retreat, or “I've done my rituals and I'm therefore done for the day.”**

The discipline required to actually do ceremonial ritual or sit down for meditation is a great task. Human inertia is the most powerful and pervasive force on earth, perhaps only behind human ignorance.

The basic thought process is this: “I've done my Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram and Middle Pillar for the day; now it's time to go out and discharge all my worldly duties.” After you formulate the Circle in the LRP, you do not simply step out of it once you are done. The Circle follows you everywhere you go... ideally.

What is required is two-fold:

- 1) The realization that the work does not end when you finish ritual, it begins.
- 2) An intentional bringing of that mindset into the rest of life

The realization is easy, you've hopefully all had it yourselves or, if not, you do now. The difficulty is bringing that mindset into the rest of life. What is then the solution? Each person can and should obviously find their own solution – rituals like Resh certainly help but they are only four times during the day. One way is to have a mini-ritual that one can do throughout the day. It can be a phrase, a visualization, a gesture, or anything. One I have used is the Qabalistic Cross – it's not just a part of the LRP, it is a ritual unto itself, and a powerful though concise one. It takes only 5 seconds to do it in your head while walking down the street. One can make the motions and say the words virtually at any time, including while reading this chapter.

The intention is to bring oneself back to the foreground, do the Qabalistic Cross and think “I am here right now, and I am going to make the most of this moment. I am a God and I am going to manifest that Godhead in action.” Or something to that effect.

One great aid is to use emotions, especially negative ones, as tools. Whenever you feel grumpy, tired, frustrated, annoyed, hurt, bored, fearful, or whatever else, take that as a reminder to do the Qabalistic Cross and come back to the Center, come back to the moment. If this habit is developed, you not only increase in intentionality and awareness, you also gain a certain power in relation to the emotions, which can easily be seen if it is practiced even just once.

Are you bored right now? Close your eyes, do the Qabalistic Cross in your head, and with the final words, open your eyes like a baby opening her eyes for the first time, and welcome this moment.

Another practice is to think about “Do what thou wilt” whenever

presented with a problem, and try to determine how it may be solved by applying the idea behind those four words to the issue at hand. Yet another practice: when annoyed or frustrated by people, mentally say “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” to each person present.

There are limitless ways to integrate more awareness and intentionality into one's life. The best practice will ultimately come from you, so try things out and do whatever feels most authentic and efficacious.

### **7) Sunday Best, or “I went to Gnostic Mass so I am done for the week”**

A typical criticism of Catholics is that they are only Catholic when they dress up in their “Sunday Best” and go to Mass every week. This can apply equally to Thelemites. Going to Gnostic Masses and participating in Masses is great, but it's not enough. This is really just a particular form of “Ritual Retreat.”

Especially if one is in a mindset of simply observing for much of the Mass, there is no Work done. It is the equivalent of reading a book on meditation and never actually meditating.

What is a solution to this problem? Make the Gnostic Mass useful when you are there. Really get into it, study it, and make it meaningful to you so that it's a powerful experience. It is possible to simply “observe” a Mass and minimally participate, or one can use the skills you have developed through Magick and meditation, as well as enflaming one's visceral devotion, to make the Mass a real mystical experience.

Realize that the Mass is only about one hour out of the 168 hours in a week. There are 167 other hours for you to integrate the ideas and practices of Thelema into your life.

Try to see how the Mass relates to other parts of your life. Do you see the Miracle of the Mass in your transmutation of food and drink? Do you see the story of the Priest in the cycle of your and the Sun's days? Do

consciously partake in the life of the Sun and the joy of the Earth?

### 8) The Lesser Work, or “but I have so much other stuff to be doing!”

The Great Work is striving to accomplish your True Will. The “Lesser Work” is everything else you need to do: having a job, making money, getting food, writing reports, writing papers, family, friends, *et cetera*.

If we are saying “I never have time to think about Thelema, I never have time to do my ritual work, I never have time to meditate” then we are engaging in this Spiritual Excuse. **You *always* have time to do ritual or meditate;** it is just a matter of your priorities, your time management, and your actual desire to get the work done.

There's always a way to find time if you really care about it. You can do a Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram in the shower, you can meditate on the train ride, you can practice mindfulness while driving, on your lunch break, right when you wake up, right before you fall asleep, and on and on.

The average life expectancy of someone living in the United States right now is around 76 to 81 years. If you are over 20, that means you are  $\frac{1}{4}$  done with your life. If you believe “Thou hast no right but to do thy will,” what could possibly matter more than the Great Work of knowing and doing your Will? What do you do toward this end? What have you created? How have you created yourself? How joyful is your life?

If you have trouble answering any of these questions, perhaps a shift of priorities is worthwhile in your life? Manage your time. Think about your priorities, and commit to doing one thing per day to the end of accomplishing your priorities. It is certainly easier said than done, but it crucially important that it be done.

## 9) Other-people Obsessiveness, or “but *they’re* not good Thelemites!”

One great way to avoid looking at yourself is to look at other people, to critique and judge others rather than working on yourself. Crowley wrote to his “magical son”:

*“I will have thee to know, moreover, my dear Son, the right Art of Conduct with them whom I shall give thee for Initiation. And the Rule thereof is one Rule; Do that thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. See thou constantly to it that this be not broken; especially in the Section thereof (if I dare say so) which readeth Mind thine own Business. This is of Application equally to all, and the most dangerous Man (or Woman, as has occurred, or I err) is the Busy-body. Oh how ashamed are we, and moved to Indignation, seeing the Sins and Follies of our Neighbours!”*<sup>720</sup>

Nowhere in the entire Thelemic literary corpus does it say that you have any right to know or dictate anyone else's Will except your own. Nowhere does it say that your standards should be other people's standards. Nowhere does it say that your beliefs should be other people's beliefs. Nowhere does it say that your practice should be other people's practice.

This is the flip-side of the Comparison Complex. Instead of being diminished by comparing yourself to others, you are diminishing others by comparing others to yourself. There are some people out there that essentially say “if you are not doing *De Cultu*, you are not a good or worthwhile Thelemite.” *De Cultu* is a chapter in *Liber Aleph* that explains to never neglect the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram, Resh, the assumption of the God-form of Hoor-paar-kraat, some kind of Eucharistic ritual, *et cetera*. This is a great list of basic practices but it in no way is an Absolute.

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<sup>720</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 96.

Your Will may very well not include all of these or *any* of these practices. Whether or not your Will includes any of these practices, there is *never* a case where it is your job to make sure other people are doing these practices. Even if you are someone's superior in a magical order, it is still on them to do the work.

To obsess about this is to simply avoid doing your own work.

What is the solution to this excuse? Remember that you can *never* know another person's True Will. You can *never* know if another person is *doing* their True Will. There is no reason to ever particularly care what another person's Will is. Even if someone is “interfering” with your Will, it doesn't matter if they are doing their Will or not. **What matters is whether you are doing your Will.**

At best, we can learn from other people's successes and failures. We can read Lon DuQuette's book, for example, and learn that globbing a throng of Abramelin Oil onto our heads before evoking a demon is not a great idea. Then again, we may need to do so ourselves before truly realizing what a bad idea it is.

Best case scenario, we see what works for other people, we try it out for ourselves, and see if it works for ourselves. We see what doesn't work for other people, try to avoid the same mistakes, and see if it works for ourselves.

### Avoiding our Issues

Using “spiritual excuses” to avoid dealing with our own issues, our own emotional problems or human foibles, is so common that there is actually a term for it: *spiritual bypass*. If we are avoiding our own developmental needs or our own painful feelings through some kind of spiritual excuse, that is a spiritual bypass.

The term was coined by John Welwood. He said, “When we are spiritually bypassing, we often use the goal of awakening or liberation to rationalize what I call premature transcendence: trying to rise above the

raw and messy side of our humanness before we have fully faced and made peace with it.”<sup>721</sup>

For example, if you are grieving over the loss of your mother and you tell yourself “It’s all just illusion anyways” so you forget about it, that is a spiritual bypass. If you are being an asshole and you tell yourself “All things are perfect in themselves,” you are avoiding the necessary work of becoming less of an asshole. If you are being a cold stoic intellectual and you tell yourself “Emotions are evil and distort my true self,” you are avoiding the necessary work of becoming aware of and expressing your emotions like a healthy human being. If you are suffering from anything – from being lonely, being hurt, being anxious – and your attitude is to “transcend” this suffering by attaining enlightenment without dealing with it, you are engaging in a spiritual bypass. If you are being malicious and you are justifying it by quoting from the Holy Books, you are engaging in a spiritual bypass.

What are some basic ways that Thelemites can do this? Often it involves justifying angry responses, hyper-sexuality, and hyper-intellectualism.

## 10) Emotion (Anger)

Some people are more emotional than others. That is fine. That can’t be denied, shouldn’t be suppressed, or looked down upon. It can, in many cases, be a great benefit. I will focus on one emotional reaction that some people justify with Thelema as a bypass or excuse: Anger.

Suppose we get really angry at someone. Our local body master doesn’t like our proposal, so we fly into a rage. Someone else calls us a name and we become angry, *et cetera*. We can justify this various ways with Thelema:

“Everything is perfect, so my anger is perfect.”

“Ra-Hoor-Khuit is a God of War.”

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721 Excerpted from “Human Nature, Buddha Nature: On Spiritual Bypassing, Relationship, and the Dharma: An interview with John Welwood by Tina Fossella.”

“Stamp down the wretched and the weak.”

“In Thelema, we don't suppress our emotions like in the Old Aeon.”

There are plenty of other ways to do so, but there are also plenty of places where Crowley explicitly mentions the dangers of emotion. More specifically, the danger of having not control over your thoughts and actions that come out of emotions. *Liber Librae* says succinctly: “discipline the emotions.” He also wrote:

*“Reason and Emotion; these are the two great enemies of the Ethic of Thelema.”*<sup>722</sup>

*“The majority of people will find most trouble with the Emotions, and thoughts which excite them. But it is both possible and necessary not merely to suppress the emotions, but to turn them into faithful servants. Thus the emotion of anger is occasionally useful against that portion of the brain whose slackness vitiates the control.”*<sup>723</sup>

Emotion does not equal Will. It is part of our being and therefore to be a vessel for the expression of our Will, but unchecked emotion is just as potentially ruinous as unchecked bodily urges. It is obvious to most people – at least after a while – that having no self-discipline whatsoever is antithetical to doing one's True Will. “Want” or “wish” or “desire” is not Will, as we say. This is no less the case with emotions.

Letting our emotions take over is just as disastrous as letting our instincts take over. Just like we can transmute our instincts into Will – for example, our instinct to eat sublimated into the Miracle of the Mass, our instinct to seek out pleasure sublimated into appreciating music or art, *et cetera* – we can transmute our emotions into Will.

Unbridled anger is simply crude and animalistic. If it leaks out and

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<sup>722</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, chapter 46.

<sup>723</sup> *Liber ABA, Part II*.



attacks other people in reaction to something, we are essentially letting that other person have power over us. If we attack someone else because we are angry at them, we are being led around by the nose. We are losing our Equilibrium, the fundamental virtue of all Magicians.

If we transmute our anger to direct it against our own laziness, for example, it may turn out useful. If we simply leave our emotions undisciplined, saying “everything is perfect” or “I am an instrument of the God of War,” we are simply kidding ourselves. We are making an excuse for our lack of work on ourselves.

## 11) Sexuality

Nowhere in Thelema does it *ever* say that Thelemites should be more sexually active than any other type of person. Nowhere does it say that polyamory is better than monogamy. Nowhere does it say that bisexuality or pansexuality is better than heterosexuality or homosexuality.

*Everywhere* in Thelema it says that you must find your own nature and fulfill it. Whatever that nature is, you must fulfill that... not live up to some external, *a priori* ideal that has been set up *for* you.

If we justify any kind of lack of discipline with sexuality with Thelema, we are engaging in a spiritual bypass. If we exploit someone else sexually or coerce them sexually, justifying it in Thelema, saying “man has the right to love as he will” (or whatever else), we are engaging in a spiritual bypass. In no place does Thelema ever say you must have sex with people at all, let alone that it should be often or in a certain way. It says you are to love *as you will*.

To let your lust take over is to release your autonomy and responsibility as a star. *Liber Librae* says succinctly: “strengthen and control the animal passions.” We are to strengthen the animal passions, we aren't to cut them out as many systems do, but we are to *control* them. If we do not control our passions, they will control us. If we are the victim to

our own passions and impulses, we are not magicians, we are simply a sail-less boat being buffeted by waves. That is not Magick, that is pitiful.

Don't excuse your lack of control of your lust by quoting a Holy Book. Practice self-discipline. You'll likely enjoy your lust more anyway.

## 12) Hyper-intellectualism

Nowhere in Thelema does it say that you need to learn the Tree of Life to do your Will. Nowhere in Thelema does it say that your mind or Reason should dictate your Will. On the contrary, Thelema is full of the exact opposite.

If we are simply studying a lot of books – memorizing a lot of what I call Qa-blah-blah – without ever looking at ourselves, we are engaging in a spiritual bypass.

If we know all the paths to the Tree of Life but we don't know the first thing about our own values, our own goals, or our own proclivities, then we are engaging in a spiritual bypass.

If we are well-versed in all the Holy Books and can quote them to show our holiness but we have never actually attempted the devotional work to attain, we are engaging in a spiritual bypass.

If we know every Golden Dawn ritual and every Golden Dawn attribution and all the various ways that this refers to that, but we still have absolutely no control over our emotions or impulses, we are engaging in a spiritual bypass.

Conversely, if we justify a complete lack of development of the intellect because “Reason is a lie,” we are engaging in a spiritual bypass. Reason, in Thelema, is a minister or servant of Will. If our servant insists on being King, we are not letting the Will have its rightful place. If our servant insists on not doing the servant's job, we are not allowing the Will the tools it needs to fulfill its purpose.

If we are hyper-intellectual, we can rationalize or intellectualize anything without actually doing work. If we are hypo-intellectual, we can

avoid studying things, finding their deeper meaning, learning the various aspects of science, philosophy, mathematics, and humanities and never go about the world in a more complete and efficient way.

Consider an extreme example where someone has never learned arithmetic because Reason is a lie (or some similar justification). They won't be able to manage their money. They won't be able to function in the simplest ways in the world because they don't have basic knowledge. Consider an extreme example where someone knows nothing about science. They will neglect the most basic aspects of reality. Suppose they attain *samadhi* and say "everything is one," they might confuse the planes and think that somehow wood doesn't float on water anymore. The classic example is someone on LSD thinking they can fly so they jump out of the building. Had they strengthened their intellect to the appropriate level, no one would ever make such a fatal mistake. Besides, as the late Bill Hicks noted, most birds take off from the ground, they don't jump off buildings.

Overall, bring more intentionality to life. Cultivate awareness, and bring that awareness into every aspect of your life. Try to determine if you are simply making excuses for not doing magick or meditation, not integrating the Law of Thelema into all parts of your life, or for poorly disciplined behavior. In this way, we may all move a little closer to the asymptote of 100% Will.



*Conceived by Soror Fieri Facias; Birthed by IAO131*

***Liber Laziness vel Facebook***  
*is based on satirical cynicism*

## CHAPTER 31

# MAGICK OUTSIDE THE TEMPLE

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*This chapter was originally a class given in 2014 e.v. The intent behind this piece is to explore how Magick is something we do everywhere in the Temple of life.*

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Magick is something we do ceremonially through ritual in our physical temples, whether they are lavish spaces or our disheveled bedrooms. Yet a Magician is not simply a Magician within the bounds of the physical Temple. You don't start becoming a Magician when you begin a ritual and finish being a Magician when the ritual ends. **A Magician is always a Magician, regardless of where she is.** She is always applying the principle of “love under will” in all facets of life. Ritual simply re-affirms and re-attunes us to this in a structured way.

**The true Temple of the Magician is her consciousness.** We are always in the secret Temple of our souls, and ritual is an outer demonstration of inner processes within this Secret Temple.

*Liber Librae* opens with this line: “Learn first — Oh thou who aspirest unto our ancient Order! — that Equilibrium is the basis of the Work. If thou thyself hast not a sure foundation, whereon wilt thou stand to direct the forces of Nature?”

We need to find a notion — or, more accurately — an experience of self that can be our Center, our place of Balance. **Finding this place of Balance is the foundational task of the Magician,** the bedrock upon which the superstructure of the rest of the self can be built. If the foundation is weak, the rest is sure to crumble

What is the self? In the Hermetic tradition, we have the 5 Elements: Earth is the body, and physical sensations — touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. Air is the mind, the intellect and faculties of

conceptualization, rationality, logic, memory, *et cetera*. Water is the emotion: sadness, happiness, surprise, anger, fear, disgust. Fire is desire, our impulses and drives. Spirit is that which is beyond these four and also binds them together. Spirit is consciousness itself, the soul, the “secret Temple.”

**The self that is the sure foundation is Spirit.** We are not the four Elements, but the Quintessence. The light of consciousness is the light of our Khabs, our Star. There is a Hebrew word (כוכב) that can be translated as “Star” and enumerates to 93, the same as that of Thelema and Agape. This Star — the light of our conscious, our Khabs — is our 93, our foundational Law, the substance of our Will. Take a moment to identify this Star in yourself, the raw stuff of consciousness itself beyond any particular appearance of body, sense, mind, emotion, or desire.

We are not our bodies. Virtually all cells in your body are replaced every 7 to 10 years.

We are not our mind, or our thoughts. Thoughts come and go, they can be right or wrong, useful or not useful, but we are not them. Mindfulness is the practice of detaching from these thoughts, of gaining perspective, a place of balance outside of thought.

We are not our emotions. Though they are powerful and we greatly identify with them while they are running their course, they are not us. We are not anger or sadness in the same way that we are not our thoughts.

We are not our impulses. Some impulses are useful and some are not. Impulses, like the impulse to eat or to say something, arise and fall away. They come and go, just like thoughts and emotions.

If we are able to reside in our self that is bare awareness, what are the natural outgrowths of this perspective?

1) **There is gratitude, appreciation for being able to partake in the mystery of awareness itself, the Sacrament of Existence.**

You could simply be nothingness, unconscious, but through some strange mystery, you have been granted the gift of awareness; you have

undergone the Miracle of Incarnation to become formulated as a conscious being.

*The Book of the Law* says, “Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.”<sup>724</sup> From the perspective of Spirit, all joys and all sorrows are but facets of one supreme, pure joy that is the involvement in Existence to begin with. Crowley comments, “‘All in this kind are but shadows’ says Shakespeare, referring to actors. The Universe is a Puppet-Play for the amusement of Nuit and Hadit in their Nuptials; a very Midsummer Night’s Dream. So then we laugh at the mock woes of Pyramus and Thisbe, the clumsy gambols of Bottom; for we understand the Truth of Things, how all is a Dance of Ecstasy.”<sup>725</sup>

He also writes, “All is a never ending Play of Love wherein our Lady Nuit and her Lord Hadit rejoice; and every Part of the Play is Play. All pain is but sharp Sauce to the Dish of Pleasure; for it is the Nature of the Universe that hath devised this everlasting Banquet of Joy.”<sup>726</sup>

Even experiences of pain are part of this awareness, part of the “play” and can be appreciated much like one would appreciate a tragedy. This is understood when we say that all things are the “play of Nuit,” as when Crowley writes, “The central thesis of the *Book of the Law* asserts the Perfection of the Universe. In its pantheistic conception all possibilities are equal in value; each and every Point-Event is ‘a play of Nuit.’”<sup>727</sup>

**Every experience is the fulfillment of one of Her possibilities, and in the fulfillment or Love, there is inherent Joy.** There is enjoyment in each new experience being a play of Mysterious Matter and Mysterious Energy upon the face of the Spirit, to paraphrase the Gnostic Mass. So there is naturally gratitude, an appreciation and even enjoyment in experience itself, regardless of its particular content.

The second natural outgrowth of abiding in the perspective of bare

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724 *Liber AL*, II:9.

725 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:9.

726 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 58.

727 *The Book of Thoth*.

awareness is:

2) **Non-attachment to things beyond bare awareness.**

Those things “beyond bare awareness” are the four Elements mentioned before: body and sense, mind and thought, emotion, and desire.

Consider loss: Suppose you get a new toy, a new car, and the next day you find it's been destroyed. You suffer the pain of loss, your attachment to the new toy or car is broken violently. Normally we attach ourselves to the new toy and suffer when it is taken away, even though we are in the exact same place then as before we received the new toy. Yet from the perspective of awareness, it is simply a new moment, a new experience. It is an experience without a car, but it is an experience nonetheless.

There is one thing on which we can always count: **Things are the way they are. A wish to alter this, make it another way, or wish it were some other way, is a sure sign you are not abiding in this Spirit**, in consciousness itself or bare awareness.

Insofar as one is non-attached, one is able to truly enjoy things. If we were attached to being Romeo, we would suffer at his suicide, but if we are the perceiver – bare awareness – then we can appreciate it as part of the Cosmic Drama. There is then a sense of peace that goes with this non-attachment: it may experience pain, loss, joy, and everything else but it is all on the backdrop of peace. This is “pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result”<sup>728</sup> that is every way perfect. It does not lust after one result or another, it simply is – or, rather, it simply goes.

This is, in a sense, an exalted state. But in another sense, it is incredibly natural. We're all born with it, we all have it, we all *are* it – but we get caught up in the various plays on the faces of our Spirits. This sense of self is our birthright. It is always with us, and yet it isn't static – it is dynamic, it is constantly “going.” **We are like stars traveling through**

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728 *Liber AL*, I:44.



**infinite space, we are consciousness moving through the space of possibilities.**

This sense of self, as I've already said, is the Spirit of the five elements, the Quintessence. In this sense, this sense of self is identifiable with Hoor-paar-kraat, the Babe in the Egg<sup>729</sup> – the Egg is the Egg of Spirit. *The Book of the Law* says, “I am unique & conqueror. I am not of the slaves that perish. Be they damned & dead! Amen. (This is of the 4: there is a fifth who is invisible, & therein am I as a babe in an egg.)”<sup>730</sup> This sense of self is therefore “shown” or reflected in the Sign of Silence. When we give this sign, we are encased in the Temple of our Soul, we are bounded by the Egg of Spirit, we detach from the play of the Elements and become one again with the light of our Star, with awareness. This is the “golden thread,” so to speak – when we abide in this place, and become familiar with it, then we can avoid so many of the pitfalls of life – or, rather, since we're magicians – we can *work* with them. We've found a place of Balance whereon we may stand to direct the forces of Nature.

We've seen how this Self has a natural attitude of non-attachment, of peace, of gratitude, and enjoyment. Yet we seem to be unable to maintain ourselves here, we're pulled down and we forget even that such a rock exists within the core of our mind. It says in our Holy Books:

*“There is joy in the setting-out; there is joy in the journey; there is joy in the goal. Only if ye are sorrowful, or weary, or angry, or discomforted; then ye may know that ye have lost the golden thread, the thread wherewith I guide you to the heart of the groves of Eleusis.”*<sup>731</sup>

Our Being has signals built into it to alter us to having lost this golden thread. *Liber Tzaddi* lists sorrow, weariness, anger, and discomfort. *The Book of the Law* comments on similar ideas. Sorrow is indicated as a

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729 Also known as Harpocrates, Harparkrat, and other similar spellings.

730 *Liber AL*, II:49.

731 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 22-23.

signal of having “lost the golden thread”: “Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.”<sup>732</sup> Another line indicates pain and regret as signals: “Hear me, ye people of sighing! The sorrows of pain and regret Are left to the dead and the dying, The folk that not know me as yet.”<sup>733</sup> Another line indicating being poor (meaning “wretched” or “miserable”) and sad as signals: “These are dead, these fellows; they feel not. We are not for the poor and sad: the lords of the earth are our kinsfolk.”<sup>734</sup> Crowley comments:

*“the poor and the outcast’ are the petty thoughts and the Qliphotic thoughts and the sad thoughts. These must be rooted out, or the ecstasy of Hadit is not in us. They are the weeds in the Garden that starve the Flower. The dead and the dying, who know not Hadit, are in the Illusion of Sorrow. Not being Hadit, they are shadows, puppets, and what happens to them does not matter. If you insist upon identifying yourself with Hecuba, your tears are natural enough. [Hecuba went mad upon seeing the corpses of her children]. The ‘lords of the earth’ are those who are doing their Will. It does not necessarily mean people with coronets and automobiles; there are plenty of such people who are the most sorrowful slaves in the world. The sole test of one’s lordship is to know what one’s true Will is, and to do it.”*<sup>735</sup>

Yet another line indicate failure, sorrow, and fear as signals we have lost the golden thread: “Dost thou fail? Art thou sorry? Is fear in thine heart?”<sup>736</sup> Crowley comments on this, “If one have a right apprehension of the Universe, if he know himself free, immortal,

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732 *Liber AL*, II:9.

733 *Liber AL*, II:17.

734 *Liber AL*, II:18.

735 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:18.

736 *Liber AL*, II:46.

boundless, infinite force and fire, then may he will and dare. Fear, sorrow and failure are but phantoms.”<sup>737</sup>

So the various “signals” listed in our Holy Books include sorrow, pain, regret, misery, sadness, fear, weariness, anger, and discomfort. These are indications that we have dropped out of being identified with Spirit, the observer, and become identifies with one or more of its various manifestations in the four Elements. Writing from this Spirit-perspective, Crowley writes:

*“The nature of events must be 'pure joy'; for obviously, whatever occurs is the fulfilment of the Will of its master. Sorrow thus appears as the result of any unsuccessful – therefore, ill-judged – struggle. Acquiescence in the order of Nature is the ultimate Wisdom. One must understand the Universe perfectly, and be utterly indifferent to its pressure. These are the virtues which constitute a Master of the Temple. Yet each man must act What he will; for he is energized by his own nature. So long as he works 'without lust of result' and does his duty for its own sake, he will know that 'the sorrows are but shadows'... He cannot fail if he would; thus, his sorrows are but shadows – he could not see them if he kept his gaze fixed on his goal, the Sun.”*<sup>738</sup>

I recommend writing out a single sentence that begins with the words “I am” which, in your own words that are meaningful to you, basically means “I am pure Spirit” or “I am pure soul.” Write a sentence identifying yourself with that bare awareness or perceiver (or, to put it another way, the sense of self that is non-identified with any particular thing). Make it something that reminds you of the appreciation, gratitude, non-attachment, peace that comes naturally from this state or perspective. Remember it and try to recall it throughout the day. Try to identify that perspective itself, and its corresponding sentence, with the Sign of Silence

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<sup>737</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:46.

<sup>738</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:9.

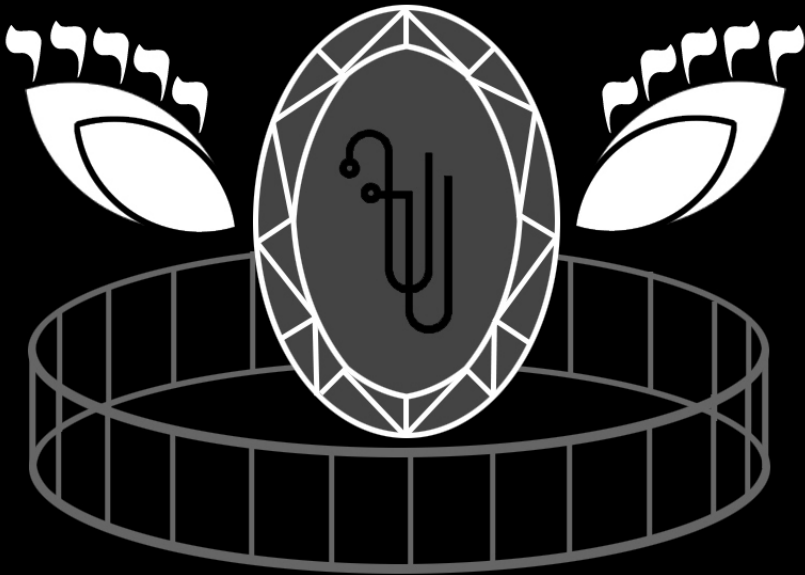
so that any time you give the Sign, you identify with Spirit, the Babe in the Egg untouched by the four Elements.

Secondly, try to become aware of and identify situations where you feel anger, sorrow, discomfort, and fear. If you are able to become aware that these things are happening, you can use them as “signals” to then give the Sign of Silence, repeat your sentence, and abide apart from any particular identifications. One can draw on a sense of non-attachment, peace, and even gratitude for the experience even though it is a “negative” one. The cultivation of this is a skill, it is a muscle that requires exercise. The continued exercise of this muscle will make you strong as a Magician as it is the strengthening of the foundation of your Center.

**BUT NOW  
IF THE SUN  
ARISE**

**OLAHO  
VIRUDEN  
MAHORELA  
ZODIREDA**

**FOLD THOU  
THINE  
ARMS**



**WARDEN OF THE 28TH AETHYR  
IAO**

*The Warden of the 28<sup>th</sup> Aethyr  
is based on the 28<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of The Vision and the Voice*

## CHAPTER 32

# THEORY & PRACTICE OF SCRYING

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*This chapter is unlike the rest in this section insofar as it tackles a common magical subject, scrying, and attempts to elucidate my approach to it. I have a somewhat unorthodox understanding and approach – there are people bound to disagree vehemently with me – but I have many experiences with scrying and success is my proof. This is offered to give different perspectives on scrying and to encourage the reader to try it out for themselves.*

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### 0) What is Magick?

What is magick and why would anyone do it? Magick is the name for the spiritual science passed down through Aleister Crowley and other occultists. Through it, we may come to explore and know ourselves; we may grow to actualize our potential as living beings.

Man is like an iceberg, with consciousness being above water and a much vaster structure lying hidden underwater in the unconscious. **Magick allows us to access the storehouse of potency that lies dormant in our unconscious minds**, bringing us to greater knowledge and power and, hopefully, balance and joy. It will help integrate our whole Self so that our lives may be lived with all parts in harmony, facilitating the accomplishment of our Wills.

One potent tool in the arsenal of Magick is scrying

### 1) What is Scrying?

Scrying is a term that is about half a millenium old. It comes from

the shortening of the word “descry” which means “to see” and “to discern” and comes from a Latin root that means “to describe.” Scrying has historically meant the practice of seeing images in crystals, mirrors, water – it is caricatured by cartoons and such when people look into crystal balls to see the future or gain some kind of knowledge they would not be able to through ordinary means.

**Scrying is the conscious facilitation of the appearance of the contents of the unconscious and the interaction therewith.** It means to “see into” the unconscious, discern what is there.

Scrying is “conscious” because it is done in a waking state and because it is an intentional act.

It is the “facilitation of the appearance of the contents of the unconscious” because it aims at releasing or producing the potencies of the unconscious mind whether in the form of thought, feeling, image, or sensation.

It is “the interaction therewith” because one is not simply passive to the unconscious contents but consciously interacting therewith through conscious intention and manipulation.

An initial question to ask is, “Does this have anything to do with the astral plane?” I do not believe it is philosophically or practically necessary to posit an objective astral plane in the first place. Crowley wrote, “In this book it is spoken of the Sephiroth and the Paths; of Spirits and Conjurations; of Gods, Spheres, Planes, and many other things which may or may not exist. **It is immaterial whether these exist or not. By doing certain things certain results will follow;** students are most earnestly warned against attributing objective reality or philosophic validity to any of them.”<sup>739</sup>

If anything, we can simply operate on the premise that the “astral plane” is another name for the realm of fantasy and dream (i.e. unconscious) material. “Astral phenomena” – all those various places and things encountered in the “astral plane” – is simply another name for

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739 *Liber O vel Manus et Sagittae.*

unconscious contents or material. The “astral body” is simply another name for that sense of self that perceives and operates within the fantasy or dream world.

None of this is ultimately very important – it is the practice and the successes thereof which really count. What is important is that “something happens” and that what happens is often very practically useful, let alone interesting.

## 2) Scrying vs. Fantasy, Dreams, Psychedelics, and Psychosis

**The unconscious is the source of the material for scrying.**

The content of scrying is merely different by degrees from the content of fantasy or imagination, dreams, psychedelic experiences, and psychosis. Scrying accesses the same source – the unconscious – but is different from these things in certain ways:

a) *Fantasy/imagination*: If we take fantasy to mean “reverie” or “daydreaming,” scrying is different because there is an element of conscious intent or directed-ness that is maintained whereas fantasy/imagination merely proceeds unconsciously or without intention.

b) *Dreams*: Dreams occur while the body is asleep whereas scrying is done in a waking state. Dreams also proceed unconsciously in the sense of lacking conscious intention or direction except in the case of lucid dreaming.

c) *Psychedelics*: Psychedelic “visions” and experiences occur because of the consumption of a substance while scrying is (or at least can be) done without substances or “soberly.”

d) *Psychosis*: Psychotic processes and phenomena occur without the volition or intention of the individual. They are therefore seen as intrusive, distressing, and often overwhelming (i.e. they are “ego dystonic”). It might be said that the magician (ideally) swims in the waters of the unconscious whereas the psychotic drowns.

It should be clear that scrying is both similar and different to these



different phenomena. Scrying is similar in that all of the above involve the release or production of the contents of the unconscious mind. Scrying is different in that it is done from the waking state, it is done with conscious volition or intention, and it can be done “sober,” i.e. without chemical substances.

Showing how scrying is *similar* to these things helps to “normalize” the phenomena. That is, it shows that the process involved in scrying is widespread insofar as it is also seen in fantasy, dreams, psychedelic experiences, and psychosis. It is not particularly unique or “weird” in this sense. Showing how scrying is *different* helps us to understand its particular method and nature as opposed to fantasy, dreams, psychedelics, and psychosis.

### 3) The Unconscious is Compensatory

One of Carl Jung's ideas that differed from Freud's and is very useful in understanding the material of scrying is the notion that the unconscious is compensatory. This means that the unconscious compensates for things that are out of balance in the conscious mind.

The extent to which we over-emphasize a trait or quality in the conscious mind is the extent to which the opposite of this trait or quality in the unconscious mind. For example, if we are overly “masculine” consciously, the unconscious will compensate by building up a “feminine” energy that will then break through into awareness in fantasies and dreams (and scrying). If we try to push away parts of ourselves, they do not simply disappear – they simply “hide” away in the unconscious, what Jung called the “shadow.” There they take on more monstrous forms by virtue of being shut away in the darkness, and they may be brought to light, integrated, and therefore make the Magician more whole as a being.

This also means that the material of scrying is inherently geared towards what is useful to you as an individual. It will bring up stuff that is exactly what is needed to help balance yourself. The real question is

whether you – as a Magician – integrate this material or not.

#### 4) Why Scry?

*Balancing the psyche:* The notion that the unconscious is compensatory leads to the first reason as to why one would want to scry in the first place. Since the unconscious is compensatory, it can theoretically be stated that it contains exactly what is needed to help balance and complete the conscious psyche of the individual. One need not be (and we often are not) conscious of what is needed – the unconscious operates naturally and without need of conscious control or awareness and will spontaneously offer up the material that is needed by the individual at that time if it is only given a chance to arise.

Scrying is the intentional act of preparing a space for this material to arise. Therefore, the first reason to scry is to become aware of and to integrate the material in the unconscious in order to become balanced and whole, a process that was called “individuation”<sup>740</sup> by Jung. In this sense, when done in a balanced way, **scrying facilitates a natural healing process of the psyche**, allowing it to re-equilibrate itself. Equilibrium is the basis of the work according to *Liber Librae*, and this is a fundamental virtue of all Magicians.

*Accessing the creative power of fantasy:* The second reason is that, as adults, we have largely blocked off our access to fantasy or imagination and the creativity that comes therefrom. **Scrying represents a practice to facilitate the rediscovery of fantasy, enabling us to access the creative wellspring of the unconscious** in the spontaneous way that was available to us as children. Therefore, the second reason to scry is to re-access the fantasy and imagination that we had when younger, which is a natural source for creativity.

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740 To somewhat oversimplify, “individuation” generally means the process of going deeper and deeper into the unconscious to eventually come to the archetype of the Self, the fully integrated individual where conscious and unconscious work as a totality.

*Self-exploration:* A third reason is curiosity. The unconscious is uncharted territory. Scrying therefore invokes the same feeling of exploration that one would get when exploring some area in the world that is unknown to you with the only difference being that scrying is self-discovery. **Scrying is therefore a source of excitement for the curious and exploratory.** While this is certainly a valid reason, I believe it can lead to an extreme where nothing is used or integrated; the material of scrying is merely enjoyed as if one went to a lecture and simply appreciated the poetic style of the speaker rather than taking his words to heart and implementing the ideas in one's life.

That being said, the material is often inherently interesting, fascinating, and exciting – and magick has the potential to be all of these things. It does not need to all be drudgery, although they don't call it the Great Work for nothing.

*The development of a personal mythology:* The final reason is the development of a personal mythology. This is my personal favorite. While it is certainly useful and recommended to have a firm grounding in an established system such as Thelema, each individual has his or her own unique, personal work that must be done. **Each individual needs to come into a personal relationship with the aspects of themselves.** These are represented by the characters or “entities” that appear in scrying. In other words: while we all have archetypes in our unconscious, we each need to come to learn our own idiosyncratic understanding of and relationship to these archetypes. This is done through scrying. For example, “Raphael” is the generic name for the Archangel of Air, but perhaps this representative of all that is Air has a name that is unique to you and therefore uniquely meaningful and powerful.

This idea can be extended beyond archetypes to all aspects of the self. For example, one can scry several times with each working using a particular emotion as its focal point. One can then write down a word or symbol that appears during the working to represent that emotion or even a symbol that represents control over that emotion. One can then develop

a symbolic alphabet of one's emotions. This can be extended to the more abstract notions represented by the 5 Elements, 7 Planets, 12 Zodiac signs, and 22 Tarot Trumps (as a few examples). One can learn lessons and explore the realms of the unconscious represents by those symbols or ideas and come to a personal, unique relationship thereto.

## 5) The Aesthetic and the Scientific

There are two complementary ways to approach the material obtained from scrying.

The first way is “aesthetic” and involves the appreciation of the material generated as if one appreciated art. Its form, beauty, and style is therefore appreciated.

The second way is “scientific” and involves the analysis of the material generated as if one investigating the nature of a physical substance. Its meaning and purpose is therefore appreciated.

Both ways are necessary and one should ideally strike a balance between the two. The aesthetic and scientific approaches balance and compensate for one another.

If one is overly aesthetic, there is a danger of losing the meaning of the unconscious content. If one is overly scientific, there is a danger of losing the potency of the symbols. What then do we do with the material?

On the aesthetic side, we have the *expressive* mode, and on the scientific side, we have the *pragmatic* mode.

In the expressive mode, we express what we have experienced in some form of writing or art (drawing, painting, movement, dance, *et cetera*), which draws from the aesthetic appreciation of the content.

In the pragmatic mode, we find the practical use of the content by putting it into practice in life, which draws from the scientific appreciation of the meaning of the content. This can be done most practically through the use of the material in ritual, the application of moral ideas in life, and the further exploration of content that seems to need more clarification.

We need a balance of the aesthetic and scientific approaches in appreciating and analyzing the material of our scrying and we need a balance of the expressive and the pragmatic in working with the material.

## 6) “I can't scry!”

It is often thought that scrying or “astral work” in general is advanced. On the contrary, I believe it is something that we used to do all the time through daydreams, fantasy, visualization, and dreams as a child but we gradually lost touch with it. We did it spontaneously and most of still get lost in reverie from time to time as well as have dreams. **We need to reconnect with this ability and bring to it our matured minds with intention, knowledge, and discernment that was not possible to the same extent as a child.** It is helpful to realize that the word “imagination” does not necessarily mean “fantasy” in the sense of something not real and therefore worth of dismissal; “imagination” is simply the image-making faculty inherent in every human being.

People often think that they simply can't scry or have a hard time. Everyone can scry, although the skills required for increased depth and power of the results comes through practice. Scrying involves your unconscious filling in the blanks; your conscious mind simply facilitates the unfolding of and interaction with these unconscious contents.

Here is a simple exercise. Close your eyes and imagine a forest. Can you imagine it? Remember this image and open your eyes.

Good, you just scryed the word “forest.” This is a very abstract word but you gave it a specific form. The general idea was there but your unconscious filled in the blanks, most likely immediately and without much effort at all. Think about the image of the forest you imagined. Were there a lot of trees or only a few? What kind of trees were they? What perspective did you see the trees from? From the ground? From above? From an angle? Was it a rainforest, a redwood forest, a grove from your childhood or a camping experience? Was it a place you've never

actually been before? Were there animals there?

These are not consciously thought, but the unconscious fills in this material. This is exactly the same mechanism, to a much simpler degree, of what happens with scrying. Remember this and **have faith in yourself and your ability**. This is a very natural, human quality or ability – Magicians just take it and consciously build it up and direct it.

## 7) The Practical Mechanics of Scrying

How does one scry? There is a process known as “the construction of the body of light.” The body of light is another name for the astral body, all of which are names for that sense of self which perceives and interacts with the material of scrying, dreaming, fantasy, and the like. Crowley wrote to a student, “In a word: do fix a convenient season for going on the Astral Plane under my eye: half an hour (with a bit of luck) on not more than four evenings would put you in a very different frame of mind. You will soon 'feel your feet' and then 'get your sea-legs' and then, much sooner than you think”<sup>741</sup>

Consider *how quickly* Crowley thought it was possible to get in this body: simply thirty minutes to “get your sea-legs.” It is not a super-advanced technique, although its possibilities and extent are endless. Viewing it as a highly advanced technique simply presents a mental block that will only make you feel inadequate and incompetent. Basically, all you need is to “get your sea-legs,” to get a feel for what it is like to be in the scrying world.

Here are some basic pieces of advice in scrying:

Advice #1: The best basic advice I can give is to **use all your senses**, especially the tactile sense of feeling with your “body.” Imagination is not simply “images” that are seen – it presents a world that you can interact with through what seem to be parallels to our physical senses. For example, one can imagine how a tree looks, how it smells, how it feels to

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<sup>741</sup> *Magick Without Tears*, Introduction.

touch, how it creaks and rustles in the wind, and even how it tastes. The tactile sense of touch seems to especially be helpful in anchoring oneself in the “astral” world that is created through scrying. Consider trying to feel the ground beneath your feet, or the rungs of a ladder in your hands, in order to get “deeper” into the scrying.

Advice #2: **Trust yourself and go with it.** Thoughts such as “I am just imagining it” or “This is not right” or “I’m not enough of an Adept to do this” are not conducive. Just go with whatever comes up – however strange or stupid or mundane or fantastical. Trust yourself. Go with the flow. You will often think it is merely a creation of your own mind, but you will slowly come to realize that the thoughts, the decisions, the images, and everything else are under far less conscious control than you may think (or want to believe). The decision to turn left instead of right, for example, may seem conscious but a complex unconscious process ultimated in causing you to decide that.

Advice #3: **Leave criticism, analysis, and skepticism for *after* the vision.** The visions require a sense of “suspension of disbelief.” Trust yourself during the vision and go with whatever comes up. You may be skeptical insofar as accepting what some character says as ultimate truth, but being critical of the scrying itself and one's ability to do such is virtually never helpful.

There are various techniques to help build the muscles needed for scrying. Close your eyes and get into a comfortable position with your spine erect. First – relax. Take some deep breaths.

### **Technique 1: The astral temple**

Build up an “astral temple” in your mind into which you can enter and return to. Imagine a room that is a perfect cube. Try walking around this room, and feeling the floor beneath your feet. Perhaps you can feel the coolness of the tiles or wood.

Imagine in front of you is a black, double-cube altar reaching to your navel. Imagine that on this altar are the four Elemental Weapons.

Pick up the wand and feel it in your wands. Imagine the tip bursts into flame, and you can feel the heat of the fire.

Put the wand down and pick up the Cup. Imagine it is filled with water. What is the shape of the cup? What is the cup made of – glass? Metal? Feel the cup in your hands. Dip your finger into the cup and feel your finger getting wet. Take a sip of the water and try to taste it – can you taste its texture? Is it cool or warm or room temperature?

Put the cup down and pick up the dagger. Feel the weight of the dagger. What is its shape? Feel the grip of the dagger. Feel the blade and point of the dagger – try to actually sense it in your hands.

Put the dagger down and pick up the disk. How big is the disk? How heavy is it? Is it made of wax? Metal? Plastic? You can imagine that it has a hexagram on it or some other symbol. Maybe see it as blank and be curious about what symbols pop up after looking at it. Inspect it.

Put the disk down and imagine there is a censer of incense, with smoke billowing out. What does the censer look like? Pick up the censer and breathe in the smoke – what does it smell like? Imagine blowing on the smoke so that it billows outward. Try to feel your breath in this body, try to actually smell the incense.

Put the censer down and imagine there is a bell on the altar. What kind of bell is it? Take the bell and ring it. Listen carefully to the sound it makes – make the sound as real as possible. Try ringing it again, maybe three times in a row.

This is now your temple. I encourage you to return to this temple and build it up in your mind. Perform rituals here, especially banishing rituals such as the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram – it can be a place of refuge.

## **Technique 2: The Qabalistic Cross**

The Qabalistic Cross is an incredibly useful grounding tool to get into the astral body. Imagine you are standing at the center of your temple with the altar in front of you. Do the Qabalistic Cross and imagine your



astral arm moving to make the motions.

Imagine the energy centers activated in your head, feet, shoulders, and chest. Do it more than once – do it repeatedly over and over, slowly and quickly, until you feel begin to feel a sense that you are in your astral body. A sure sign is, if you are sitting, getting the impression that you are standing up – it will often fade and come back, but it is a good clue you are getting into the “body.”

You can vibrate the corresponding words in your imagination. Try to “use” the sound of the vibrations to deepen and unfold the visualizations. Imagine the feeling of vibration in your throat and the sound in your ears are fuel that cause the visualizations to be more vivid.

### **Technique 3: Music-Guided Visualization**

This technique helps build visualization skills and strengthen the sense of one's astral body. Credit for it is due to Soror Fieri Facias. It is a good technique that helps to get you to understand the right “attitude” towards the images in scrying is music-guided visualization.

Step 1: Pick a song, preferably one that has no words. They are distracting and can bring you back to the rational-verbal level of the mind which gets in the way of the unconscious imagery.

Step 2: Relax your body and perform several Qabalistic Crosses to get into the astral body (or whatever works for you). Try moving around, doing jumping jacks, flying like superman, doing air traffic controller movements, or whatever in order to get into the body.

Step 3: Play the song and listen to it. First, listen to the music and let it suggest a particular environment to you. Do you think of a forest? A city street? A desert? A house? Whatever comes to mind at first, choose and stick with it. Go with whatever comes up and don't judge it.

Step 4: Listen to the music and let the aspects of the song develop the environment. Perhaps a certain melody makes you think of certain plants, certain paintings on the walls, certain people walking about. Let the images come to you – don't concern yourself whether you are “just

imagining things,” just trust yourself and go with whatever comes up.

Step 5: Be in that environment. Use your senses. Walk around the area – interact with it. Use your body. Listen to the sounds of the environment. Smell the smells. Lick things – whatever you can do to get into that sense of being in the environment. Allow the mood of the music to influence the vision.

Step 6: Go with whatever comes up. Let the vision come to an end when the song ends. Start a new song, rinse and repeat, or write down your results in your magical record. You are essentially scrying the song, which is not necessarily just an exercise; it can yield interesting results.

## 8) The Mechanics of Ritual

You can put these skills to use in a more formulaic manner. There is a basic formula that one can use to “scry” just about anything: **Banish – Invoke – Scry – Banish**.

*Banishing:* Use the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram or Star Ruby. Use whatever you feel is right and effective for you.

*Invoking:* Use an invocation proper to the “energy” intended to be invoked. If you are invoking Jupiter, read a poem about Zeus or Jupiter. If you are invoking Kali, chant a mantra proper to her nature. If you are invoking Earth, read a prayer proper to the Element. Use what is meaningful to you.

*Scrying:* Sit and scry whatever comes up. Let the environment formulate itself. Formulate your body in this environment. Interact with it.

*Banishing:* You can close with a banishing ritual to re-equilibrate yourself and the Temple.

This is a very basic formula. More advanced ones can be used. For example: Banish – General Invocation – Particular Invocation – Barbarous Words – Scry – Banish.

*Banish:* Perform your basic banishing ritual.

*General invocation:* Identify yourself with the Godhead in Kether by some means. You can use the “Bornless Invocation” from the *Goetia* or from *Liber Samekh*. You can use “Thou who art I...” from the Gnostic Mass. You can use “Unity uttermost showed...” from *Liber AL*. This invocation should be general and invoke the highest sense of divinity and one's identity therewith.

*Particular invocation:* Use an invocation proper to the energy invoked. This may be a ceremonial ritual, a poem, a dance, or whatever.

*Barbarous Words:* Use some kind of non-rational string of sounds or “words” to allow the unconscious to take over. The Barbarous Words from *Liber Samekh* are good for this. The section called “Spirit” is good because it is not an unbalanced force, although the sections for each Element would be worthwhile if focusing on that particular Element (or a Zodiac sign of that Element).

*Scry:* Interact with the environment. Call upon a guide to appear or a certain individual if appropriate e.g. the Archangel of an Element if an Element is being scryed. Interact with that entity. Test the entity by saying “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law” and waiting for the proper answer of “Love is the law, love under will.” Ask it questions. Do not overly scrutinize the answers. Take on the god-form of Ra-Hoor-Khuit or Hoor-paar-kraat if feeling threatened or misled.

*Banish:* Close with a banishing.

## 9) The Magus and the Seer

When scrying by yourself, you are essentially performing two roles at once: the Magus and the Seer. The Magus is the individual who performs all the ritualistic elements including banishing and invoking. The Seer is the individual that does the scrying itself.

It is extremely useful to scry with two people, one acting as Magus and the other as Seer. The Seer will sit throughout the initial rituals and the Magus will perform the Banishings and Invocations (and whatever else

is determined to be done).

The Seer can use the words of the Magus to “propel” them into the vision. Use the Banishing to get into one's astral body. Use the words of the invocation to formulate the environment. Use the Barbarous Words to concretize the sense of oneself in the environment. This allows the Seer a lot more time to get relaxed and get into the astral body as opposed to doing it all oneself

The Magus can also help facilitate the Seer's vision by asking questions. I confidently say from experience that it is, in fact, possible to physically speak as the Seer while one is simultaneously in a vision. It takes a little practice to balance this duality of physical speech while interacting on the astral plane, but it is indeed possible and useful.

The Magus and Seer should be comfortable with one another. If the Seer will inevitably feel strange, embarrassed, stupid, confused, and other similar emotions if actually accessing the unconscious, and the Magus should be someone with whom he or she feels comfortable and safe. The Temple is a sacred, safe space – the banishing does this magically but it must also be there interpersonally. The more the Seer feels safe, the more he or she will be comfortable to go deeper into the vision and the communicate more – it can only be better.

The Magus can help direct the scrying by posing questions to the Seer. This might be questions for the Seer herself or for characters that appear in their visions. Some useful questions are:

Can you describe what is happening?

Can you greet the entity?

What is its name? What other names does it have?

Can you spell that?

What is its number? What other numbers?

What is its symbol?

How may you more efficiently invoke this entity?

How might you bring [this energy] more fully into your life?

How might you bring [this energy] into the community more fully?

Can I speak directly to [entity]? Have the Seer flip their perspective into that of the entity and just let whatever comes up come up.

As a Magus, asking questions is more difficult than it might seem at first. There is an art to it that must be learned through experience – one simply can't just rattle off questions. Here are some tips for a Magus who intends to help guide the scrying through posing questions:

- *Be patient.* It often takes a little bit for the answer to come and/or for the Seer to respond verbally. Wait for an answer. Let the Seer have time to respond or to expand on their answers. Let the Seer have time for the vision to develop. Don't rush. You may be rushing past a very important answer.
- *Do not assume anything.* You may think you know what a response means, but always clarify. Don't assume you know what something looks like, you know what it means, or you know what it's for.
- *Be curious.* Follow up on questions if they might be elaborated or if they suggest other questions. If the entity replies “my symbol is a sword” you might ask “what kind of sword?” or “what is the sword used for?” or even “Why is this your symbol?” Maybe the sword has a special name like Nothung or Excalibur. Maybe it has a symbolism that is particular to the context of this vision. Always treat everything as if you know nothing about it – being curious about it and asking follow-up questions is crucial to getting valuable information about the vision that will be lost otherwise.
- *Ask questions very clearly,* as if you are asking the question to someone who speaks English as their second language. Ambiguous questions are difficult to understand and can cause anxiety which is not conducive to the vision. Do not ask one-word questions – be clear. Also, be aware of the tone in which you are asking questions – it may confuse or distract the Seer, or introduce unwanted elements into the vision.
- *Be mindful of the state of the Seer.* If the Seer looks distressed or

exhausted, try to bring the vision gently to a close. You might ask “Is there any last thing you'd like to communicate?” to indicate it is coming to a close.

Other tips for scrying:

- *Use a voice recorder.* Even if you are alone, narrate what is happening. It is notoriously difficult to recall the details of visions, especially if they last longer than a very short period of time. I assure you that with every hour that passes, you will have lost a detail of the vision to obscurity. Transcribe the results. Analyze them.
- *Use your knowledge of 777 to create rituals.* Be creative. If you are invoking Mars, put five candles around the circle, dress in red, smoke a cigarette, and punch someone in the face beforehand (not really, since that would likely get in the way of the performance of your ritual, but you get the idea hopefully).
- *Use your knowledge of 777 to see if the ritual was “accurate.”* Find the enumeration of the name or names given. Look up the meaning of the numbers given in the ritual. Look up the correspondences for the colors or images that occurred.
- *Look for patterns of colors or images or themes in the messages given to the Seer.* The use of certain metaphors may be relevant – for example, a vision of Earth might use metaphors of heaviness or trees while a vision of Air might use metaphors of clouds and thought.
- *Try to draw out at least 2 or 3 practical pieces of advice from the ritual.* This is the scientific/pragmatic side mentioned before. If you invoke Fire and the Archangel Michael says to “speak Truth,” a practical piece of advice is to not lie, to call people out when you see them. If Kali says to shut up and meditate, the practical piece of advice is to plot out a time to meditate every day. **Ground the vision in something actionable.** Take time to act upon these pieces

of advice and write down your results and experiences in your record. This is really where the work tangibly occurs.

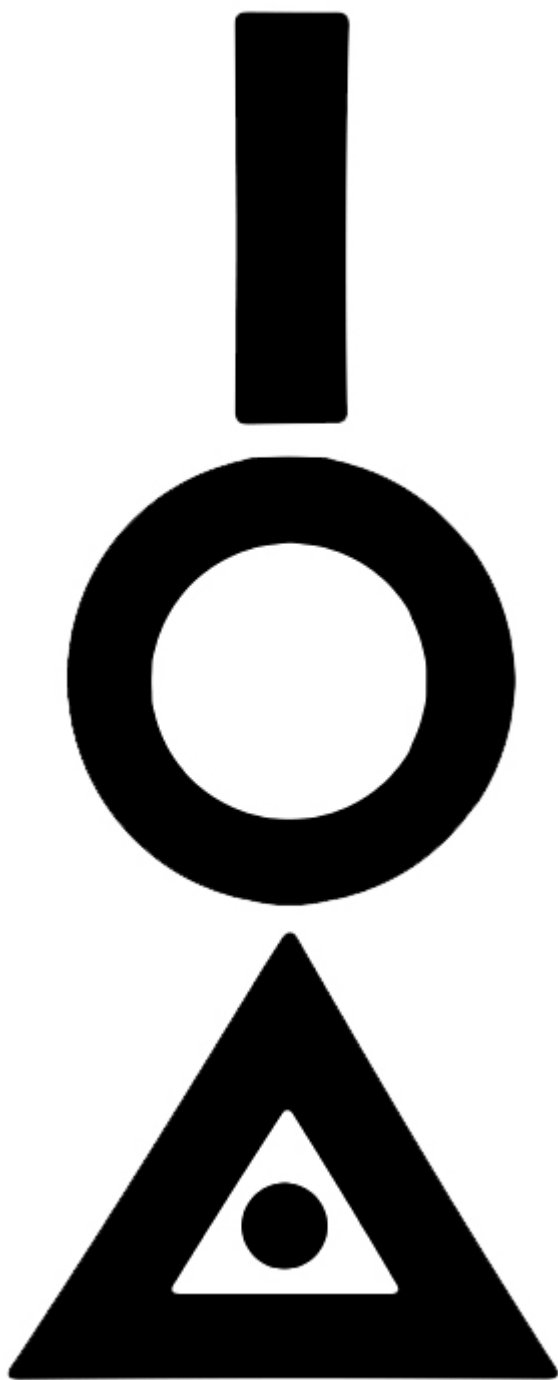
- *Use the experience of scrying to facilitate your creativity.* Write a poem based on the experience. Draw a drawing or paint a painting. Write a song based on the experience. This is the aesthetic/expressive side mentioned before.
- *Do not take anything said as gospel or too seriously.* One might say there is Newton's Law of Visions: For every vision, there is an equal and opposite vision that is possible possible. Take everything with a grain of salt. Afterwards, measure it against your current understanding and skepticism. Take it as advice as one would from a good friend – consider it, try it out, but don't think that you have stumbled upon an unalterable and unarguable Truth. Also, do not reject something if it makes you uncomfortable or contradicts your knowledge: be curious about and open to it, but never believe that anything experienced or received is absolute.

There are some basic facts about scrying which are often taken for granted but that I have verified through my own experience: (1) results are possible even if the magicians are relative novices; (2) the preparations, banishing, and invoking don't need to be perfect or too elaborate; (3) it's possible to physically communicate while also scrying; (4) it's possible for someone to ask a question to someone else who is having a vision and get a response from within that vision to that question; (5) it's possible for the Seer to identify with and speak as an entity that appears in a vision.

Scrying is an extremely potent and simple tool to greatly enhance your work as a Magician. Crowley wrote, “The essential magical work, apart from any particular operation, is the proper formation of the Magical Being or Body of Light.”<sup>742</sup> Calling something “the essential magical work” is no lightly applied label and I encourage you to explore this in your own practice.

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<sup>742</sup> *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 11.





# **PART IV**

## **The Rituals of the Elements and Feasts of the Times**



## CHAPTER 33

# INTRODUCTION TO THE RITUALS OF THE ELEMENTS

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*This is an introduction to a series of four rituals I wrote to celebrate the Equinoxes and Solstices. With an overarching Thelemic worldview, the rituals synthesize many threads of symbolism including that of the seasons, the life of an individual, the path of attainment, the life of Christ, the life of Buddha, Zarathustra, the Man of Earth of O.T.O., A·:·A·:, Book of Revelation, The Vision and the Voice, the Lesser and Greater Mysteries, Wagner's Parsival, and the Gnostic Mass. They are intended to be dramatic rituals which are both archetypal as well as specifically Thelemic in character and content. They only require four individuals to perform, and they are intended to be done in an existing temple of the Gnostic Mass with many items that will already be present in such a temple. They have no true "beginning" as they are a perpetual cycle, but it has been found to be particularly powerful to begin with the Autumn Equinox, which corresponds to adulthood, the stage of life in which most individuals who partake and attend will be.*

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It is written in *Liber AL vel Legis* II:36, "There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times." Crowley comments, "The entry of the Sun into the cardinal signs of the elements at the Equinoxes and Solstices are suitable for festivals. The difference between 'rituals' and 'feasts' is this: by the one a particular form of energy is generated, while there is a general discharge of one's superfluous force in the other. Yet a feast implies periodical nourishment."

This cycle of dramatic rituals are therefore invocations. They are intended to generate energy at the entrance of the Sun into the cardinal signs of elements at the four quarters of the year, i.e. the Equinoxes and Solstices.

The entire cycle of rituals simultaneously show:

- The **macrocosmic cycle** of the Sun going through the seasons
- The **microcosmic cycle** of Man going through the generations/Incarnation (birth/youth–adulthood–old age–death).
- The **process of Attainment** from  $1^\circ=10^\square$  to  $8^\circ=3^\square$  and back again.

The energies of each ritual correspond to each of these planes simultaneously:

	Seasons	Stages of Life	Stages of Attainment
<b>Vernal Equinox</b>	Spring	(Re-)Birth / Youth	$1^\circ=10^\square$ through $4^\circ=7^\square$
<b>Summer Solstice</b>	Summer	Adulthood	$5^\circ=6^\square$ through $6^\circ=5^\square$
<b>Autumnal Equinox</b>	Autumn	Old Age	$7^\circ=4^\square$
<b>Winter Solstice</b>	Winter	Death	$8^\circ=3^\square$

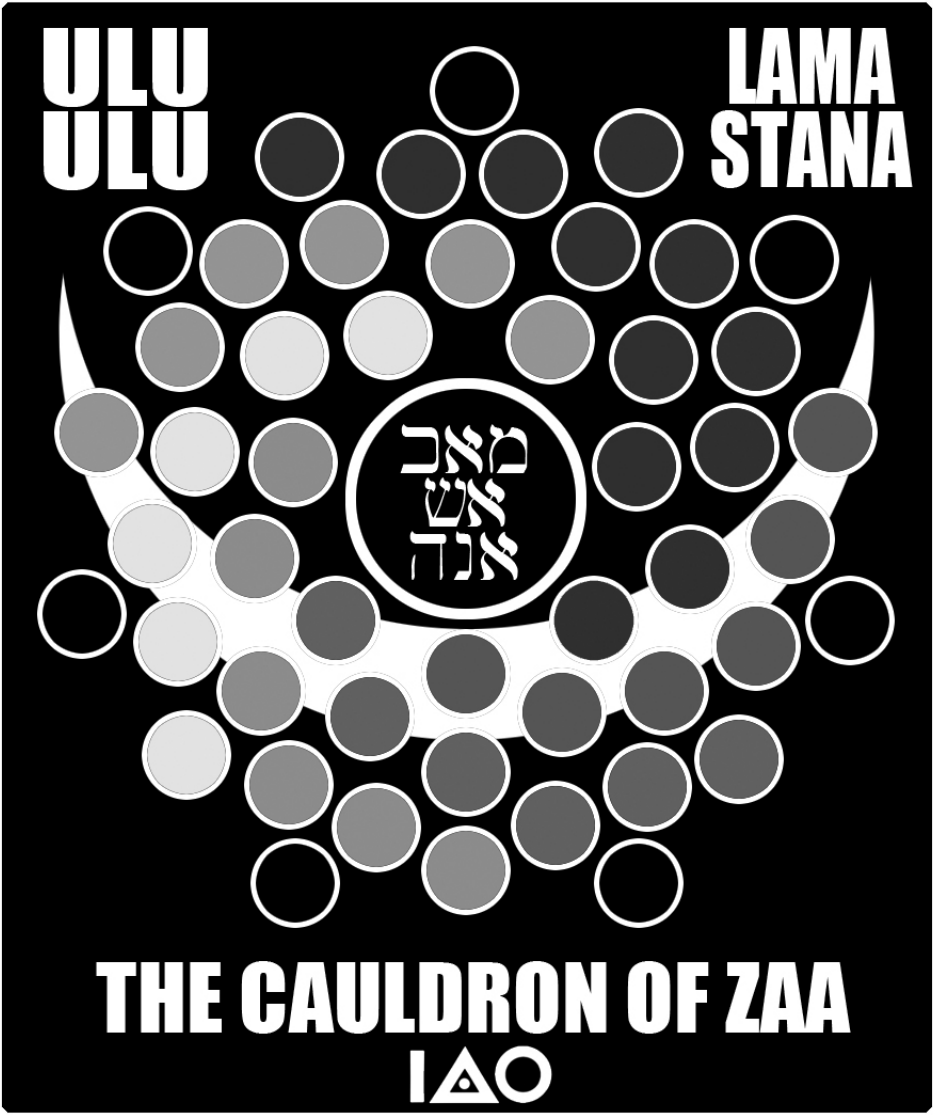
Each ritual invokes a particular energy. Each ritual has a particular Word of Power associated therewith and it is intoned in between the scenes. The Word also appears once in each ritual within a particular Scene.

Each of the four rituals has 3 scenes for a total of 12 scenes for the entire cycle, one for each of the signs of the Zodiac. The middle scene of each ritual is the sign of the Equinox or Solstice – for example, the middle scene in Autumn is Libra. The first scene is therefore Virgo, the sign

before Libra, and the last scene is Scorpio, the sign after Libra. In general, the first scene represents events leading up to the Equinox or Solstice, the middle scene represents the actual turning-point, and the last scene represents events leading to the next Equinox or Solstice.

### The Basic Characters

- ( $\odot/\♂$ ) **Priest/King** – the conscious Self. The Child who grows to become King who attains and becomes a Priest, and then dies and is reborn as the Child (and so on *ad infinitum*).
- ( $\text{D}/♀$ ) **Priestess/Queen** – the Non-Self (the unconscious self, the “higher self,” *et cetera*). The Mother of the Child, the Queen/Beloved of the King, and the High Priestess of the Priest.
- (+ and –) **2 Children** – the duality of the World. Various roles throughout the entire cycle.
- ( $\oplus$ ) **The People** (participants) – the inhabitants of the World; they identify (at least their conscious selves) with the Priest.



*The Cauldron of ZAA*  
is based on the 27<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of The Vision and the Voice

# CHAPTER 34

## AUTUMNAL EQUINOX: THE HOUR OF TRUTH

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*The Word of this ceremony is “THELEMA” (Theh-lay-muh). It is intoned three times in between scenes, i.e. between Scenes 1 & 2 and between Scenes 2 & 3, by the People/Congregants. The Talisman of this ceremony is an ostrich plume (or a smaller representation thereof).*

### SCENE 1: Virgo.

**The End of Summer, the Threat of Winter/Death,  
the Possibility of Immortality.**

*SETTING: The Kingdom at Sunset <sup>743</sup>; it is almost the time of harvest.<sup>744</sup> The King is entering Old Age. The room is lit, but dimly; the primary light comes from the West, i.e. the setting Sun. There are fields of wheat <sup>745</sup> surrounding everyone or up on the Throne. Leaves are scattered about that are colored by Autumn. The King is enthroned in the East, facing Westward; he is wearing a white robe under his scarlet robe; the Queen is wearing a green robe over white and her hair is filled with 12 white flowers in a crown. + holds the Sword, – holds the Balances; the Staff and Lantern are hidden behind the Throne.*

*+ and – stand on either side of the King and speak as if announcing news to the Kingdom.*

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743 In the symbolism of day and night, this ceremony corresponds to Sunset as, in the symbolism of the seasons, it corresponds to Autumn.

744 Virgo is the sign just before Libra, which is the traditional time of harvest.

745 Wheat and corn are attributed to Virgo.

*INTRO MUSIC: Tchaikovsky's Op.45, "Capriccio Italiano."*

+: Thrust in thy sickle and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; the harvest of the earth is ripe.<sup>746</sup>

–: Thrust in thy sharp sickle, and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.<sup>747</sup>

KING: Let there goeth forth a sickle that shall reap every flower!<sup>748</sup>

*MUSIC: Fade out song.*

*+ and – march to the West side of the Temple and turn to face East. The Queen paces around, looking very worried.*

KING: My Queen! The fruits of our labors are ripened. It is a time for reaping and rejoicing, yet you appear discontent.

QUEEN: Harvest time is indeed upon us... yet I tremble in fear at the thought of enduring another winter storm. What if our harvest does not last until the next blooming of flowers? What if you fail of an heir and we are left in darkness?

*The King looks disappointed but does not respond. + and – take a few steps forward while + says:*

+: My Queen, we may know of a certain solution to your sorrows.

*+ and – stop before – speaks.*

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746 Adapted from Revelation 14:15.

747 Adapted from Revelation 14:18.

748 From *The Vision and the Voice*, 7th Aethyr. The reference is to the coming month of Libra that is of harvest; Saturn, whose weapon is the sickle, is exalted in Libra.



–: Indeed, the legend we have heard in our youth of the potion that provides permanence.

QUEEN: Ah! Yes! Yes! The Elixir of Immortality. I know this legend; how I could I have forgotten! If you could but find and drink of it, Eternal life would be granted. Winter storm would pose no threat; fear of having no heir would be banished at last!

KING: This sounds good, too good to be true. Where might I find this Elixir and what must I do?

QUEEN: It is said there is but one soul upon the Earth who has the Wisdom<sup>749</sup> to create this Elixir.

*+ and – are becoming excited by the Queen’s tale, taking further steps towards the East while + says:*

+: The Priestess Nuit!

*+ and – stop before – speaks.*

–: Yet she lives afar off!

QUEEN: Across the great span of the wilderness to the West, you may find her at the summit of the highest, most holy mountain. There, where the Earth meets the Heavens!<sup>750</sup> I must warn you, though, that I have heard many have tried and all have failed, for they did not persist.

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749 Virgo is “Atu IX: The Hermit,” Mercury or Wisdom.

750 The mountain is the Holy Mountain, Abiegnus of the Rosicrucians; the Summit is where the Goat-God Pan lives, i.e. Capricorn the Winter Solstice, and it is seen symbolically as the High Altar in the Gnostic Mass.

+ *and* – take their final steps to be right next to the King in the East while  
+ *says*:

+: They were turned aside by adversity.

+ *and* – stop before – *speaks*.

–: They settled for something less than that ultimate end.

+ *and* – turn around simultaneously to face the West.

KING: I will seek only Nuit. I will turn not aside for aught.<sup>751</sup>

QUEEN: Ah! Our perpetual predicament may be resolved at last! Save your Kingdom from disrepair; save your Queen from utter despair. The wasteland awaits thee, my King! Follow the footsteps of the Camel<sup>752</sup> that lead the way through the desert.<sup>753</sup>

KING: Let the preparations be made at once!

QUEEN: But, my King, if you are gone, who will rule in your stead?

+ *steps forward and raises the Sword*.

+: I will rule with the severe sword!

– *steps forward and raises the Balances*.

---

751 *The Vision and the Voice*, 20th Aethyr.

752 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 73. It is not realized that Death rides this Camel of Initiation.

753 This refers to the Gimel that literally means “camel,” which is the path of “Atu II: The High Priestess” that leads from Tiphareth across the Abyss to the Supernals.

–: I will rule with the benevolent balances!

KING: Only they who have the right of God and might of Will may take the throne. [*+ and – step back to the sides*] My Queen, you must rule in my stead.

QUEEN: How should I be worthy to ascend to the throne and administer the royal decrees to our Brothers and Sisters?

KING: The most potent power derives from the most solemn service.<sup>754</sup> Divest yourself of all pursuit of pleasure and all sin of selfishness.

QUEEN: I see nothing but a blank midnight in this Emptying of the Soul!<sup>755</sup>

KING: This is the necessary condition of Illumination.<sup>756</sup> Even as the Sun is swallowed in Sea [*The King points to the West*] you too must undergo the darkness of the Night of Pan, purged of all egoity!

*The King takes the Queen by the hand and slowly leads her into the West. As they walk, drums beat slowly and softly but become louder and faster.*

QUEEN: Why do I sweat with blood and dew? Blind horror catches at my breath. The path of the abyss runs through things darker, dismaller than death! There is no memory possible of this unfathomable hell. Even the shadows that arise are things too dreadful to recount!<sup>757</sup>

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754 A reference to *Liber 194: An Intimation with Reference to the Constitution of the Order* where, when speaking about governmental positions in O.T.O., Crowley writes, “with us Government is Service, and nothing else.”

755 AHA!

756 AHA!

757 AHA!

*The drums become louder and more chaotic. The King and Queen approach the West; the rhythm of their words carry them onward.*

KING: This is the end of all our pain, the dissolution of the brain! For lo! in this no mortar sticks; Down come the house – a hail of bricks!<sup>758</sup>

*The drums are loud and completely chaotic; there is no rhythm.*

QUEEN: But my soul faints, my stomach sinks. Let me pass on! [*The Queen pushes away the King to make the final steps to the West alone*] My being drinks the nectar-poison of the Sphinx. This is a bitter medicine! Black, black, intolerably black! Go, spectre of the ages, go!<sup>759</sup>

*The drums stop suddenly. The Queen arises solemnly and turns to the East in the attitude of Resurrection, i.e. the sign of Osiris Risen.*

KING: You have passed beyond. Beloved, thy stature spans the sky.<sup>760</sup>

QUEEN: Verily; but it is not I. The ego dissolves – pale phantom form blown from the black mouth of the storm. It is another that arises! Ay, there is no more potent spell. Through life, through death, by land and sea, most surely will I follow thee.<sup>761</sup>

KING: Follow thyself, not me!<sup>762</sup> It is complete! The Kingdom will obey thine command! My departure is nigh at hand!

**END SCENE.** *Congregants repeatedly intone “THELEMA” in between scenes. MUSIC: Glazunov's “Autumn.”*

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758 AHA!

759 AHA!

760 AHA!

761 AHA!

762 AHA!

## SCENE 2: Libra.

### The Installment of the Queen as Ruler of the Kingdom.

*SETTING: The light from the West is slightly darker; the Sun is halfway concealed by the horizon. The King stands in front of the Throne in the East and the Queen stands before him. + and – stand on either side of the Queen, facing her. + holds the Sword, – holds the Balances.*

KING: The preparations for my departure into the wilderness of the West are almost complete. My final act is to raise you to the throne as Ruler<sup>763</sup> of this Kingdom.

*The King comes down from the Throne. He takes the Queen's hand and sets her in the Throne where she sits. The King turns to address the People.*

KING: I say that 'Every man and every woman is a star.' I do not fool and flatter women; I do not despise and abuse them. To me a woman is Herself, absolute, original, independent, free, self-justified, exactly as a man is. I dare not thwart Her Going, [*The King turns to face the Queen*] Goddess thee! I arrogate no right upon your will; I claim not to deflect your development, to dispose of your desires, or to determine your destiny. You are your own sole arbiter. I do not want you as a slave; I want you free and royal, whether your love fight death in my arms by night, or your loyalty ride by day beside me in the Charge of the Battle of Life.<sup>764</sup>

*+ advances and hands the Sword to the Queen who holds it between her legs, point downward.*

---

763 This is seen in the Gnostic Mass when the Priest upraises the Priestess and sets her upon the summit of the Earth.

764 This entire speech is adapted from the New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:55.

KING: Let your rule be strong yet precise. O be thou proud and mighty among men!<sup>765</sup>

*– advances and hands the Balances to the Queen who holds it against the hilt of the Sword. She holds both Sword and Balances at once.*<sup>766</sup>

KING: Let your rule be merciful yet fair. Bring the glory of the stars into the hearts of men!<sup>767</sup>

*The King takes a Crown of ostrich plumes<sup>768</sup> and places it on the Queen's head.*

*MUSIC: Tchaikovsky's "Oktober."*

KING: May Truth stand upon your crown, eternally alert. Truth is your Path, and Truth is your Goal; [*The King kneels while + and – give smaller versions of the ostrich plume to each Congregant, saying "Truth is your Path" and "Truth is your Goal" to each. Upon + and – returning, fade out MUSIC, and the King continues:*] Ay! there shall come to you a moment of great Light when, understanding what is Truth, you will understand your Self, for you *are* Truth!<sup>769</sup>

*The King pauses and smiles.*

KING: It is accomplished! [*The King genuflects and extends his arms*

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765 *Liber AL*, II:77.

766 This is Woman as Justice, seen in "Atu VIII: Adjustment," to which is attributed the sign of Libra. It also is a reference to the liberation of Women from the subservience of the Old Aeon, c.f. *Liber AL*, III:10, "Let the woman be girt with a sword before me."

767 *Liber AL*, I:15.

768 These are the feathers of Maat, c.f. *The Book of Thoth*, "She is crowned with the ostrich plumes of Maat, the Egyptian goddess of Justice."

769 This speech is adapted from the chapter "Truth" in *Little Essays Towards Truth*.

towards the Queen while saying:] Unto thee is all power given.<sup>770</sup>

*The King, +, -, and the People applaud.*

QUEEN: I will glorify myself and live deliciously. I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.<sup>771</sup> I will rule firmly with severity yet justly with mercy. I will not only uphold thine power, but it shall wax in strength to cover the world. Remember, my King: Seek only Nuit! Turn not aside for aught! I entrust unto thee this staff to support you in daytime [+ takes the staff]. I impart unto thee this lantern to guide you in darkness [- takes the lantern].<sup>772</sup> I empower thee with this most holy word of force and fire<sup>773</sup> that thou mayst endure unto the End: THELEMA.

*The Queen kisses the King.*

QUEEN: The wasteland awaits thee, my King! Follow the footsteps of the Camel that lead the way through the desert.

**END SCENE.** *Congregants repeatedly intone “THELEMA” in between scenes. MUSIC: No music.*

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770 A reference to *Liber AL*, I:15, “...and in his woman called the Scarlet Woman is all power given.”

771 Adapted from Revelation 18:7 where it refers to Babylon.

772 The lantern and staff are the weapons of the Hermit as seen in “Atu IX: The Hermit.” They also reflect the Pillar of Fire that guided Moses in the desert by night and the Pillar of Cloud that guided him in the desert by day.

773 *Liber AL*, II:20.

### SCENE 3: Scorpio.

#### The Kings leaves to Wander in the Wilderness.

*SETTING: The Light from the West is even darker; the Sun is almost set on the horizon. The King is prepared to leave the Queen <sup>774</sup> and the Kingdom to wander in the wilderness <sup>775</sup> for 50 days. <sup>776</sup> The King faces the Queen who is enthroned in the East.*

*The King closes the Veil, hiding the Queen from sight. He then turns towards the West.*

KING: My Kingdom is secure with Justice enthroned.<sup>777</sup> Her eyes of equity are etched into my brain. Her Word awakens my intent. Her kiss lingers on my lips. Now, I goeth solitary...<sup>778</sup> Bearing my staff as support by day [+ raises the staff] and my lantern as guide by night [- raises the lantern].

*The King points to the ground in the West.*

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774 This is seen in the Gnostic Mass when the Priest closes the veil after raising Priestess to the summit of the Earth.

775 The wilderness represents spiritual austerities as when Christ fasted in the desert and Buddha meditated under the Bodhi tree. In terms of Thelema, it represents the Abyss. Crowley associates the Yod, which is attributed to "Atu IX: The Hermit," with "Parzival in the desert. Christ taking refuge in Egypt, and on the Mount tempted by the Devil. The unconscious Will, or Word" in *Magick in Theory and Practice*.

776 50 is a symbolic number, being the number of Nun, which is attributed to "Atu XIII: Death" and therefore Scorpio. It is also a reference to Christ's wandering 40 days in the wilderness and Buddha's 49 days of meditation under the Bodhi tree before enlightenment. In both cases this period directly precedes their temptation by Satan/Mara. This period is also seen in the Gnostic Mass after the Veil is drawn (the Sunlight dwindling in Sunset/Autumn) and the Priest circumambulating 3 times; this temptation is seen in this cycle of rituals at the beginning of the Winter Solstice ceremony.

777 This represents the attainment of  $7^\circ=4^\square$ . The next step is to cross the Abyss and attain  $8^\circ=3^\square$ , which is shown in the Winter Solstice ceremony.

778 A reference to *The Vision and the Voice*, 13th Aethyr, "The hermit goeth solitary, and giveth only of his light unto men"; it is therefore also a foreshadowing of the attainment of the Grade of Hermit.



KING: Look! The footprints of a Camel! The initiation of my journey is at hand.

*The King lifts his Lance, pointing it to the Western horizon.*

KING: With my burning spear, to the wilderness I wander!<sup>779</sup>

*The King then holds the Lance upright with both hands, right over left, and begins to slowly march towards the West where the Sun sets completely and darkness envelops the Kingdom. + and – hold the staff and lantern and walk on either side of the King. + and – slowly and solemnly chant the word “THELEMA,” starting loudly and slowly becoming silent. They may enter the Tomb in the West as at the end of a Gnostic Mass.*

*OUTRO MUSIC: Frédéric Chopin's Sonata, op. 35, Part III: “Marche funèbre” a.k.a. “Funeral March.”*

+ and –: THELEMA... THELEMA... THELEMA...

***END SCENE.***

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779 Adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 10<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

## CHAPTER 35

# WINTER SOLSTICE: THE GATE OF LIFE

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*The Word of this ceremony is “AUMGN.” It is repeatedly intoned in between scenes, i.e. between Scenes 1 & 2 and between Scenes 2 & 3, by the People/Congregants. The Incense of this ceremony is Myrrh.<sup>780</sup> The Talisman of this ceremony is the goblet(s) of Wine.*

### SCENE 1: Sagittarius.

#### The Wandering in the Wilderness.

*SETTING: The King is in the West, facing East. + and – are on either side of the King, holding the staff and lantern. The High Priestess sits behind the Veil in the East. The King circumambulates<sup>781</sup> the Temple clockwise/deosil to symbolize his wandering in the wilderness.*

*INTRO MUSIC: Frédéric Chopin's Sonata, op. 35, Part III: “Marche funèbre” a.k.a. “Funeral March,” continuing from the end of the Autumn Equinox ceremony.*

*The King approaches the East from the West in a winding or serpentine manner. + and – follow behind the King, + behind the King and in front of –.*

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780 Myrrh is attributed to Saturn. In the story of Christ, “myrrhbearers” were said to be those involved in the burial of Christ or finding his tomb, which corresponds to the Winter Solstice ceremony insofar as the King (who is identified with Christ) dies and the world enters into complete darkness of the middle of Winter.

781 These three circumambulations are seen in the Gnostic Mass before his three steps of approaching the Veil.

KING: I have left my Beloved and my Kingdom in search for the Elixir of Immortality; I have wandered alone in the wilderness; I have endured the travails of the desert... The footprints of the Camel lead up this winding way to the Summit of the Mountain.

*The King stops a few steps in front of the Veil, as if he was in front of the small altar and before the dais in the Gnostic Mass. + and – stand on either side of the King, slightly behind him.*

PRIESTESS: I am the Soul of the Desert; thou hast sought me in the wilderness of sand.<sup>782</sup>

*The King turns to his right (deosil) and heads towards the West, starting his first circumambulation with + and – behind him in a line.*

KING: I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Make straight the Way of my Will!<sup>783</sup>

*The King, halfway done with his circumambulation in the West, turns deosil back towards the East, + and – still following behind in a line, and finishes his first circumambulation while the Priestess says:*

PRIESTESS: With courage conquering fear shall ye approach me.<sup>784</sup>

*The King turns to his right (deosil) and heads towards the West with + and – behind him, starting his second circumambulation.*

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782 *Liber LXV*, IV:61.

783 A reference to Mark 1:3 and John 1:23 where it is put in the mouth of Christ, which is itself a reference to a similar line in the Old Testament, i.e. he is fulfilling the prophecy of the Redeemer.

784 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 16.

KING: By the word and the will, by the penance and the prayer, let me behold thy face.<sup>785</sup>

*The King, halfway done with his circumambulation in the West, turns deosil back towards the East with + and – behind him, and finishes his second circumambulation while the Priestess says:*

PRIESTESS: Fear not for aught; turn not aside for aught, eremite of Nuit, apostle of Hadit, warrior of Ra Hoor Khu!<sup>786</sup> Only those who fear shall fail!<sup>787</sup>

*The King turns to his right (deosil) and heads towards the West with + and – flanking him, starting his third circumambulation.*

KING: I fear no power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth.<sup>788</sup> Success is my proof; courage is my armor; I shall turn not back for any!<sup>789</sup>

*The King is halfway complete with his third circumambulation and stops in the West, facing East.*

PRIESTESS: Many are the champions of life, but all are unhorsed by the lance of death.<sup>790</sup>

*The King is stripped of his staff so that he has no support, i.e. + snaps the staff in two or throws it away and stands next to the King in the attitude of Resurrection (Osiris Risen).*

PRIESTESS: Many are the children of the light, but their eyes shall all be

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785 *The Vision and the Voice*, 20<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

786 *The Vision and the Voice*, 20<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

787 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 18.

788 *Liber AL*, III:17.

789 Adapted from *Liber AL*, III:46.

790 *The Vision and the Voice*, 19<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

put out by the Mother Darkness.<sup>791</sup>

*The King is then stripped of his lantern so he cannot see at night, i.e. – blows out the flame of the lantern and stands next to the King in the attitude of Resurrection (Osiris Risen). + and – then approach the King and remove his scarlet robe, throwing it on the floor, showing he is stripped of everything extraneous and unnecessary, i.e. the purging fire<sup>792</sup> of asceticism. + and – then go to the sides of the Veil, and face outwards towards the West in the sign of Osiris Risen.*

*The King is exhausted but he persists to the East to finish his third and final circumambulation while saying:*

KING: Mighty and erect is this Will of mine [*he lifts the Lance*], this Pyramid of fire whose summit is lost in Heaven. Upon it have I burned the corpse of my desires!<sup>793</sup>

PRIESTESS: He who endures unto the end will have eternal life.<sup>794</sup>

**END SCENE.** *A light is turned out to make the Temple slightly darker. Congregants repeatedly intone “AUMGN” in between scenes. No music.*

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791 *The Vision and the Voice*, 19<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

792 It is like the Sagittarian Arrow of aspiration soaring upwards, leaving behind the chaff. In Hindu terminology it is the *tapas* or heat of spiritual practice and aspiration; it is the Alchemical alembic that transmutes the gross into the subtle by fire.

793 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 15.

794 An adaptation of Matthew 10:22 and 24:13; it is also a reference to the motto of 666, “Perdurabo,” i.e. he who endures unto the End.

## SCENE 2: Capricorn.

### The Temptation of the Buddha-Christ King and the Rending of the Veil of the High Priestess

*SETTING: Everyone is in the same position as the end of the first scene. + now holds a “false Grail” filled with jewels, jewelry, coins, and other things indicating material wealth. – holds another “false Grail” filled with a potion (although not necessarily filled with anything, the symbolism remains). The King is three steps away from the Veil,<sup>795</sup> and with each step he undergoes a Temptation.<sup>796</sup>*

*The King takes his first step towards the Veil/on the dais.*

*+ steps down to the first step on the dais and turns to face the King, offering the “false Grail” full of coins, jewels, et cetera.*

+: You have finished your quest. I will give you the endless pleasure of the most beautiful women of the world; I will grant you rulership over all the kingdoms of the Earth.

KING: It has been written, 'Thou hast no right but to do thy will.'<sup>797</sup> I am not swayed by your appeal to petty lusts. Neither pleasure nor power shall satisfy me. I seek only Nuit and will turn not aside for anything.

*The King extends his Lance forward towards + (towards the South if the High Altar is in the East) to make a horizontal arm of a Cross of Light. + spins away, puts the “false Grail” away, and retreats back to the former position at the Veil in the Sign of Osiris Risen.*

795 This is seen in the Gnostic Mass in the Three Steps of the Priest toward the Altar before rending the Veil.

796 These refer to the three Temptations of Christ by Satan on the Mount as well as the three Temptations of Buddha by Mara. They are the three tests of one's sincerity – or the purity of one's aspiration – before enlightenment is conferred.

797 *Liber AL*, I:42.

*The King takes his second step.*

– descends to the second step, turns to face the King, and offers another “false Grail” containing a potion.

–: It is also written, 'To worship me take wine and strange drugs whereof I will tell my prophet, & be drunk thereof! They shall not harm ye at all.'<sup>798</sup> Therefore, drink this concoction and you will not be harmed.

KING: We have been warned to shun those who would interpret the Law for us as centres of pestilence.<sup>799</sup> I have certainty, not faith,<sup>800</sup> the certainty of my own Understanding won through my own struggles. I seek not to be deceived into swaying from my own path, in resting content in adhering to others' beliefs. I seek only Nuit and will turn not aside for anything.

*The King extends his Lance forward towards – (towards the North if the High Altar is in the East) to make the second horizontal arm of a Cross of Light. – spins away, puts the “false Grail” away, and retreats back to the former position at the Veil in the Sign of Osiris Risen.*

*The King takes his third step. Both + and – stand outward, questioning the King on the third step.*

+: O man, who art thou that wouldst penetrate the Mystery?<sup>801</sup>

–: What makes you think you are worthy to speak to the High Priestess Nuit?

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798 *Liber AL*, II:22.

799 A reference to the The Comment of *The Book of the Law*.

800 *Liber AL*, I:58.

801 *The Vision and the Voice*, 28<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

+ : Who attests to your authority?

- : Who attests to your attainment?

KING: I am the Holy Chosen One.<sup>802</sup> The very Earth testifies to my attainment.

*The King raises the Lance and there is the sound of a lightning strike; he then strikes the ground with the Lance and there is the crack and ripple of loud thunder; he thereby makes the two vertical portions of the Cross of Light, therefore completing the entire Cross; the Earth trembles and thunders.*<sup>803</sup>

+ and - retreat to the Veil, face one another, and are ready to rend the Veil.

KING: I seek only Nuit and will turn not aside for anything!

*The Veil is then rent by + and -. The High Priestess sits enthroned. She has the moon under her feet, and upon her head is a crown of twelve stars.*<sup>804</sup> *The golden Holy Grail is hidden behind her.*<sup>805</sup>

PRIESTESS: Lonely am I and cold in the wilderness of the stars. For I am the queen of all them that dwell in Heaven, and the queen of all them that are pure upon earth, and the queen of all the sorcerers of hell. I am the lady of the stars, the Bride of them that are vowed unto loneliness.<sup>806</sup>

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802 *Liber AL*, I:65.

803 A form of Buddha in his pose of defying Mara, i.e. in Lotus position with one hand on the ground.

804 Revelation 12:1.

805 The Cup of Babalon that is mentioned in the Book of Revelation as well as in *The Vision and the Voice*; it is seen in the Gnostic Mass.

806 Adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 27th Aethyr. At this point, the King



KING: O Lady of the Stars! I have left my Beloved and my Kingdom; I have wandered alone in the wilderness; I have endured the travails of the desert; I have followed the footprints of the Camel to the summit of the Earth... all in search for the Elixir of Immortality.

PRIESTESS: I alone have the Wisdom wherewith the Elixir may be produced... yet it requires a sacrifice.<sup>807</sup>

*The High Priestess retrieves the hidden Holy Grail that was hidden behind her, and she holds it before the King.*

KING: I have been stripped of all I have. What could I give as a sacrifice?

PRIESTESS: The Elixir may only work upon those who have sacrificed their body and blood.

KING: How could eternal life be given unto them who are no longer alive? I pray that you explain this paradox.

PRIESTESS: The reasoning mind cannot pass this threshold. If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought.<sup>808</sup> What spurred thee to this quest?

KING: Naught but Love.

PRIESTESS: Have you no Love left?

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believes he has found the mythical "High Priestess Nuit" mentioned in the Autumn Equinox ceremony.

807 This line shows a sinister turn of the character of the High Priestess. At first we think she is the benevolent Nuit, the Lady of the Stars, but she appears as Babalon, the Mother of Abominations, the Great Whore, who has the blood of the saints in her Cup upon which she is intoxicated.

808 *Liber AL*, II:30.

KING: The beat of my heart is the pendulum of love. The songs of me are the soft sighs: The thoughts of me are very rapture: And my deeds are the myriads of Thy children, the stars and the atoms. Let there be nothing! Let all things drop into this ocean of love!<sup>809</sup>

PRIESTESS: Give your last particle of dust<sup>810</sup> in the ecstasy of sacrifice! Consummate Thy rapture!<sup>811</sup>

*The King stabs himself in the side with the Lance.*<sup>812</sup>

KING AND PRIESTESS: Faluti!<sup>813</sup>

*The Priestess and King kiss.*

*The King staggers and falters, and is almost dead. The Priestess fills her Cup with the blood from the King's wound.*<sup>814</sup>

PRIESTESS: It is done!<sup>815</sup>

+: He hath drunk of the waters of death!

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809 *Liber VII*, V:21-28.

810 *Liber AL*, I:61.

811 *Liber VII*, V:30.

812 The final wound of Christ on the Cross, c.f. John 19:34, "But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water."

813 *Liber VII*, V:30; Also called "The outburst of the orgasm" in *The Vision and the Voice*, 2nd Aethyr, and is therefore identical to "HRILIU" as seen in the Gnostic Mass.

814 This is similar to the Crucifixion scene where Christ is stabbed in the side. His blood, in this ceremony, is collected into the Chalice by the Priestess who would be Mary Magdalene in the Crucifixion (who is often identified as a prostitute).

815 A reference to Revelation 16:17 that is itself referring to Armageddon, the End, which is here identified with the death of the self, the dissolution of the ego in the Absolute whereby  $8^{\circ}=3^{\circ}$  may be attained.

PRIESTESS: Not otherwise could he water the Rose.

–: He hath burnt himself at the Fires of life!

PRIESTESS: Not otherwise could he sun the Rose.<sup>816</sup>

*The Priestess raises the Chalice, and the King looks up at it.*

PRIESTESS: Let him look upon the cup whose blood is mingled therein, for the wine of the cup is the blood of the saints. I have spilt their blood in every corner of the earth and lo! I have mingled it in the cup of my whoredom. With the breath of my kisses hath I fermented it, and it hath become the wine of the Sacrament, the wine of the Sabbath.<sup>817</sup>

*MUSIC: Benedictine monks chanting of “Ave Maria” and “Alma Redemptoris Mater.”*<sup>818</sup>

*The Priestess descends to fill the Congregant’s goblets with some wine from the Grail. Alternatively, + and – descend to give goblets of wine or water. Fade music when complete.*

PRIESTESS: In the Holy Assembly hath I poured it out for my worshipers, and they had become drunken thereon, so that face to face they beheld my Father.

+: Thus are they made worthy to become partakers of the Mystery of this holy vessel.

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816 This exchange comes from *The Vision and the Voice*, 14<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

817 *The Vision and the Voice*, 12<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

818 These are two of the four “Marian hymns” dedicated to the Virgin Mary. Mother Mary was the Old Aeon version of the Divine Feminine, which is equivalent to Babalon, the Whore, in the New Aeon. MARIE in Greek (Μαριε) = 156 = BABALON in Hebrew (בַּבְּלוֹן מַלְאָכָה) as well as Greek (Βαβαλον).

–: For the blood is the life!<sup>819</sup>

PRIESTESS: Death is no catastrophe; it is Love.

*The High Priestess raises her Grail and motions as if drinking from it, signaling to the People that they may drink the wine in their goblets. All drink.*

PRIESTESS: Death is not the end; it is Life to come!<sup>820</sup>

*The Priestess, +, and – all turn to face the King with arms extended towards one another to form a Hexagon.*<sup>821</sup>

PRIESTESS, +, and –: AUMGN.

*MUSIC: Begin to play Gustav Holst's "Saturn" from "The Planets," starting around ~4:15 while the "AUMGN" is being intoned, so the crescendo at ~4:32 occurs at "The King is dead!"*

*The Priestess crowns the King.*

PRIESTESS: The King is dead! Long live the King!

**END SCENE.** *Congregants repeatedly intone "AUMGN" in between scenes. MUSIC: Let Holst's "Saturn" play out until next scene.*

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819 This entire exchange comes from *The Vision and the Voice*, 12th Aethyr.

820 An adaptation of *The Book of Lies*, chapter 18.

821 The hexagon is a 6-sided figure, which relates it to the 6<sup>th</sup> Sephirah on the Tree of Life, Tiphareth, that is attributed to Sol, Death-and-Rebirth gods (e.g. Osiris, Christ, Orpheus, Dionysus, etc.), and the Son in whom the Father is reborn (which can be seen in the Vernal Equinox ceremony). Alternately, they form a triangle with the King in the center, representing the axle of the Wheel of Jupiter or Fortune that moves not yet undergoes the triplicity symbolized by the Sphinx, Hermanubis, and Typhon (i.e. Rajas, Tamas, and Sattvas or Sulphur, Salt, and Mercury, etc.)

### SCENE 3: Aquarius.

#### The Mourning of the Mother and the Portend of the Child-Savior.

*SETTING: The Queen (divested of her Priestess garments, now wearing her Green robe and crown of flowers) is back at the Kingdom; she is in the throne and mourning the absence of the King. The obelisks are toppled.*

*+ and – stand to the West and look concerned and distressed.*

*+: She is weeping...*

*–: Weeping...<sup>822</sup>*

QUEEN: I sit solitary; I have become a widow! I weepeth sore and there is none that can comfort me! There is naught but treachery and affliction!<sup>823</sup>

*The Queen gets up and starts to move towards the West.*

QUEEN: I can neither strive nor wait. There is agony in my ears, and in my throat, and mine eyes have been so long blind that I cannot remember that there ever was such a thing as sight.<sup>824</sup> The Obelisks are broken; the stars have rushed together: the Light hath plunged into the Abyss: the Heavens are mixed with Hell... I am lost in the night of infinite pain: no hope: no God: no resurrection: no end: I fall: I fear.<sup>825</sup>

*The Queen turns back towards the East and falls to her knees. + and – approach and kneel to comfort her, facing the West.*

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822 *The Vision and the Voice*, 27th Aethyr.

823 Adapted from Lamentations, 1:1-3.

824 *The Vision and the Voice*, 2<sup>nd</sup> Aethyr.

825 *The Vision and the Voice*, 30<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

QUEEN: My mind is distraught by the bitterness of my heart.<sup>826</sup> I doubt whether I may endure this winter storm.

*The Eightfold Star*<sup>827</sup> [a Unicursal Hexagram can be substituted] then rises on the horizon (in the West) as a portend of the birth of the Child-Savior.<sup>828</sup> The Queen is given Hope<sup>829</sup> to persist through the final hours of Midnight/Winter.<sup>830</sup>

+ looks up, points with fear, and stands up.

+: Look! A great star falling from heaven, burning as if it were a lamp; it is falling upon the waters.<sup>831</sup>

+ starts to back away a few steps. – gets up and starts to back away as well while saying:

–: Beware: that is the Star called Wormwood!<sup>832</sup> Many men will die of the waters, because they are made bitter.<sup>833</sup>

*The Queen turns to look at the Star in the West, rises to her feet, and says:*

QUEEN: Fear not my brothers and sisters... This is the world of the waters of Maim; this is the bitter water that becometh sweet!<sup>834</sup>

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826 Adapted from *The Heart of the Master*.

827 The Star of Mercury, i.e. of the Redeemer; the Morning Star.

828 Having a banner or image of the Star concealed within the Tomb and, at this moment, having someone tear down the veil to reveal the Star has a good effect.

829 As seen in “Atu XVII: The Star” to which is attributed the sign of Aquarius.

830 That which is depicted in “Atu XVIII: The Moon.”

831 Revelation 8:10.

832 From *The Heart of the Master*, also a reference to Revelation 8:11, “And the name of the star is called Wormwood...”

833 Revelation, 8:10.

834 *Liber LXV*, III:55.

+ and – walk together to stand next to the Queen while + says:

+: Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.<sup>835</sup>

–: They that sow in tears shall reap in joy.<sup>836</sup>

QUEEN: I have dreaded this midnight of the soul, for I thought it was the end. Now I welcome the herald.<sup>837</sup> Ay! It is the end!

*MUSIC: Fade in beginning of Alexander Glazunov's "Winter" from "The Seasons."*

QUEEN: ...the gate of the beginning!<sup>838</sup>

*END SCENE. Fade out lights. MUSIC: Play out the first few of Alexander Glazunov's "Winter" and fade out.*

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835 Psalm 30:5.

836 Psalm 126:5.

837 Adapted from *AHA!*

838 *The Vision and the Voice*, 29<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.



*The Slave-Gods Superceded*  
is based on the 26<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*



# CHAPTER 36

## VERNAL EQUINOX: THE BORNLESS REBORN

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*The Word of this ceremony is “VIAOV.” It is repeatedly intoned in between scenes by the People/Congregants. The Incense of this ceremony is Frankincense<sup>839</sup> and/or Rose.<sup>840</sup> The Talismans of this ceremony are fresh, Spring flowers.<sup>841</sup> The obelisks are still toppled.*

### SCENE I: Pisces.

#### End of Winter, the Final Lamentations of the Mother

*INTRO MUSIC: The last ~2 minutes of Alexander Glazunov's “Winter” from “The Seasons,” which continues the song that ended the Winter Solstice ceremony.*

*SETTING: The Queen is the Mother,<sup>842</sup> lamenting the death of the King at the tomb in the West.<sup>843</sup> + and – stand in the East in front of the dais as forms of Anubis,<sup>844</sup> looking to the West at the Queen. The Obelisks are still broken.*

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839 In 777, Frankincense is attributed to Tiphareth (the Sun) and to the Element of Fire, which rules the Vernal Equinox because it occurs in the sign of Aries.

840 In 777, Rose is attributed to Tiphareth in the King Scale of Color, and it is also “traditionally been taken as [a] glyph of the circle” which refers in this case to the circle or cycle of the Seasons itself.

841 This represents vegetative Growth, the “Green Man” of Spring, and the general flowering of Beauty after lying fallow during the darkness of Winter.

842 Isis mourning Osiris/Mary mourning Jesus; Isis Mourning (L) of the INRI/LVX/IAO formula.

843 The Sun sets in the West and therefore represents Death.

844 As in “Atu XVIII: The Moon,” which is attributed to Pisces, the sign of this scene.

*MUSIC: Sounds of wind howling/storm fade in and overpower the music.*

MOTHER: Sterility is my name, and desolation.

+: Intolerable is thine ache

–: And incurable thy wound.

MOTHER: I said, Let the darkness cover me; and behold, I am compassed about with the blackness that hath no name.<sup>845</sup>

+: The sun has become black!

–: The moon has become as blood!<sup>846</sup>

MOTHER: All that was ordered and stable is shaken!<sup>847</sup> The winter storm has plunged our kingdom into darkness.

*The Queen pauses and listens to the howling winds.*

MOTHER: The mystery, the evil darkness of these incoherent cries, sets my teeth on edge with horror. And yet I cannot give up the hope which thrilled me at the Voice.<sup>848</sup> But so keen, so desolate, so deadly is the pain of my spirit that blank darkness overwhelms me altogether.<sup>849</sup>

+: Yet there was a star in sight...

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845 *The Vision and the Voice*, 14<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

846 Adapted from Revelation 6:12.

847 *The Vision and the Voice*, 16<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

848 In terms of these Seasonal rites, “the hope which thrilled me” refers to the Star of the Redeemer appearing at the end of the Winter Solstice ceremony, i.e. in Aquarius, which directly precedes this particular scene. More generally, it is the hope for Dawn during the darkest hours of Midnight.

849 *The Heart of the Master*.

–: A star of hope arose...

MOTHER: Yet fell back into the darkness of the waters!<sup>850</sup> A Star in the West? What folly!<sup>851</sup> The King has left no heir and I fear we may wallow in this darkness forever. This discipline is sorrowful...

+: And ploughing is laborious...

–: And age is weariness...<sup>852</sup>

MOTHER: I sink through waves of blackness... down!

*The Queen falls down.*

+: Down!

*+ falls down.*

–: Down!<sup>853</sup>

*– falls down.*

MOTHER: In this Kingdom of the Grave, there is no light or knowledge.

+: Nor beauty.

–: Nor stability.

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850 A reference to the Star of the Redeemer that appeared at the end of the Winter Solstice ceremony, i.e. in Aquarius.

851 *The Heart of the Master.*

852 Adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 28<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, where it refers to the dispersion of the Abyss.

853 *The Vision and the Voice*, 16<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

MOTHER: The worm is crowned!

*The Queen places her crown on the ground.*

MOTHER: All that we have been hath been eaten up! All that we shall be is nothing!<sup>854</sup>

+: The darkness of the earth is ruddy.

–: The darkness of the air is grey.

MOTHER: The darkness of the soul is utter blackness.<sup>855</sup>

*The Mother laments and, with each wave of sobs and cries of pain,<sup>856</sup> the thunder of the storm gets louder and longer, an earthquake<sup>857</sup> rumbles stronger and stronger.*

+: The Queen is sore distressed!<sup>858</sup>

–: Who is now set to save us?<sup>859</sup>

+: Is not the egg of spirit a black egg?

–: Is not the snake that devoureth the spirit of man the lust of light?<sup>860</sup>

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854 Adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 14<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

855 *The Vision and the Voice*, 14<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

856 These are the pangs of birth.

857 A reference to Revelation 6:12, “And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and, lo, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.”

858 An adaptation of *Liber LXV*, I:38.

859 An adaptation of *Liber LXV*, I:37.

860 *The Vision and the Voice*, 14<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

+ *stands up while saying:*

+: Let us beseech the Babe that abides in the egg!

– *stands up while saying:*

–: Let us invoke the Son of Morning hidden in the Lotus!<sup>861</sup>

+ and – *walk to the West and gather on opposite sides of the Mother. + turns around, and + and – circle the Queen widdershins (counterclockwise) while vibrating VIAOV three times. During the first vibration, + and – are in the Sign of Isis Mourning; during the second vibration, they are in the Sign of Apophis; during the third vibration, they are in the Sign of Osiris Risen; there are a total of 9 widdershins circumambulations.*<sup>862</sup>

+ & –: VIAOV. VIAOV. VIAOV.

*The King is hidden inside the Veil in the East. The Music gets quieter for a moment.*

KING: In the thick darkness the seed awaiteth spring.<sup>863</sup>

**END SCENE.** *Congregants repeatedly intone “VIAOV” in between scenes. MUSIC: The thunderstorm continues and gets louder.*

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861 These two lines are adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 14th Aethyr.

862 The three vibrations of the threefold word “VIAOV” (the V’s are silent) give 9 total syllables that are intoned, symbolic of the 9 months of the Child in the womb. They do not necessarily need to perform 9 circumambulations but it would strengthen the symbolism.

863 *The Vision and the Voice*, 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

## SCENE II: Aries.

### The Vernal Re-Birth of the Father in the Child

*MUSIC: The storm continues to rumble with thunder.*

*SETTING: The King is still behind the Veil. The obelisks are stood upright and in front of the Veil as in the other ceremonies.*

*The Queen gives + a Dagger and – a Disk.<sup>864</sup>*

KING: Let the Illusion of the World pass over thee, unheeded, as thou goest from the Midnight to the Morning!<sup>865</sup>

+: It is He! The Bornless Spirit!<sup>866</sup>

–: It is He that lighteneth and thundereth!<sup>867</sup>

*The Mother rises. The sound of the storm begins to fade away.*

MOTHER: It is He! The Truth!<sup>868</sup> He is risen!<sup>869</sup>

864 The Mother is the source of the mind (Dagger) and body (Disk) of the Child, which are given to Him in order that he may incarnate or “manifest.”

865 *The Heart of the Master.*

866 He is the “Bornless Spirit” because the True Self is never born nor does it ever die, yet it enters into incarnation or manifestation – represented by the four seasons and four Elements – in order to experience Itself.

867 It is seen that the storm is the Child itself, no longer a source of fear but a signal of the divine presence. As it says in the Holy Book of Thelema known as *Liber A’ash*, “Fear not when I fall in the fury of the storm; for mine acorns are blown afar by the wind; and verily I shall rise again, and my children about me, so that we shall uplift our forest in Eternity. Eternity is the storm that covereth me.”

868 This exchange comes from *Liber Samekh*, Section Gg. “The Truth” is a name Christ gives to himself and it is also one of the many names of Allah. Mansur al-Hallaj – a Persian Sufi of the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> centuries C.E. – attained this identity with Godhead and he was promptly killed for blasphemy when he proclaimed “I am the Truth.”

869 “He is risen” comes from what is called the “Paschal greeting.” On Easter, certain Christians will greet each other by saying “Christ is risen” and the response is “Truly,

+ : He is exalted!

- : He is great!

+ : Glory to God!

- : Thanksgiving to God!<sup>870</sup>

MOTHER: There is no god but man.<sup>871</sup>

*MUSIC: Sound of lightning and swelling of “OM.”*

*The Mother gives the Sign of Isis Rejoicing,<sup>872</sup> and there is a flash of lightning.<sup>873</sup> +, -, and the Mother all kneel in awe as the Child emerges.*

He is risen!” Easter, i.e. the Resurrection, corresponds to the Vernal Equinox ceremony insofar as the Father is resurrected in the Son in this Season.

870 This exchange is adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr. “Exalted” and “great” are qualities or titles of the 5<sup>th</sup> Sephirah, Geburah, while “glory” and “thanksgiving” (the literal translation of *eucharistos*) are qualities or titles of the 4<sup>th</sup> Sephirah, Chesed. Together with Tiphareth, the Sun, they form the descending triangle of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, the Crowned and Conquering Child.

871 This line comes from Liber LXXVII: Liber OZ, and is switched in here for “There is no god but god,” which occurs in the 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr. It is thus, in one sense, a development from the Muslim proclamation of faith insofar as the human being is understood to be the true God. It is said here by the Queen almost as a correction to the paeans being made by + and -.

872 The final sign of the NOX series, Mater Triumphans; it signifies the completion of the crossing of the Abyss to be born as Nemo.

873 Lightning represents (a) Incarnation or Manifestation, i.e. the Qabalistic Lightning Flash; (b) the birth of the Zarathustran Overman as in “Where is the lightning to lick you with its tongue? Where is the frenzy with which ye should be inoculated? Lo, I teach you the Superman: he is that lightning, he is that frenzy!”; it is also therefore the birth of the Child of Attainment, i.e. Nemo in the City of the Pyramids; he is also the birth of the demi-god Savior as in, for example, the stories of Christ or Buddha; (c) the Thelemic image of the generative force through *Liber VII* as well as in *Liber A’ash*, “Gnarled Oak of God! In thy branches is the lightning nested! Above thee hangs the Eyeless Hawk.” It is therefore the Incarnation of the Spirit into Man and the birth of the Savior into the World, the Master of the Temple being cast from Binah

*The King is seen as the Child <sup>874</sup> in the East <sup>875</sup> in the attitude of Resurrection,<sup>876</sup> dressed in Green <sup>877</sup> or Rose-pink <sup>878</sup> or plant-life with a golden sash around his chest,<sup>879</sup> and he carries fresh flowers in both hands. + holds up the Dagger <sup>880</sup> and – holds up the Disk;<sup>881</sup> they then both kneel and adore the Child when he begins his speech.<sup>882</sup>*

KING: I am that I am, the flame / Hidden in the sacred ark. / I am the unspoken name / I the unbegotten spark. / I am He that ever goeth, / Being in myself the Way; / Known, that yet no mortal knoweth, / Shewn, that yet no mortal sheweth, / I, the child of night and day. / I am never-dying youth. / I am Love, and I am Truth. / I am the creating Word, / I the author of the aeon; / None but I have ever heard / Echo in the empyrean / Plectron of the primal paean! / I am the eternal one / Winged and white, the flowering rod, / I the fountain of the sun, Very God of very God! / I

---

back down into Malkuth to restart the cycle. The idea also relates to an aphorism from the *Chaldean Oracles*, “If thou often invokest thou shalt see all things growing dark; and then when no longer is visible unto thee the High-arched Vault of Heaven, when the Stars have lost their Light and the Lamp of the Moon is veiled, the Earth abideth not, and around thee darts the Lightning Flame and all things appear amid thunders.”

874 The Green Man/Pure Fool of Spring and youthful folly; also the Crowned & Conquering Child Horus

875 The East is where the Sun rises and therefore represents Birth.

876 The Sign of Osiris Risen with arms crossed over the chest; it is the sign of Life triumphant over Death.

877 This refers to the re-emergence of plant life after Winter and is reflected in many traditions, e.g. the Green Man, the green color of Osiris’ skin, or “Atu 0: The Fool” in the Thoth Tarot.

878 Rose-pink is a color of Tiphareth, the Sun, specifically “the rose-pink of dawn, the spring of the day” (777).

879 Revelation 1:13.

880 The Dagger is the weapon of Air and therefore symbolizes the bestowing of a Mind as a weapon to work his Will. It also reflects the Scourge, i.e. of Geburah/Mars that Osiris traditionally holds.

881 The Disk is the weapon of Earth and therefore symbolizes the bestowing of a Body as a weapon of work his Will. It also reflects the Crook, i.e. of Chesed/Jupiter that Osiris traditionally holds.

882 This is Baphomet, the Two-in-One God, who is seen as Christ the Redeemer in Revelation 1, the Alpha & Omega.



am he that lifteth up / Life, and flingeth it afar; / I have filled the crystal cup; / I have sealed the silver star. / I the wingless God that flieth / Through my firmamental fane, / I am he that daily dieth, / And is daily born again.<sup>883</sup> VIAOV!<sup>884</sup>

*The King looks to + and – who are kneeling in supplicated adoration.*

KING: Fear not; I am the first and the last; I am he that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, for I have the keys of hell and of death.<sup>885</sup> Kneel not in supplication, for I am your fellow-servant. You are my brother [*he raises + to his feet, takes the Dagger in his right hand, and gives + half of the flowers*] and my sister [*he raises – to her feet, takes the Disk in his left hand, and gives – the other half of the flowers*]. Worship Thyself!<sup>886</sup>

*The King stands in the Sign of Osiris Risen, holding the Dagger and Disk against his shoulders. + and – go around and give each of the Congregants a flower with the words “Worship Thyself!”*

*MUSIC: Fade in of “Appalachian Spring” by Copland.*

*When complete, + and – return, place any extra flowers on the High Altar in the East, and take back the Dagger and Disk, respectively. The King then approaches the West to comfort his awe-struck Mother. + and – go with him, flanking him. Fade out music.*

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883 From Crowley's “The Ship: A Mystery Play.”

884 VIAOV represents the V passing through the cycle of Incarnation (IAO), triumphant and sustained by the process rather than it being a catastrophe. It represents the triumph of Life/Hadit through apparent death.

885 An adaptation of Revelation 1:17-18.

886 An adaptation of Revelation 22:9, “Then saith he unto me, See thou do it not: for I am thy fellowservant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.” The switch from “God” to “Thyself” represents the switch in perspective of the New Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child.

KING: Mother, you mourn sincerely, but your sorrow has no cause. The change which ye lament is the life of my rejoicing, and the sorrow that blackeneth your heart is the myriad deaths by which I am renewed.<sup>887</sup> Grieve neither for the living nor for the dead. There has never been a time when you and I and all the stars gathered here have not existed, nor will there be a time when we will cease to exist.<sup>888</sup> Wipe the tears from your eyes.

+: There is no death!

–: There is no sorrow!

+: There is no crying!

–: Nor is there pain.<sup>889</sup>

KING: Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains.<sup>890</sup> I am the Eternal Sun, the motionless axle of the cycle of night and day, constant and triumphant throughout the changing seasons. Realize you are That which pervades the universe and is indestructible; no power can affect this unchanging, imperishable reality. Even in the face of death, you should not grieve. Death is inevitable for the living; birth is inevitable for the dead. Since these are unavoidable, you should not sorrow... There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was.<sup>891</sup> There is no sin, and there is no salvation.<sup>892</sup> Death means the attainment of heaven, and life means the enjoyment of the earth. Therefore, rise up, Mother, and

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887 *The Vision and the Voice*, 23<sup>rd</sup> Aethyr.

888 An adaptation of a portion of chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

889 Adapted from Revelation 21:4.

890 *Liber AL*, II:9.

891 *Liber AL*, II:58.

892 *The Vision and the Voice*, 26<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

resolve to rejoice!<sup>893</sup>

MOTHER: Behold! where are now the darkness and the terror and the lamentation? For we are born into the new Aeon; we shall not suffer death. In the nights we will dance together, and in the morning we will go forth to war; for, as my King liveth that was dead, so do you live now and shall never die!<sup>894</sup>

**END SCENE.** *Congregants repeatedly intone “VIAOV” in between scenes. MUSIC: Alexander Glazunov’s “Spring” from “The Seasons,” fade in starting from ~1:00.*

### SCENE III: Taurus.

#### The Growth of the Body in Boyhood, the Equilibration of the Elements

*SETTING: The future King is a youth, growing into adolescence. He is counseled by the Mother to grow in preparation for the Child to take the throne as King: he is taught to balance the Elements<sup>895</sup> in the form of attainment of the four Powers of the Sphinx:<sup>896</sup> To Know, To Will, To Dare, To Keep Silence. The Mother leads the Child around to each Quarter.<sup>897</sup>*

MOTHER: Ah, my son! You are like a hawk with mighty-sweeping wings of mother-of-emerald. The very earth gladdens into green at your coming. Children of Earth! Rejoice! Rejoice exceedingly, for our salvation is at

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893 An adaptation of a portion of chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

894 Adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 22nd Aethyr.

895 The 4 Elements are seen around the edges of “Atu V: The Hierophant” to which is attributed the sign of Taurus.

896 This arduous work of winning mastery over the Elements is reflected in the hard work of plowing the fields early in the year; Taurus, the Bull, is an animal used to help plow fields.

897 The Quarters represent both the 4 Elements and the 4 Powers of the Sphinx.

hand. The end of sorrow is come!<sup>898</sup>

KING: I am still but a child, innocent and impotent.<sup>899</sup> How should I ever become deserving to take my Father's throne?

MOTHER: You must first become worthy to seize the Sacred Lance of his power.<sup>900</sup> The temple must be builded before the God can indwell it.<sup>901</sup> Strengthen thyself! Set thy feet firmly upon the earth.<sup>902</sup> Tend the garden of your soul!<sup>903</sup>

KING: Heavy is the labour, but great indeed is the reward.

MOTHER: You shall not see the reward,<sup>904</sup> but you must tend the garden. Who can tell upon what day a flower shall bloom?<sup>905</sup> In the impure Soul no Vision will arise, therefore cleanse the Soul:<sup>906</sup> balance the Elements within oneself: You must achieve the Four Powers of the Sphinx, though

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898 Adapted from *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 1-4.

899 "Innocent and impotent" is a phrase used in *Liber Samekh* to describe the Pure Fool, the Babe Horus (Aleph – "Atu 0: The Fool") that must obtain the Lance and become the Adult Horus (Ayin – "Atu XV: The Devil").

900 Crowley writes in *Liber Samekh*, Point II, line 5, "What then is the formula of the initiation of Horus? It will no longer be that of the Man, through Death. It will be the natural growth of the Child. His experiences will no more be regarded as catastrophic. Their hieroglyph is the Fool: the innocent and impotent Harpocrates Babe becomes the Horus Adult by obtaining the Wand. 'Der reine Thor' seizes the Sacred Lance. Bacchus becomes Pan. The Holy Guardian Angel is the Unconscious Creature Self – the Spiritual Phallus. His knowledge and conversation contributes occult puberty."

901 *Liber LXI vel Causae*, line 21.

902 *The Vision and the Voice*, 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

903 A reference to the garden of the 13<sup>th</sup> Aethyr where a certain flower may arise as NEMO, the Master of the Temple.

904 A foreshadowing of the King's death next Winter, and also a more esoteric reference to the fact that Attainment ultimates in the annihilation of the ego so the "you" of the ego shall not see the "reward."

905 *The Vision and the Voice*, 13<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

906 Adapted from *AHA!*

even adepts hardly attain to one of them!<sup>907</sup>

*The Mother leads the Child-King to the West where + stands as representing the threat of unbalanced introversion. – stands in the East.*

+: The wiles of the world are a plague upon the spirit! Build yourself up as a fortress to withstand the poisonous attacks of sense.<sup>908</sup>

*The King looks to the Mother for guidance.*

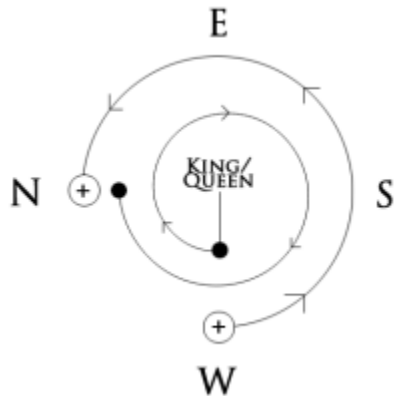
MOTHER: Be strong, o man! lust, enjoy all things of sense and rapture: fear not that any God shall deny thee for this. Exceed! Exceed! Strive ever to more! Love is the law, love under will.<sup>909</sup>

*The Mother gives the Sign of the Enterer,<sup>910</sup> and the King turns back to + to give the Sign of the Enterer himself.*

MOTHER: My Child, the Power of Daring is in your heart, coiled and ready to leap!

*MUSIC: Fade in “Mars” by Holst during circumambulations and fade out (and pause) before the next line is spoken.*

*The Mother leads the Child-King 1¼ deosil (clockwise) circumambulations while + moves widdershins (counter-clockwise) ¾ circle (– mirrors*



907 Adapted from *AHA!*

908 Basically, + represents the Threat of unbalanced Introversion: + tries to get the Child-King to keep to himself and be concerned only with himself.

909 *Liber AL*, II:22, 71, 72 and I:57.

910 The Sign of the Enterer, i.e. Silence, i.e. of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, represents a response to or attack against the – imbalance.

*movements of + on the opposite side of the circle; + ends in the North and – in the South); King and Queen come to the North where + stands as representing external Tyranny. The King faces + with the Mother behind him and to the side, guiding him.*

+: Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother! Thou shalt not commit adultery!<sup>911</sup>

*The King looks to the Mother for guidance.*

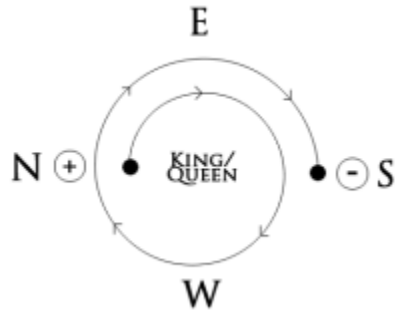
MOTHER: Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay.<sup>912</sup>

*The Mother gives the Sign of Silence,<sup>913</sup> and the King turns back to + to give the Sign of Silence himself.*

MOTHER: My Child, the Power of Knowledge grows within you!

*MUSIC: Fade in “Mars” by Holst during circumambulations and fade out (and pause) before the next line is spoken.*

*The Mother leads the Child-King 1½ deosil (clockwise) circumambulations; + and – do not move. The King and Queen*



911 Two of the 10 Commandments of the Old Aeon. They represent, in general, the “Thou shalt”s and “Thou shalt not”s that are overturned in the New Aeon. In particular, the father and mother are no longer adored for it is the Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child. Adultery is no longer sinful, for we no longer pathologize the sexual instinct nor think it sinful, and Babalon is the Great Whore that we adore. Basically, + represents external Tyranny, i.e. religious-social Authority, and + tries to get the Child-King to conform to his ideal of what is right.

912 *Liber AL*, I:42-43.

913 The Sign of Silence, i.e. of Harpocrates or Hoor-Paar-Kraat, represents a response to or defense against the + imbalance.

*come to the South where – stands as representing unbalanced extroversion. The King faces – with the Mother behind him and to the side, guiding him.*

–: Be not lead into temptation, beware of your prideful sins!<sup>914</sup> Love is charity and sacrifice to others.

*The King looks to the Mother for guidance.*

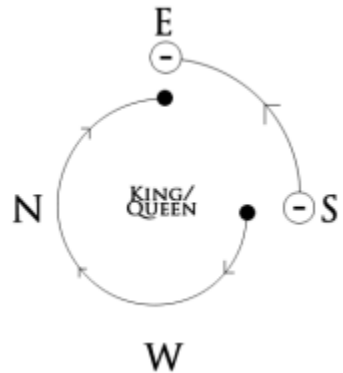
MOTHER: Ye shall be as ye are, & not other. Therefore the kings of the earth shall be Kings for ever: the slaves shall serve.<sup>915</sup>

*The Mother gives the Sign of Silence,<sup>916</sup> and the King turns back to – to give the Sign of Silence himself.*

MOTHER: My Child, do not give overly of yourself to others in thought, word, or deed; Knowledge, Will, and Courage are for naught if you do not Keep Silence!

*MUSIC: Fade in “Mars” by Holst during circumambulations and fade out (and pause) before the next line is spoken.*

*The Mother leads the Child-King  $\frac{3}{4}$  deasil (clockwise) circumambulations while – moves widdershins (counter-clockwise)  $\frac{1}{4}$  circle*



914 A reference to the Lord's prayer as in Luke 11:4, "And forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." Basically, – represents the threat of unbalance Extroversion: – tries to get the Child to engage in self-sacrifice, only thinking of others, which is a hallmark of the Old Aeon of Osiris, the Dying God.

915 *Liber AL*, II:58.

916 The Sign of Silence, i.e. of Harpocrates or Hoor-Paar-Kraat, represents a response to or defense against the + imbalance.

*(+ mirrors movements of – on the opposite side of the circle; – ends in the East and + in the West); King and Queen come to the East where – stands as representing internal Tyranny. The King faces – with the Mother behind him and to the side, guiding him.*

–: Who art thou that dost float and fly and dive and soar in the inane? Behold, these many æons have passed; whence camest thou? Whither wilt thou go?<sup>917</sup>

*The King looks to the Mother for guidance.*

MOTHER: A curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursed for ever! If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness.<sup>918</sup>

*The Mother gives the Sign of the Enterer,<sup>919</sup> and the King turns back to – to give the Sign of the Enterer himself.*

MOTHER: My Child, you have begun to unfold the Power of Will. There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.<sup>920</sup>

*The Mother takes off the King's green/rose-pink tabard.<sup>921</sup> + takes the tabard from the Queen; + and Queen move to the East to join –, and +*

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917 This line comes from *Liber LXV*, II:21 where it is asked by the “little crazy boy” of Reason to the Adept. Basically, – represents Internal Tyranny, i.e. superstition and habit. – tries to get the Child-King to question himself through hyper-rationality.

918 *Liber AL*, II:28-31.

919 The Sign of the Enterer, i.e. Silence, i.e. of Ra-Hoor-Khuit, represents a response to or attack against the – imbalance.

920 *Liber AL*, III:60.

921 This represents the end of childhood and the entering into adulthood. There have now been a total of 3½ deosil circumambulations, symbolic of the Kundalini serpent coiled 3½ times at the base of the spine. The awakening of the Kundalini represents the awakening to the Creative Life-force of Godhead, which is seen symbolically in puberty in the course of the individual's life.



*places the tabard in the East.*

*The Queen retrieves the Lance from the High Altar. + and – move to the center, The King in the West, the Mother in the East, + in the South, and – in the North so that all four individuals form a circle or diamond in the center, all facing inwards.*

+ : You have passed through each of the quarters.

– : You have become an adherent, a Man of Earth.<sup>922</sup>

*The Queen holds the Lance upright in the center. +, –, and the Mother all intone a syllable of “IAO.” The Mother begins with “I,” and while she is still intoning, + begins to vibrate “A,” and – vibrates “O” so that all three are vibrated at once. Finally, the King vibrates “VIAOV” and they all end at the same time.*

QUEEN: I!

*+ holds the Lance with the Mother while intoning:*

+ : A!

*– holds the Lance with the Mother and + while intoning:*

– : O!

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922 This represents attaining the “grade” of Man of Earth, corresponding to the Third Order of Golden Dawn (Malkuth,  $1^\circ=10^\square$ ) which contains the 4 Elements. The next grade is the Lover, which is in Tiphareth ( $5^\circ=6^\square$ ). This grade, as well as that of Geburah ( $6^\circ=5^\square$ ) are attained in the Summer Solstice ceremony. The grade of  $7^\circ=4^\square$  is attained in Autumn, which is the final aspect of the grade of Lover. The next grade of Hermit ( $8^\circ=3^\square$ ) is attained in the Winter Solstice when the King gives up his life in an act of supreme Love.

*The King grabs the Lance and raises it while the Mother, +, and – all let go, all while the King intones:*

KING: VIAOV!

*+ and – turn to flank the Mother while facing toward the King.*

KING: Am I not nearly purged of the iniquity of my forefathers?

MOTHER: Yet a little...<sup>923</sup> This is only the first step upon the Path of the Great Work. Our Kingdom is still in danger: the Lower Kingdom threatens us where the Daughter of their King still rules. You must now leave me: win your own adulthood by winning a worthy Queen, and reclaim your rightful place as King.<sup>924</sup> Go now, with ecstasy of worship in your heart.

+: With a clear mind.

–: And a passionate body.<sup>925</sup>

MOTHER: Go now, and may you grow to be a great King!

+: May you wax strong in spirit.

–: May you be filled with wisdom!<sup>926</sup>

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923 *The Vision and the Voice*, 16<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

924 This represents the child leaving the home of the family and becoming an independent adult. It also refers to the Son or Prince of Tetragrammaton (YHVH) uniting with the Daughter or Princess of Tetragrammaton (YHVH), so that she may be set upon the throne of the Mother (YHVH) and the Prince may become King (YHVH)

925 *The Vision and the Voice*, 16<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

926 Luke 2:40.

*MUSIC: Fade in “Mars” from “The Planets, op.32” by Gustav Holst, starting from ~3:45.*

KING: I shall find the Daughter of the King<sup>927</sup> and she will become my bride! The voluptuous Virgin of Night will illumine my soul with arcane delight!<sup>928</sup> Our Upper Kingdom will be united with the Lower once more: I shall set her upon the Throne of my Mother<sup>929</sup> and the whole earth will rejoice.<sup>930</sup>

*The King raises his Lance and marches to the West and into the Tomb.*

**END SCENE. OUTRO MUSIC:** *Play out “Mars” for a few minutes.*

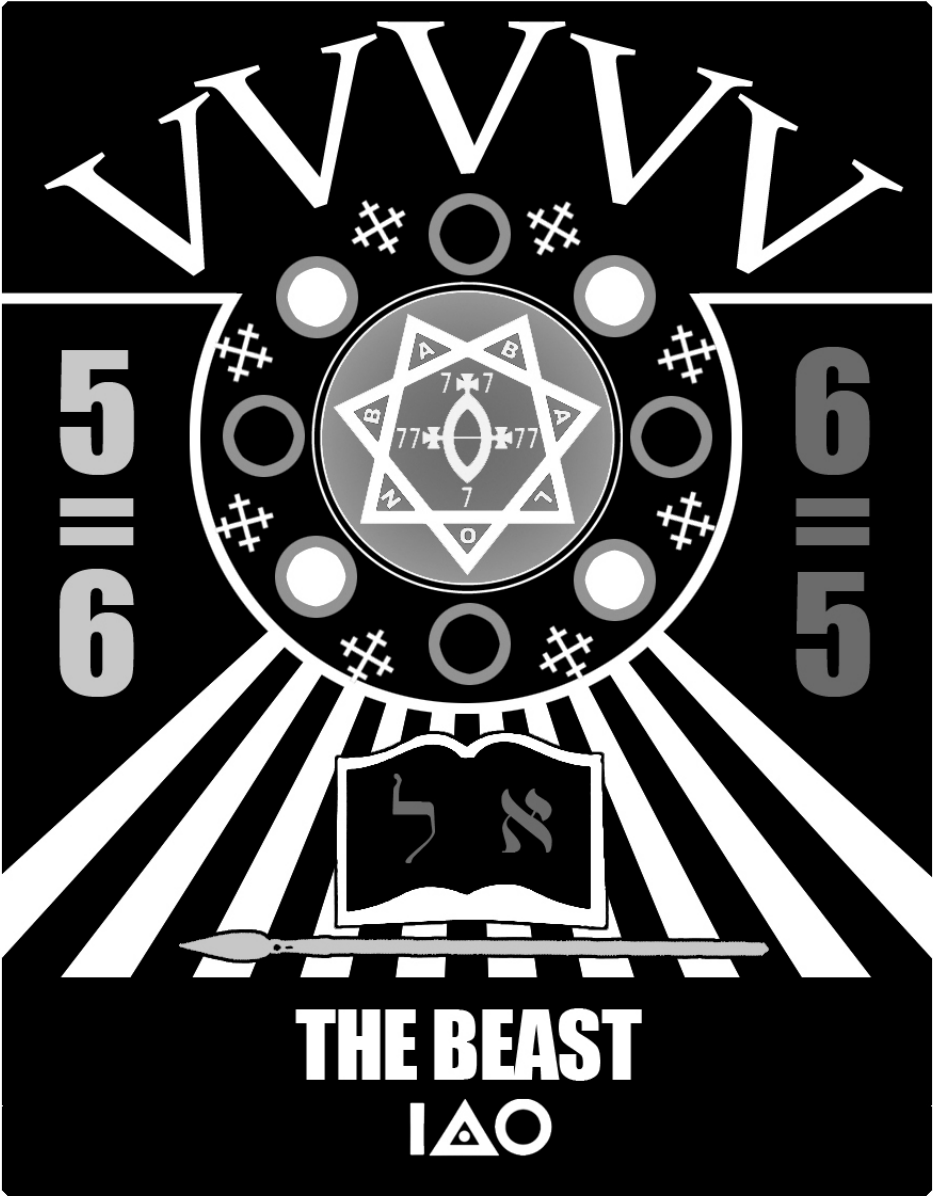
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927 *The Vision and the Voice*, 9<sup>th</sup> Aethyr. She is the Daughter or Princess of Tetragrammaton (YHVH). The King, having attained the Lance, has become the Prince (Vav of YHVH).

928 Adapted from *AHA!*

929 *The Vision and the Voice*, 9<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, “This is she that is set upon the Throne of Understanding. Holy, Holy, Holy is her name, not to be spoken among men. For Kor they have called her, and Malkuth, and Betulah, and Persephone.” Also, the 4<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, “And this is that which is written: Malkuth shall be uplifted and set upon the throne of Binah.”

930 A foreshadowing of the Summer Solstice ritual, which reflects Revelation 19:7, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.” The King is, of course, the Lamb, the Solar Savior of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty.



*The Beast*  
is based on the 25<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*

## CHAPTER 37

# SUMMER SOLSTICE: THE CHYMICAL WEDDING

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*The Word of this ceremony is “ABRAHADABRA.” It is repeatedly intoned in between scenes by the People/Congregants. The Incense of this ceremony is Sandalwood.<sup>931</sup> The Talisman of this ceremony is the Mark of the Beast.<sup>932</sup>*

### SCENE I: Gemini.

**The Maturation of the Child, the Strengthening of the Mind,  
and the King’s approach to the Lower Kingdom.**

*SETTING: The Queen sits enthroned in the East <sup>933</sup> behind the Veil. She is wearing a white robe with no tabard, is crowned with twelve flowers, and she holds a wilted Lotus flower. + and – stand in the center of the Temple; + holds a censer with incense<sup>934</sup> and – holds a cup of salt and*

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931 In 777, Sandalwood is attributed to Venus and generally refers to Love. This ceremony deals with the union of Father and Mother, King and Queen, in the sign of Cancer whose symbol shows the union of opposites (☿). Insofar as Sandalwood is attributed to Venus, it corresponds with “Atu III: The Empress” in the Tarot which shows a mature female who is often shown wearing or being adorned with flowers; this is the character of the new Queen that appears in this Solstice ceremony.

932 The Mark of the Beast is, symbolically, the union of Sol and Luna, which is the basic alchemical process at work throughout the Summer Solstice ceremony. It is as Crowley's usual design: the symbol of Sol and Luna with two testes in front of a heptagram; otherwise, the cross-in-the-circle is a suitable substitute.

933 This is the Daughter of Tetragrammaton, the Final Heh of YHVH. She is explicitly called “the Daughter of the King” in the third scene (Taurus) of the Vernal Equinox ceremony. She is not yet raised to be the Mother/Queen, which requires the union of the Son with the Daughter in the second scene (Cancer) of this Summer Solstice ceremony.

934 These represent the “active” elements of Fire (censer) and Air (incense), reflecting

water.<sup>935</sup> *The King is in the West with the Lance, wearing only a white robe with no tabard. The body of the King has been equilibrated<sup>936</sup> and now the mind<sup>937</sup> requires equilibration.*

*INTRO MUSIC: The end of Holst's "Mars, the Bringer of War" continuing from the end of the Vernal Equinox ceremony.*

*The King begins to approach the East from the West.*

KING: I have balanced the Elements within myself and become worthy to seize my Father's Sacred Lance of power. I travel into the Lower Kingdom to seek the Daughter of the King, that she may become my bride and be set upon the Throne of my Mother.

*+ and – approach the King and stop him.*

+ and –: Halt!

*They attach a garotte to his throat.<sup>938</sup>*

–: Child of Earth, un-purified, you cannot enter the path to the Lower Kingdom.<sup>939</sup>

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the censer used by the "Positive" Child in the Gnostic Mass.

935 These represent the "passive" elements of Earth (salt) and Water (water), reflecting the pitcher of water and cellar of salt used by the "Negative" Child in the Gnostic Mass.

936 The body refers more abstractly to the Elements in general, and the Child has passed through the equilibration of the 4 Elements in the third scene (Taurus) of the Vernal Equinox ceremony.

937 Gemini is an Air sign and is ruled by Mercury which both represent the Mind in Elemental and Planetary symbolism, respectively.

938 The garotte is a symbol of the restraint of thought and speech. Crowley writes in *The Book of Lies*, "The reason is situated in Daath, which corresponds the the throat in human anatomy."

939 Adapted from the Golden Dawn Neophyte initiation ceremony.

– *makes three crosses with the cup of salt and water in the shape of a downward triangle*<sup>940</sup> *over the chest of the King while saying:*

–: For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.<sup>941</sup>

+ : Child of Earth, unconsecrated, you cannot enter the path to the Lower Kingdom.

+ *makes three crosses with the censer in the shape of an upright triangle*<sup>942</sup> *over the chest of the King while saying:*

+ : I am uplifted in thine heart; and the kisses of the stars rain hard upon thy body.<sup>943</sup>

*In the following back-and-forth, the lines are spoken fairly quickly, with the King turning his head back and forth to face + or – as they speak, giving the sense of being bounced back-and-forth between two extremes of duality.*

+ : Thoughts are false.<sup>944</sup>

– : All thought is dis-ease.<sup>945</sup>

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940 The downward triangle is a symbol of the Element of Water in this context.

941 *Liber AL*, I:44. In *Magick in Theory & Practice*, chapter 14, Crowley writes, “The words of purification are: *Asperges me, Therion, hyssopo, et mundabor; lavabis me, et super nivem dealbabor*. Those of consecration are: *Accendat in nobis Therion ignem sui amoris et flammam aeternae caritatis*. These may now advantageously be replaced by (a) ‘... pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.’ (*CCXX*, I, 44) to banish; and (b) ‘I am uplifted in thine heart; and the kisses of the stars rain hard upon thy body.’ (*CCXX*, II, 62) to consecrate. For the Book of the Law contains the Supreme Spells.”

942 The upright triangle is here a symbol of the Element of Fire.

943 *Liber AL*, II:62.

944 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 5.

945 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 85.

+: All this is true and false.

–: And it is true and false to say that it is true and false.<sup>946</sup>

+: Now a curse upon Because and his kin! May Because be accursèd for ever!

–: If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought.

+: If Power asks why, then is Power weakness.

–: Also reason is a lie; for there is a factor infinite & unknown; & all their words are skew-wise.<sup>947</sup>

*The King then looks straight ahead, the head tipped slightly upwards to expose the neck.*<sup>948</sup>

+: Strain forth thine Intelligence, O man, for thus thy reason shall at last break down.

–: As the fetter is struck from a slave's throat.<sup>949</sup>

*The garotte is removed from the King's throat.*<sup>950</sup>

+: Balance against each thought its exact opposite!

946 This exchange comes from *The Book of Lies*, chapter 31, entitled “The Garotte.”

947 *Liber AL*, II:28-32.

948 The neck is the place of Daath, “Knowledge,” that is the crown of the Ruach but also what prevents passageway to the Abyss.

949 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 31.

950 Crowley writes in his commentary to chapter 31 of *The Book of Lies*, “As soon as the reason is vanquished, the garotte is removed; then the influence of the supernals (Kether, Chokmah, Binah), no longer inhibited by Daath, can descend upon Tiphareth, where the human will is situated, and flood it with the ineffable light.”



–: For the Marriage of these is the Annihilation of Illusion.<sup>951</sup>

QUEEN: The Oracle of the Gods is the Child-Voice of Love in thine own Soul! hear thou it!

*She pauses briefly.*

QUEEN: Heed not the Siren-Voice of Sense, or the Phantom-Voice of Reason: rest in Simplicity, and listen to the Silence!<sup>952</sup>

*The King gives the Sign of Silence. + and – move to the sides of the King, allowing him passage into the Lower Kingdom.<sup>953</sup> The King proceeds to the East and passes through the Veil.*

*END SCENE. The congregants chant “ABRAHADABRA.” MUSIC: Gustav Holst’s “Uranus, the Magician” from op.32, “The Planets.”*

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951 These two lines come from *The Heart of the Master* under the section for Libra, which here represents the balance of the King’s mind.

952 From the section for Gemini in *The Heart of the Master*, which is proper to this scene as being of Gemini.

953 This represents the culmination of Adolescence in the expansion and fortification of the mind/Ruach.

## SCENE II: Cancer.

### The Union of the Upper and Lower Kingdoms, and the Re-ascent of the Man to Kingship.

*SETTING:* The King stands in the West, approaching the Lower Kingdom.<sup>954</sup> The Queen sits enthroned in the East with the Veil open. She appears as the Empress,<sup>955</sup> bearing the Lotus flower and wearing a crown of 12 white flowers;<sup>956</sup> she wears only a pure white robe.<sup>957</sup> The Lotus flower is dying as it has lacked sunlight for it to flourish. The Man approaches and the Queen questions whether he is worthy. + and – stand on either side of the Queen in the sign of Osiris Risen.

*The King walks towards the East.*

+: A man approaches.

–: It is the young King of the Upper Kingdom.

QUEEN: Assure yourselves that he is purified and consecrated.

– approaches the King and touches his forehead, mouth, and chest.<sup>958</sup>

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954 The Lower Kingdom represents the unconscious and therefore the marriage between Kingdoms symbolizes a harmony between the conscious and unconscious self.

955 “Atu III: The Empress.” The Queen is the Empress, the Beloved, bearing the Lotus of femininity.

956 These 12 white flowers are the Earthly reflection of the High Priestess’ crown of 12 stars that is seen in the Winter Solstice ceremony, showing the identity of Queen and Priestess.

957 This reflects the fact that she is, at this point, the “Virgin, pure, without spot” from the Gnostic Mass who will be uplifted by the Priest to become the Queen/Mother. It also is a reference to Revelation 19:8, “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteous acts of saints.”

958 The forehead represents thought, the mouth represents speech, and the chest represents deed or action.

–: He is pure of body and soul.<sup>959</sup>

QUEEN: Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.<sup>960</sup> To the pure, all things are pure.<sup>961</sup>

*+ approaches the King and touches his forehead, mouth, and chest.*

+: He is fervent of body and soul.<sup>962</sup>

QUEEN: Blessed are they that seek God with the whole heart and walk in his ways.<sup>963</sup> The fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.<sup>964</sup>

*The Queen approaches the King and touches his chest with her left hand.*

QUEEN: Καθαρος!<sup>965</sup>

*+ touches the King's right arm with his right hand.*

+: Fortis!<sup>966</sup>

*– touches the King's left arm with her left hand.*

–: TAN!<sup>967</sup>

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959 Adapted from the Gnostic Mass.

960 Matthew 5:8.

961 Titus 1:15.

962 Adapted from the Gnostic Mass.

963 Adapted from Psalm 119:2-3.

964 James 5:16.

965 Pronounced “ka-tha-rah’s.” Καθαρος or “katharos” is Greek for “purity,” which pertains to the 6<sup>th</sup> Sephirah of Tiphareth, or Sol, in the Heart. As Crowley writes in the 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, “This Adept guards Tiphareth and tests the heart (which pertains thereto) for its purity. (Καθαρος = pure).”

966 Fortis is Latin for “strength” or “strong,” which pertains to the 5<sup>th</sup> Sephirah of Geburah or Mars. As Crowley writes in the 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, “Fortis means strong.”

967 Pronounced “tahn.” TAN is Enochian for “justice” or “mercy,” which pertains to the

*The Queen touches the King's head with her right hand.*

QUEEN: Samajh!<sup>968</sup>

*The Queen, +, and – step back from the King.*

QUEEN: To what end do you journey into this Lower Kingdom?

KING: To seek you, the Daughter of the King, that you may become my bride and be set upon the Throne of my Mother.

QUEEN: By what power do you approach my Lower Kingdom to take me as your bride?

*The King raises his Lance.*<sup>969</sup>

KING: By the power of the lifted lance!<sup>970</sup>

*+ and – both give the Hailing sign of the Magician.*<sup>971</sup> *The Lotus is transformed, blooming, and beautiful. The Queen holds it up, looks at it, and recognizing the Man's authority and right as the King, gives the Hailing sign of the Magician as well.*

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4<sup>th</sup> Sephirah of Chesed, or Jupiter. The 17<sup>th</sup> Aethyr is named "TAN" and within the Aethyr it is said, "TAN is that which transformeth judgment into justice. BAL is the sword, and TAN the balances... this word TAN meaneth mercy." Crowley comments thereupon, "TAN is given in above as meaning the Balances. Thus... the truth of Justice is Mercy."

968 Pronounced "sah-mahj." Samajh means "understanding" in Sanskrit, which pertains to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sephirah of Binah. All the previous words (purity, strength, mercy, and understanding) all come from *The Vision and the Voice*, 15<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

969 This is an invocation of the King's Solar-Phallic power, an assertion of his having obtained the sexual-procreative powers of maturity.

970 From the Gnostic Mass.

971 The sign of Life (II°) that is given in the Gnostic Mass.

+: It beams!

–: It burns!

QUEEN: It blooms!<sup>972</sup>

*The Queen sets the Lotus on the altar in the East and clothes the King in a scarlet or red robe/tabard.<sup>973</sup> In the center of the robe is a golden cross; above the cross is written, “ΒΛΑΣΦΗΜΙΑ”<sup>974</sup> and at the groin is a sun.<sup>975</sup>*

QUEEN: Who is like unto thee? Who is able to make war with thee?<sup>976</sup> Blessing unto the name of the Beast, for thou hast let loose a mighty flood of fire from his manhood, and from his womanhood hast thou let loose a mighty flood of water.

*She turns and speaks to the People.*

QUEEN: Great is the Beast that cometh forth like a lion, the servant of the Star and of the Snake. He is the Eternal one; He is the Almighty one. Blessed are they upon whom he shall look with favour, for nothing shall stand before his face. Accursed are they upon whom he shall look with derision, for nothing shall stand before his face... Who shall strive with his might? Hath he not the spear of the Warrior Lord of the Sun? Who shall contend with him? Who shall lift himself up against him? For the latchet of

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972 This exchange comes from *The Vision and the Voice*, 5<sup>th</sup> Aethyr. It refers to the Rose-Cross.

973 This goes over the white robe, virtually identical to the Priestess clothing the Priest in the radiance or ambience of the flame of the Sun at the beginning of the Gnostic Mass. This signifies his ascent to Kingship and being Lord on Earth.

974 Revelation 13:1.

975 A symbol of the masculine-generative power.

976 Adapted from Revelation 13:4 where it refers to the Beast.

his sandal is more than the helmet of the Most High.<sup>977</sup> The Beast whereon I shall ride is the Lord of the City of the Pyramids!<sup>978</sup> By your might as King of the earth, you shall cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark.<sup>979</sup>

*The King gives the Mark of the Beast<sup>980</sup> to the People. The King returns and then clothes the Queen in a green robe/tabard, being Venus the Beloved; in the center of the robe is a silver circle;<sup>981</sup> just above this is written, "MYSTHPION"<sup>982</sup> and at the groin is a moon.<sup>983</sup>*

KING: Beautiful art thou, O Babalon, and desirable, for thou hast given thyself to everything that liveth, and thy weakness hath subdued their strength. For in this union thou dost understand. Therefore art thou called Understanding, O Babalon, Lady of the Night!

*He turns and speaks to the People.*

KING: This is the Mystery of Babalon, the Mother of abominations, and this is the mystery of her adulteries, for she hath yielded up herself to everything that liveth, and hath become a partaker in its mystery. And

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977 Adapted from *The Vision and the Voice*, 16<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

978 *The Vision and the Voice*, 12<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

979 Revelation 13:16.

980 This Mark of the Beast is also the Mark of Cain, i.e. the mark of initiation. The people receiving this mark refers to  $6^\circ=5^\square$  in Geburah, the martial expansion of power to the kingdoms of the earth, the leading and enlightening of others. It also refers to the attainment of the Grade of Lover whereof it is said in the 13<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, "The lover giveth his life unto the work among men." The Mark of the Beast can either be rubber stamp bearing the Mark of the Beast (either Sol-Luna with two testes upon the heptagram, or the Cross-in-the-Circle) pressed onto the hands of the People, or it can also be a coin or some other talisman bearing the same or some cognate symbol.

981 The silver circle of the Queen complements the golden cross of the King, together they form the Rose-Cross or Lingam-Yoni.

982 Revelation 17:5.

983 A symbol of the feminine-generative power.

because she hath made herself the servant of each, therefore is she become the mistress of all. Not as yet canst thou comprehend her glory.

*The King turns back to the Queen.*

KING: O Babalon, Babalon, thou mighty Mother, that ridest upon the crowned beast, let me be drunken upon the wine of thy fornications; let thy kisses wanton me even unto death!<sup>984</sup>

*END SCENE. Congregants repeatedly intone “ABRAHADABRA” in between scenes. MUSIC: The first part of Tchaikovsky's Op.45 “Capriccio Italiano,” stopping before ~1:30.*

### SCENE III: Leo.

#### The Marriage of King and Queen, and the Conception of the Demi-God Redeemer.

*SETTING: The King and Queen are in the East in front of the Veil and below the dais. The Queen stands to the left and the King stands to the right.*<sup>985</sup>

– bears a Chalice, different from the one used earlier for purification, to the King and Queen, and + fills this with wine or champagne.

+: Wisdom is the Man.

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984 *The Vision and the Voice*, 12<sup>th</sup> Aethyr. Note that the original text has “Babylon” because the correct spelling as “Babalon” was not revealed until the 10<sup>th</sup> Aethyr. The term is switched to “Babalon” in this ritual, for To Mega Therion discovered the true spelling of Her name for us.

985 That is, the King stands in the place of Chesed (the Beast) and the Queen stands in the place of Geburah (Babalon) on the Tree of Life. The path between them is that of Leo to which is attributed the Tarot trump “Atu XI: Lust” that depicts Babalon astride the Beast.

–: And Understanding the Woman.<sup>986</sup>

*The wine is shared between the King and Queen as is traditionally seen at marriages.<sup>987</sup> The King then leads the Queen up the dais to the East where he stands on the right and the Queen stands on the left.<sup>988</sup> The King and Queen face one another; the Queen holds the Lance with her right hand that is also in the King's right hand, and the King holds the Chalice in his left hand that is also in the Queen's left hand (right hands over left), forming a lemniscate, a symbol of interlocked opposites and infinity.*

*MUSIC: Fade in Tchaikovsky's Op.45 "Capriccio Italiano," starting from approximately ~1:45.*

+ : Hallelujah, for the Lord omnipotent reigneth!<sup>989</sup>

–: Hallelujah, for the Lady omnipresent reigneth!

+ : Let us give honor to them!

–: Let us be glad and rejoice!<sup>990</sup>

+ and –: Hallelujah!

*The King then moves to the center of the East, facing outwards, and sits in full-lotus (or cross-legged). He holds the Lance with the point upwards in his right hand. The Queen mounts the King while bearing the Cup<sup>991</sup> in*

986 *The Vision and the Voice*, 12<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

987 This refers to 5°=6□ in Tiphareth.

988 That is, the Queen stands in the place of Binah and the King stands in the place of Chokmah on the Tree of Life. Their elevation shows the change from being Prince/Princess to King/Queen. The path between them is that of Venus, i.e. Supernal Love.

989 Revelation 19:6.

990 Adapted from Revelation 19:7.

991 This is Shiva-Shakti in Hindu imagery and Babalon astride the Beast as seen in "Atu



*her right hand.*

KING and QUEEN: ABRAHADABRA.<sup>992</sup>

*+ and – close the Veil as the song reaches ~3:15 where there is a short break in the music. Fade out music as the Veil is drawn.*

END SCENE.

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XI: Lust” in the Thoth Tarot, which is ruled by Leo. The Rose-Cross is the image of the Supernals reflected below the Abyss. As it says in *The Book of Lies*, chapter 11, “Cast down through The Abyss is the Light, the Rosy Cross, the rapture of Union that destroys, that is The Way. The Rosy Cross is the Ambassador of Pan.”

992 ABRAHADABRA refers to the interlocking unity of opposites, specifically the 5 of the Microcosm with the 6 of the Macrocosm. As it is written in *The Vision and the Voice*, 12<sup>th</sup> Aethyr, “This is the word of double power in the voice of the Master, wherein the Five interpenetrateth the Six.”

## CHAPTER 38

# THE FEASTS OF THE TIMES: A FEAST FOR THE FIRST NIGHT OF THE PROPHET AND HIS BRIDE

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*These are a couple rituals to celebrate the Feasts of the Times mentioned in the Book of the Law. Certain feasts pertain to the anniversaries of important events leading to the reception of the Book of the Law. First of these is the First Night of the Prophet and his Bride, which is dramatically depicted in this chapter. Next are the feasts for the Supreme Ritual and for the Equinox of the Gods. Those feasts are combined into a single dramatic ritual in the next chapter. Neither of these are “official” in any way.*

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### Background

This feast is celebrated on **August 12**, and its primary purpose is to celebrate the anniversary of Crowley’s marriage to Rose that made possible the reception of *The Book of the Law*. Crowley comments, “There should be a special feast on the 12th day of August in every year, since it was the marriage of The Beast which made possible the revelation of the New Law. (This is not an Apology for Marriage. Hard Cases make Bad Law).”<sup>993</sup>

In terms of E.G.C., this ceremony represents the Collect of Marriage, which involves the union of all things, not only the legal proceedings of marriage. In terms of M·:M·:M·:, this ceremony represents II° insofar as this shows the soul “how it may best carry out its

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<sup>993</sup> New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:37.

object in the eucharist of life. It partakes, so to speak, of its own godhead in every action, but especially through the typical sacrament of marriage, understood as the voluntary union of itself with each element of its environment.”<sup>994</sup>

This feast has five scenes that follow the basic 5-act structure. Each scene refers not only to semi-historical events but also to important parts of each star’s journey in accomplishing their Wills:

1. The **first scene** involves Rose, who is the hero of this story and symbolizes each aspirant, and her Father, who symbolizes the “great dragon” of tradition and authority, being a microcosm of the Old Aeon of slave religion in general. This scene symbolizes the oppression of the values of the Old Aeon, both historically as well as individually in terms of the various constraints, beliefs, habits, and values of youth that must be discarded and transcended in the process of growth.
2. The **second scene** involves the arrival of the Beast, who represents Crowley historically and the Holy Guardian Angel of each individual symbolically. Rose confides in the Beast about her arranged marriage and he resolves to marry her to absolve her of her obligation. This represents, more generally, the Trance of Sorrow where the aspirant becomes dissatisfied with the world and is given the motive to start upon the Path of the Great Work.<sup>995</sup>
3. In the **third scene**, Rose is then given a choice to adhere to the security of tradition and authority as symbolized by the Father on the one hand or the Liberty and Light of the path of the Great Work as symbolized by the Beast on the other hand. Rose chooses to follow her own True Will, and leaves with the Beast. This

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994 *Confessions*, chapter 72.

995 Crowley wrote in *Little Essays Towards Truth*, “The Aspiration to become a Master is rooted in the Trance of Sorrow.”

represents every aspirant's choice to begin the journey out of the Darkness of ignorance and into the Light, out of the Old Aeon and into the New. The scenes therefore get more and more comedic as the Laughter of the Child slowly overtakes the Sorrow of the Dying Father.

4. The **fourth scene** involves the marriage of the Beast and Rose. Before being married, the Beast or Holy Guardian Angel teaches that she must be balanced in herself before uniting with him. "Equilibrium is the basis of the Work."<sup>996</sup> The Beast tests Rose in the Four Powers of the Sphinx as a form of acquiring balance or equilibrium of the Four Elements.
5. The **fifth scene** involves the marriage of the Sphinx and Pyramid, Rose and the Beast, which is the act of conception that will eventually lead to the birth of the Child, *The Book of the Law*. This can be seen as symbolically reflective of the task of all individuals in uniting with their Gods or Holy Guardian Angels so they may bring forth their own Word to the world.

## Persons

☿ : **Master of Ceremonies** - Dressed in white robe with yellow stole, i.e. as a Deacon. He performs the role of narrator and conductor of the People.

♃ : **Rose** - Dressed in red/scarlet dress. She performs the role of Rose Kelly who is symbolic of the soul of the aspirant.

♁ : **The Beast** - Dressed in blue/azure. He performs the role of Aleister Crowley who is symbolic of the Holy Guardian Angel/Beast.

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996 *Liber Librae*.

♁: **The Father** - Dressed in black garments or a black robe. He performs the role of the father of Rose who is symbolic of the “great dragon (c.f. *Zarathustra*) of authority, obligation, and the Old Aeon in general.

♁: **The People** - Dressed as they will. They participate when appropriate.

## SCENE I: Rose & her Father

♀: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

♁: Love is the law, love under will.

♀: Upon all that this day unite with love under will let fall success; may strength and skill unite to bring forth ecstasy, and beauty answer beauty.

♁: So mote it be.

♀: In the eucharist of life, the soul partakes of its own godhead in every action, but especially through the typical sacrament of marriage, understood as the voluntary union of itself with each element of its environment. Every mundane marriage is therefore symbolic of the union of the soul and the elements of its world, and – on a higher level – the union of the Adept with her God.

*[pause, focus shifts to ♁ and ♀]*

♀: We are gathered here tonight to celebrate the feast for the first night of the Prophet and his bride, which made possible the revelation of the New Law. We must therefore go back in time, 110 *[change accordingly]* years ago, before Rose and Aleister were married.

*[A pause]*

h̄: My dear Rose, I have tended this garden with careful watch for many seasons. The weeds of temptation have been uprooted so they could not corrupt you; pure waters of the Lord's word were gathered for you to be fed. I have labored for years so that you, my flower, could one day be plucked to be worn as boutonnière.<sup>997</sup> My dear Rose, you are like the red, red rose that's newly sprung in June. O my girl's like the melody that's sweetly played in tune.<sup>998</sup>

⋈: Your words are kind and full of lightness, Father, yet I hear a dark and heavy drone that weighs down my soul.

h̄: What mean thing could possibly besmirch your fair bosom with weight at such a joyous time? I have arranged for you to be married to a noble man, noble and gold-endowed! All the preparations have been made; there is no reason left for you to fret.

⋈: It is just that, my lord. Make no mistake. To you I am bound for life and education. My life and education both taught me how to respect you: you are the lord of duty. I am hitherto your daughter.<sup>999</sup> I wish I could profess such undying duty to my future husband.

h̄: Do you doubt my judgment in selecting a suitor? I have called in every favor to make for the most profitable and secure arrangement for you.

⋈: Yes, profitable and secure, indeed. With that I can agree.

h̄: What else would could one wish for in the future father to one's

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997 A boutonnière is the flower worn by men at formal occasions in general and worn on the chest of a bridegroom in particular.

998 Adapted from Robert Burns' poem, "A Red, Red Rose."

999 Adapted from Shakespeare's *Othello*, Act I, Scene 3, lines 182-185.

children?

⋔: I would that my heart was as well-endowed as my purse.

⋔: A heart requires health, and the greatest health is gained through comfort and security.

⋔: [*aside, said sarcastically about her father*] Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!<sup>1000</sup>

⋔: What is that, my dear?

⋔: Nothing, father, you are kind in your care for me, and you know me well.

⋔: Aye, of course I know you well, and you are a worthy daughter for honoring your father. A thought almost occurred that you might be balking at my carefully cultivated arrangements.

*[The father walks off mumbling to himself]*

⋔: Nobody knows this little Rose... I might a pilgrim be.<sup>1001</sup>

## SCENE II: The Arrival of the Beast

♀: Later that night, Rose attended a gathering organized by her brother Gerald Kelly. There she met the Beast in whom she confided her secret suffering.

⋔: ...and he is arriving from America in no less than a week. Though I

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1000 The first line of a sonnet by John Keats, which Crowley notes in his *Confessions* (chapter 46) is a line that Rose often quoted.

1001 Adapted from Emily Dickinson.

am indebted to my father through duty, I cannot in good faith accept the suitor arranged for me. I don't love him; I barely know him! Oh, what a troubling song my heart-strings play!

☉: My fair Rose, duty that is imposed by others is naught but tyranny. A rose is rightly colored with love's strong pulse, never by the bloody stains from traitorous refusal of your soul's decrees. [*Rose is distressed*] Don't upset yourself about such a trifle.<sup>1002</sup> Luckily for such a damsel as yourself, I am pledged through a solemn oath to battle all forms of oppression.

☽: Such wise benevolence and incorruptible justice<sup>1003</sup> you display! What must I do to acquire your aid?

☉: All you must do is marry me.<sup>1004</sup> I will absolve you of your obligations, and you will be responsible only for your own conduct.

☽: But my father will never accept our treacherous tryst!

☉: I would only that your fate were free, not for any benediction of paternity.

☽: Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art!<sup>1005</sup>

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1002 A direct quotation of what Crowley claims he said to Rose in his *Confessions*, chapter 45.

1003 A reference to *Confessions*, chapter 45, where Crowley writes, "There is something in my character which makes people confide in me. I think the bottom of it is my chastity. They instinctively understand that I have no personal axe to grind; that I shall display a wise benevolence and incorruptible justice, being detached from every form of desire."

1004 Another adapted quotation of what Crowley claims he said to Rose in his *Confessions*, chapter 45.

1005 The first line of a sonnet by John Keats, which Crowley notes in his *Confessions* (chapter 46) is a line that Rose often quoted. It is here said truly, to be contrasted with its sarcastic tone when directed at Rose's father in the previous scene.



☉: Ah, you speak in sweet poetry that bewitches even the Beast! Yes, we will confront your father soon, when the sun next rises! There is a budding morrow in midnight<sup>1006</sup> ... who knows what species of fortune may flower?

### SCENE III: The Confrontation

☿: The next morning, Rose and the Beast went to confront her father.

*[Rose enters the Father's room]*

♠: Good morning! What signs do your petals unfold to tell today, young Rose?<sup>1007</sup>

♠: Father, my lord, I have come with my bridegroom.

♠: Here already? What great fortune! Bring him in!

*[The Beast enters]*

♠: What? Who is this ghastly beast of a man?

☉: Great and wild Beast to you, good sir. Although my friends may call me Little Sunshine.<sup>1008</sup> I am to wed your Rose today.

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1006 From Keats' poem, "Ode to Homer."

1007 An obscure reference to the first lines of *AHA!*, "Master, ere the ruby Dawn / Gild the dew of leaf and lawn, / Bidding the petals to uncloset / Of heaven's imperishable Rose, / Brave heralds, banners flung afar / Of the lone and secret star."

1008 Crowley tried to explain this in court when he testified in a 1934 lawsuit. He was asked, "Did you take to yourself the designation of 'the Beast 666'?" "Yes." "Do you call yourself the 'Master Therion'?" "Yes." "What does 'Therion' mean?" "Great wild beast." "Do these titles convey a fair impression of your practice and outlook on life?" "It depends on what they mean." "The Great Wild Beast and the Beast 666 are out of the Apocalypse?" "It only means sunlight; 666 is the number of the sun. You can call me 'Little Sunshine.'"

℔: What sins have you committed to be indebted to such a devil?

⋈: I owe no debt but undying gratitude. I marry him of my own free will!

℔: How dare you! Thou shalt honor thy father and thy mother!<sup>1009</sup>

⋈: Ah, Father, every scale on your serpentine skin glitters a golden “Thou shalt.” The values of ages long-since past are etched in your scales. You are the great dragon that I am no longer inclined to call Lord. “Thou shalt,” you say, and “Thou shalt not.” To that, this man lent me a portion of his lion-spirit and now I say to you, “I will.”<sup>1010</sup>

℔: You are indebted to me for life and education, remember? I own you and you will marry as arranged!

⊙: There is no property in human flesh.<sup>1011</sup>

⋈: I own myself and answer only to myself!

℔: O Rose, you are sick. The invisible worm that flies in the night in the howling storm has found out thy bed of crimson joy, and his dark secret love does your life destroy.<sup>1012</sup>

⊙: O Rose! Who dares to name thee! I can see you no longer roseate now, nor soft, nor sweet, but pale, and hard, and dry, as stubble-wheat. Kept twenty-eight years in a drawer...

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1009 One of the Ten Commandments of the Old Aeon.

1010 This entire speech is adapted from the first chapter of *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, “The Three Metamorphoses of the Spirit.”

1011 Adapted from Crowley’s *Liber Aleph*, chapter 34, where he writes, “There shall be no property in human flesh.”

1012 Adapted from William Blake’s poem “The Sick Rose.”

♪ : Twenty-nine!<sup>1013</sup>

☉ : Kept twenty-nine years in a drawer, I'm not surprised your name shames thee.<sup>1014</sup>

℥ : Where is the modest woman I raised so carefully?

☉ : The veil of the modest woman is the veil of sorrow and the pall of death! She has torn down that lying spectre of the centuries and veils not her vices in virtuous words any more!<sup>1015</sup>

℥ : I fear that my own shock and sorrow have paralyzed me. [*He leans against a table or bed*] Go now, Rose. Go now, you miserable Beast! I must lie down and hopefully awake from this horrible nightmare.

[*Rose starts to exit*]

☉ : A Woman under Tabu is loathsome to Life, detested by her fellows, and wretched in herself.<sup>1016</sup> To me, a woman is Herself, absolute, original, independent, free, self-justified, exactly as a man is.<sup>1017</sup>

♪ : [*Rose grabs the Beast*] That is enough! Indignation may stir the dragon out of his cave and we will miss our chance. Let's go!

[*They exit*]

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1013 Rose was 29-years-old when she married Crowley, who was 28.

1014 Adapted from Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem "A Dead Rose."

1015 Adapted from *Liber AL*, II:52.

1016 Adapted from the New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:52.

1017 Adapted from the New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:55.

## SCENE IV: The Equilibration

♀: Having chosen liberty over obligation, Rose set upon a dangerous path. Before the marriage, the Beast described the preliminaries that would need to be undertaken.

⊙: Through my extensive travels in the lands of mysticism and magick, I have fashioned myself four-fold as a proud Pyramid. My sides are life, love, liberty, and light, and my apex is poised to receive the kisses of the stars.<sup>1018</sup> Being that I am such a monument of man, I will have no bride but a spotless Sphinx.<sup>1019</sup>

♃: Ah, I know this riddle!<sup>1020</sup>

⊙: This is no riddle as there is no sure solution. I speak of the four powers of the Sphinx. One must find and learn and re-learn these: to know, to will, to dare, and to keep silence.

♃: Though these ideas are new to me, I pray that you would test my present ability.

⊙: Fine then, let's jump right in! I will put four questions before you and let's see if you sink or swim.

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1018 A reference to *Liber Aleph*, chapter 160, where Crowley writes, "Now then at last art thou made ready to confront the Pyramid, if thou art established as a Sphinx. For It also hath the foursquare Base of Law, and the Four Triangles of Light, Life, Love and Liberty for its Sides, that meet in a Point of Perfection that is Hadith, poised to the Kiss of Nuith."

1019 Crowley writes in *Liber Aleph*, chapter 152, "Now then this Sphinx, being perfect in true Balance, yet taketh the Aspect of the Feminine Principle that so She may be partner of the Pyramid, that is the Phallus, pure Image of Our Father the Sun, the Unity Creative."

1020 A reference to the Riddle of the Sphinx to which Oedipus famously gave a solution with the answer, "Man."

⋈ : Although I've been cloistered, I believe I've still learned my fair share. Do your worst, "you miserable Beast!"

⊙ : First, what is true knowledge?

⋈ : True knowledge is not known but what's felt as innately right, the heart's subtle understanding is one's sole guiding light.<sup>1021</sup>

⊙ : A bit sentimental and a bit unclear, but I'll accept your answer and press on, my dear. Now, tell me, what is true will?

⋈ : When the heart's understanding is wed to the brain's bright wisdom, the foot walks with a solemn swiftness towards the Lord's kingdom.<sup>1022</sup>

⊙ : Though harmony of the soul's faculties is the prerequisite thereof, you will one day find that the star you seek is within, not above.<sup>1023</sup> Now, pray tell, what is true daring?

⋈ : A will that desires demons and dangers on all sides,<sup>1024</sup> not sett'ling in security of what comfort decides.

⊙ : Though father Friedrich<sup>1025</sup> said living dangerously's the secret of

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1021 This refers to the distinction between Knowledge which is below the Abyss (Daath), and Understanding which is above the Abyss (Binah).

1022 Qabalistically, "Wisdom" is Chokmah, "Understanding" is Binah, and "the Lord's kingdom" is Malkuth.

1023 A reference to Crowley's poem "One Star in Sight" where the last stanza is "To man I come, the number of / A man my number, Lion of Light; / I am The Beast whose Law is Love. / Love under will, his royal right— / Behold within, and not above, / One star in sight!"

1024 A reference to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, chapter 7, where Nietzsche writes, "The atmosphere rare and pure, danger near and the spirit full of a joyful wickedness: thus are things well matched. I want to have goblins about me, for I am courageous. The courage which scareth away ghosts, createth for itself goblins – it wanteth to laugh."

1025 A reference to Friedrich Nietzsche who Crowley claimed was a Prophet of Thelema and who is listed as a Saint in the Gnostic Mass.

success,<sup>1026</sup> even Liberty's greatest warriors require repose and recess. Your answers are satisfactory but I require a final proof; now with Pontius Pilate<sup>1027</sup> I ask most solemnly of you... What is Truth?

*[Rose takes a breath with her finger in the air to give another answer, but she hesitates, looks puzzled, and puts her forefinger to her lips in deep thought]*

☉: Wise you are, indeed! Wise beyond your years! Beyond my highest hopes you've dispelled my fears. Who knew that a lotus and not a rose sprung, from the dark mire of your education's dung, that your roots in blackened depths produce fruit fresh and new, that your petals hide Harpocrates in his egg of blue!<sup>1028</sup>

*[The Beast laughs]*

Ah! this lyrical exchange has quelled all my insecurities about this arrangement. Let us defy convention and pre-emptively consummate our marriage, at least until the evening star arises<sup>1029</sup> to preside over the proper legalities.

*[They exit]*

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1026 Adapted from Crowley's reference to Nietzsche in *Liber Aleph*, chapter 46, where he writes, "Yet this I charge thee with my Might: Live Dangerously. Was not this the Word of thine Uncle Friedrich Nietzsche?" This is itself a reference to what Nietzsche wrote in his book *The Gay Science*, "For believe me: the secret for harvesting from existence the greatest fruitfulness and greatest enjoyment is – to live dangerously."

1027 Pontius Pilate asked Christ "What is Truth?" as in John 18:38.

1028 Harpocrates or Hoor-paar-kraat is the god of Silence who is often depicted with his finger on his lips. He is also, in the Western Hermetic tradition, often depicted in an egg of blue or Spirit on top of a lotus.

1029 The evening star is actually the planet Venus, which is the planet of Love and Union.

## SCENE V: The Marriage

[♁ stands behind the Beast and Rose but not out of sight, presiding as the priest for the marriage]

☉: For the many years of your youth, you have borne the weight of tradition and custom as a camel. You then defied law and convention as a lion, replacing the “Thou shalt” of tradition with the “I will” of independence. Now, having created freedom for yourself, you must become as a little Child,<sup>1030</sup> and find your own way with a holy Yea unto one’s new life.

♃: What a heavy burden has been lifted from me! I can feel the lightness of liberty that this new life allows!

☉: On the contrary, my dear Rose, for freedom is the greatest restriction of all. Having extricated yourself from the web of obligations to others, one must re-affirm with equal intensity one’s duty to oneself. Though the Child of the spirit is free from all convention, she is bound with equal obligation to his own law. You must find your true destiny, the purpose on this earth for which you were fitted, and adhere solely to it. This is the apotheosis of Freedom but it is also the strictest possible bond,<sup>1031</sup> for having begun to tread the path of the Great Work, you are bound to continue walking thereupon and never swerve therefrom.

♃: What a strange and terrible oath I have unknowingly taken!

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1030 A reference to (1) Matthew 18:3 (“And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven”), (2) to the “Three Metamorphoses of the Spirit” in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*, and (3) to the fact that the New Aeon is that of the Crowned and Conquering Child of Horus.

1031 A quotation from *Liber II: The Message of the Master Therion*, of which this entire speech is an adaptation or paraphrase.

⊙: Terrible, indeed, the most daunting task that one can possibly attempt. Yet it is also the path to complete peace, true wisdom, and perfect happiness.

⋈: What is my goal upon this long and winding road of attainment?

⊙: One must never ask or ponder about the final goal but always focus one's energies upon taking the Next Step.<sup>1032</sup>

⋈: My love for you is undeniable and unconquerable. Lead me to take this Next Step!

⊙: Love is indeed the right motive and fuel for this path, yet your marriage to me is but a symbol of your true goal. Even as you wed me today, you must seek the inward marriage of the soul with your God. With all the love you love me today, it must be inflamed a thousandfold towards the attainment of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Though I vow to guide you in whatever way may be of use, you must do the work and it is only you that may take the final plunge. No one can ever do that for you, nor can any man ever know the Name of another's God. It is the most universal and unique of all goals, it is the Holy of Holies.<sup>1033</sup>

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1032 The Next Step is a reference to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel. Crowley wrote in *The Vision and the Voice* that he "became aware of his True Will, of the purpose for which he had undertaken Incarnation. And this was expressed thus: to aid Mankind to take the Next Step. And at the time he understood this as meaning: to lead them to aspire to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel."

1033 A paraphrase of "One Star in Sight" where Crowley writes, "It is impossible to lay down precise rules by which a man may attain to the knowledge and conversation of His Holy Guardian Angel; for that is the particular secret of each one of us; as secret not to be told or even divined by any other, whatever his grade. It is the Holy of Holies, whereof each man is his own High Priest, and none knoweth the Name of his brother's God, or the Rite that invokes Him."



☽ : I vow to attain the Knowledge and Conversation of my Holy Guardian Angel. Nothing will deflect me from this most holy and austere obligation.

☉ : May this ring be a seal of your solemn oath, forever reminding you of the promise you made today.

[☿ approaches to stand between the Beast and Rose]

☿ : With your vows being made, I now proclaim you man and wife!

[The Beast whispers in ☿'s ear]

☿ : Excuse me... I now proclaim you Beast and whore! You may kiss the harlot.

☉ : It is accomplished, the marriage is complete. What Child this union may bring we know not yet. There are many events in the womb of time which will be delivered.<sup>1034</sup> For our honeymoon we will travel to the land of the Sun. To Egypt, where the other Sphinx and Pyramid stand as we now do!

[The Beast and Rose exit]

☿ : It was on this day of August 12, the first night of the Prophet and his bride, that the events were set in motion which would lead to the revelation of the New Aeon several months later with the reception of *The Book of the Law*. Even as Rose's marriage to the Beast led to the birth of the Child of the New Aeon, so too must each individual come to unite with their own Gods and give their Words to the world. So mote it be.

[Applause]

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1034 A quotation from *Othello*, Act I, Scene 3, lines 369-370.

## The Feast

☿: But ye, o my people, rise up & awake!

[☿ motions for all to stand]

Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy & beauty! There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times.<sup>1035</sup> Tonight there is a feast for the first night of the Prophet and his Bride!<sup>1036</sup>

[☿ motions for the feast to be brought out and for everyone to sit at the table or stand around the table with food]

Aye! feast! rejoice! there is no dread hereafter. There is the dissolution, and eternal ecstasy in the kisses of Nu.<sup>1037</sup>

[☽ stands at the head of the table and knocks 3-5-3]

☽: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

♣: What is thy Will?

☽: It is my Will to eat and to drink.

♣: To what end?

☽: That I may fortify my body thereby.

♣: To what end?

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1035 *Liber AL*, II:34-36.

1036 Adapted from *Liber AL*, II:37.

1037 *Liber AL*, II:44.

☽: That I may celebrate the feast of the first night of the Prophet and his Bride.

♣: To what end?

☽: That I may accomplish the Great Work.

♣: Love is the law, love under will.

*[☽ knocks once]*

☽: Now please direct your attention to the Beast.

☉: I'd like to make a toast, so everyone please get a drink.

*[☿ and other appointed helpers give everyone a glass and pours drinks]*

☉: First, as always, to Nuit, our Lady of the Stars!

♣: To Nuit!

☉: To Rose, who played an integral part in the revelation of the New Aeon!

♣: To Rose!

☉: To the prophet of the lovely star, the Beast!

♣: To the Beast!

☉: To our great Thelemic fraternity, the O.T.O.!<sup>1038</sup>

♁: To O.T.O.!

☉: To [*insert local body name*]!

♁: To [*insert local body name*]!

☉: And finally, to all of us!

♁: To all of us!

☉: You may now feast and rejoice!

*Finis.*

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1038 Or whatever group is currently gathered.



*The First Kiss of the Lady of Initiation*  
is based on the 24<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice*

## CHAPTER 39

# THE FEASTS OF THE TIMES: A FEAST FOR THE SUPREME RITUAL AND A FEAST FOR THE EQUINOX OF THE GODS

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### Background

This dramatic ritual combines two feasts, the feast for the Supreme Ritual and the feast for the Equinox of the Gods. The Equinox of the Gods is celebrated on the equinox and – since the Supreme Ritual is celebrated on March 20 – they will virtually never fall more than 2 days apart from one another, at least for the vernal equinox. Since they fall close together on the calendar, since they share a single line in *The Book of the Law*, and since they are both related to the shift from the Old Aeon to the New, I have combined them into a single ritual and feast.

The Supreme Ritual celebrates the invocation of Horus that was performed on March 20, 1904 and the Equinox of the Gods celebrates the changing of the Aeons from Old, where Osiris ruled, to the New, where Horus now rules. Crowley comments, “The Supreme Ritual is the Invocation of Horus, which brought about the Opening of the New Aeon. The date is March 20. The Equinox of the Gods is the term used to describe the Beginning of a New Aeon, or a New Magical Formula. It should be celebrated at every Equinox.”<sup>1039</sup>

This combined feast has five parts. The first four parts or scenes show important semi-historical events that are relevant to the revelation of the New Aeon, and the last scene involves audience participation in a renunciation of the slave-ideals of the Old Aeon:

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1039 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:40.

- The **first scene** goes back approximately 2,600 years to the time when the Stele of Revealing was created as a funerary stele for Ankh-af-na-khonsu. Since this Stele is an important symbol for Thelema, this scene involves a reading of the content of the Stele of Revealing. There is then a list of the seven Magi that have come to Earth and give their Words since that time. This scene therefore serves to educate the People about the Stele of Revealing and the Magi of the past.
- The **second scene** jumps forward to March of 1904 when Crowley tried to invoke the sylphs, the elementals of Air, through the preliminary invocation of the Goetia (also known as the “Bornless Ritual”), which put Rose into a trance who has vague messages that foreshadow the coming of the New Aeon. Crowley then questions Rose to ascertain the accuracy of her message. He then leads Rose through the Boulaq Museum in Cairo where she points to Stele #666, the Stele of Revealing.
- In the **third scene**, Crowley performs the Invocation of Horus, which “brought about the Opening of the New Aeon.”<sup>1040</sup>
- The **fourth scene** dramatically re-enacts the Equinox of the Gods itself. Osiris’s seat in the East is taken by Ra-Hoor-Khuit and the New Aeon is established.
- The **fifth scene** involves the renunciation of the slave-gods by everyone present who wills to do such. Crowley wrote in a letter to Karl Germer, “You can take outsiders; but everyone who has anything to do with us at all must make a formal renunciation of ideas denounced in AL 49-56. Cap III.”<sup>1041</sup> He also wrote to Frater

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1040 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:40.

1041 Letter from Aleister Crowley to Karl Germer, March 14, 1942.

Achad, "I am inclined to propose that you should prepare a formula, to be presented at your lectures, by which any person can publicly renounce the errors of Christianity and so on, and accept the Law. Such a person should at that time burn a copy of his old "sacred book", Bible, Mrs. Eddy, or what not, and be marked by you with The Mark of The Beast, to wit, the Acid on the Pulse of the Left Wrist."<sup>1042</sup> The renunciation is based on rituals developed by T Polyphilus and T Omphalos.

## Persons

☩ : **Master of Ceremonies** - Dressed in white robe with yellow stole, i.e. as a Deacon. He performs the role of narrator and conductor of the People.

A: **Ankh-af-na-khonsu** - Dressed in Egyptian garb, or a plain white robe.

⚡ : **The Magi** - Dressed in white robes or in garments proper to the culture of the Saints.

☉ : **The Beast** - Dressed in blue/azure. He performs the role of Aleister Crowley.

☽ : **Rose** - Dressed in red/scarlet dress. She performs the role of Rose Crowley.

♁ : **Osiris/ Jesus** - Dressed as Osiris, as Jesus, or in a black robe, representing the Aeon of Osiris.

♂ : **Horus** - Dressed as Ra-Hoor-Khuit, or in scarlet and gold.

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1042 Letter from Aleister Crowley to Charles Stansfield Jones, a.k.a., Frater Achad, April 1, 1919.



♁: **Ma'at** - Dressed as Ma'at, representing the Aeon of Ma'at/Thmaist in the future.

♁ : **Isis** - Dressed as Isis, representing the Aeon of Isis of the past.

♁: **The People** - Dressed as they will. They participate when appropriate.

## **PART I:** **Ankh-af-na-khonsu in Egypt & the Seven Magi**

*[☿ stands in the East]*

☿ : Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

♁: Love is the law, love under will.

☿ : We are gathered here tonight to celebrate the feast for the Supreme Ritual and the feast for the Equinox of the Gods. Crowley wrote, “The Supreme Ritual is the Invocation of Horus, which brought about the Opening of the New Aeon. The date is March 20. The Equinox of the Gods is the term used to describe the Beginning of a New Aeon, or a New Magical Formula. It should be celebrated at every Equinox.” To understand the Supreme Ritual and the Equinox of the Gods, we must go back in time over two and a half millenia.

*[He says the following while moving to the West where A stands in Osiris Risen in front of the Tomb]*

☿ : Over 2,500 years before the reception of The Book of the Law , Ankh-af-na-khonsu, a high priest of Mentu, lived in the Egyptian city known as Thebes. As was customary, a funerary stele was prepared for Ankh-af-na-khonsu.

*[ ♀ moves behind A and holds up the front of the Stele over A 's head]*

On the front it said:

**A:** Above, the gemmed azure is  
The naked splendour of Nuit;  
She bends in ecstasy to kiss  
The secret ardours of Hadit.  
The winged globe, the starry blue,  
Are mine, O Ankh-af-na-khonsu!

I am the Lord of Thebes, and I  
The inspired forth-speaker of Mentu;  
For me unveils the veiled sky,  
The self-slain Ankh-af-na-khonsu  
Whose words are truth. I invoke,  
I greet Thy presence, O Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

Unity uttermost showed!  
I adore the might of Thy breath,  
Supreme and terrible God,  
Who makest the gods and death  
To tremble before Thee:  
– I, I adore thee!

Appear on the throne of Ra!  
Open the ways of the Khu!  
Lighten the ways of the Ka!  
The ways of the Khabs run through  
To stir me or still me!  
Aum! let it kill me!

The light is mine; its rays consume Me:  
I have made a secret door  
Into the House of Ra and Tum,  
Of Khephra and of Ahathoor.  
I am thy Theban, O Mentu,  
The prophet Ankh-af-na-khonsu!

By Bes-na-Maut my breast I beat;  
By wise Ta-Nech I weave my spell.  
Show thy star-splendour, O Nuit!  
Bid me within thine House to dwell,  
O winged snake of light, Hadit!  
Abide with me, Ra-Hoor-Khuit!

*[ ȝ then holds the back of the Stele up]*

ȝ : And on the back it said:

**A:** Saith of Mentu the truth-telling brother  
Who was master of Thebes from his birth:  
O heart of me, heart of my mother!  
O heart which I had upon earth!  
Stand not thou up against me a witness!  
Oppose me not, judge, in my quest!  
Accuse me not now of unfitness  
Before the Great God, the dread Lord of the West!  
For I fastened the one to the other  
With a spell for their mystical girth,  
The earth and the wonderful West,  
When I flourished, o earth, on thy breast!

The dead man Ankh-f-n-khonsu  
Saith with his voice of truth and calm:  
O thou that hast a single arm!  
O thou that glitterest in the moon!  
I weave thee in the spinning charm;  
I lure thee with the billowy tune.  
The dead man Ankh-f-n-khonsu  
Hath parted from the darkling crowds,  
Hath joined the dwellers of the light,  
Opening Duaut, the star-abodes,  
Their keys receiving. The dead man Ankh-f-n-khonsu  
Hath made his passage into night,  
His pleasure on the earth to do Among the living.

*[ϝ then steps away, gives the Stele to A, and A backs into the Tomb, which is then covered]*

ϝ: There was then great darkness as the Aeon of Osiris took hold upon the earth. Throughout these times of darkness, the Secret Chiefs send forth certain men to bring Light to the world know as Magi. There are many magical teachers but in recorded history we have scarcely had a dozen Magi in the technical sense of the word. They may be recognized by the fact that their message may be formulated as a single word, which word must be such that it overturns all existing beliefs and codes.<sup>1043</sup> The essential characteristic of the Grade is that its possessor utters a Creative Magical Word, which transforms the planet.<sup>1044</sup> He then is called the Logos, or Logos Aionos, that is to say, the Word of the Aeon or Age, because he is verily that Word.<sup>1045</sup>

*[Pause]*

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1043 *Confessions*, chapter 49.

1044 "One Star in Sight."

1045 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 68.

First, there was Lao-Tzu, whose word was TAO.

*[Lao-Tzu comes out with a candle and a copy of the Tao Teh Ching. He places the Tao Teh King on the High Altar and turns to face the People while holding the candle.]*

This Tao is the true Nature of Things, being itself a Way or Going, that is, a kinetic and not a static Conception. Also He taught this Way of Harmony in Will... So then this Tao is Truth, and the Way of Truth, and therefore was He Logos of His Aeon, and His true Name or Word was Tao.<sup>1046</sup>

⊕ **(Lao-Tzu)**: The Tao that can be spoken is not the eternal Tao. The name that can be named is not the eternal name. The nameless is the origin of Heaven and Earth. The named is the mother of myriad things. Thus, constantly without desire, one observes its essence. Constantly with desire, one observes its manifestations. These two emerge together but differ in name. The unity is said to be the mystery Mystery of mysteries, the door to all wonders.<sup>1047</sup>

*[Lao-Tzu turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

⊕ **(led by ♀)**: So mote it be.

♀: Next came he whom Men call Gotama, or Siddhartha, or the Buddha, and His Word was ANATTA.

*[Siddhartha comes out with a candle and either a statue of Buddha, a copy of sutras, or a copy of the Dhammapada. He places the object on the*

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<sup>1046</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 69.

<sup>1047</sup> Chapter 1 from *Tao Teh Ching*.

*High Altar and turns to face the People while holding the candle.]*

The Root of His whole Doctrine was that there is no Atman, or Soul, as Men ill translate it, meaning a Substance incapable of Change. Thus, He, like Lao-Tze, based all upon a Movement, instead of a fixed Point. And His Way of Truth was Analysis, made possible by great Intention of the Mind toward itself, and that well fortified by certain tempered Rigour of Life. And He most thoroughly explored and Mapped out the Fastnesses of the Mind, and gave the Keys of its Fortresses into the Hand of Man. But of all this the Quintessence is in this one Word ANATTA, because this is not only the foundation and the Result of his whole Doctrine, but the Way of its Work.<sup>1048</sup>

⊕ (**Siddhartha**): There are these two extremes that are not to be indulged in by one who has gone forth. Which two? That which is devoted to sensual pleasure with reference to sensual objects: base, vulgar, common, ignoble, unprofitable; and that which is devoted to self-affliction: painful, ignoble, unprofitable. Avoiding both of these extremes, the middle way realized by the Tathagata — producing vision, producing knowledge — leads to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding.<sup>1049</sup>

*[Siddhartha turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

⊕ (**led by ♀**): So mote it be.

♀ : Next there was Krishna who has Names and Forms innumerable, and we know not His true Human Birth, for His Formula is of the Major Antiquity.

*[Krishna comes out with a candle and a copy of the Bhagavad Gita. He*

<sup>1048</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 70.

<sup>1049</sup> *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, translated by Thanissaro Bhikku.

*places the Bhagavad Gita on the High Altar and turns to face the People while holding the candle.]*

The true Word of Krishna was AUM, importing a Statement of the Truth of Nature.<sup>1050</sup> The word AUM is the sacred Hindu mantra which was the supreme hieroglyph of Truth, a compendium of the Sacred Knowledge. It represents the complete course of sound. Symbolically, this announces the course of Nature as proceeding from free and formless creation through controlled and formed preservation to the silence of destruction. The three sounds are harmonized into one; and thus the word represents the Hindu Trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva; and the operations in the Universe of their triune energy.<sup>1051</sup>

⚡ (**Krishna**): The Supreme Self is eternal, and the visible world including the physical body is transitory. The reality of these two is indeed certainly seen by the seers of truth. The Supreme Self by which all this universe is pervaded is indestructible. No one can destroy the imperishable Self. One who thinks that the Self is a slayer, and the one who thinks Self is slain, are both ignorant. Because Self neither slays nor is slain. The Supreme Self is neither born nor does it die at any time. It does not come into being, or cease to exist. It is unborn, eternal, permanent, and primeval.<sup>1052</sup>

*[Krishna turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

⚡ (led by ☿): So mote it be.

☿: There was also Tahuti, or Thoth, whose word was AMOUN.

*[Tahuti comes out with a candle and a papyrus or a statue of himself. He*

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1050 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 71.

1051 *Magick in Theory and Practice*, chapter 7.

1052 An adaptation of chapter 2 of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

*places the object on the High Altar and turns to face the People while holding the candle.]*

Amoun was “the concealed one” from whom the Hebrews borrowed their holy word “Amen.”<sup>1053</sup> The true Word of Tahuti, AMOUN, therefore made Men to understand their secret Nature, that is, their Unity with their true Selves, or, as they then phrased it, with God.<sup>1054</sup>

⊕ (**Tahuti**): True, without Deceit, certain and most true. As Above, so Below, and as Below, so Above, in the Accomplishment of the Miracle of the One Thing. And just as all things have come from One, through the Mediation of One, so all things follow from this One Thing in the same Way. Its Father was the Sun, the Moon its Mother. It was carried in the Womb of Air, and the Earth was its Nurse. It is the Father of every Willed Thing in the whole World. Its Power is perfected if it becomes as Earth. Separate the Earth from Fire: the Fine from the Gross, gently and with great skill.<sup>1055</sup>

*[Tahuti turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

★ (**led by** ☩): So mote it be.

☩: There was then a follower of Tahuti was an Egyptian whose Name is lost; but the Jews called Him Mosheh, or Moses, and their Fabulists made Him the Leader of their Legendary Exodus. Yet they preserved His Word, and it is IHVH [Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh].

*[Mosheh comes out with a candle and the Old Testament or Tanakh. He places the Old Testament on the High Altar and turns to face the People*

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1053 *Liber ABA*, Part II.

1054 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 72.

1055 Adapted from *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes*.



*while holding the candle.]*

This Word is itself a Plan of the Fabrick of the Universe, and upon it hath been elaborated the Holy Qabalah, whereby we have Knowledge of the Nature of all Things soever upon every Plane of By-coming, and of their Forces and Tendencies and Operations, with the Keys to their Portals.<sup>1056</sup>

⚡ (**Mosheh**): And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.<sup>1057</sup>

*[Mosheh turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

★ (led by ☩): So mote it be.

☩: There was also Dionysus.

*[Dionysus comes out with a candle and statue of himself or a papyrus. He places the object on the High Altar and turns to face the People while holding the candle.]*

His Word hath spread into many Lands, and we know it today as INRI with the secret IAO concealed therein. And the Meaning of this Word is

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<sup>1056</sup> *Liber Aleph*, chapter 73.

<sup>1057</sup> Exodus 20:1-6, King James Version.

the Working of Nature in Her Changes; that is, it is the Formula of Magick whereby all Things reproduce and recreate themselves.<sup>1058</sup> This formula is the principal and most characteristic formula of Osiris, of the Redemption of Mankind. I is Isis, Nature, ruined by A, Apophis the Destroyer, and restored to life by the Redeemer Osiris.<sup>1059</sup>

⚡ (Dionysus): I am the loud-roaring and revelling Dionysus, primeval, double-natured, thrice-born, Bacchic lord, wild, ineffable, secretive, two-horned and two-shaped. Ivy-covered, bull-faced, warlike, howling, pure, I take raw flesh, I have feasts, wrapt in foliage, decked with grape clusters. I am the resourceful, immortal god sired by Zeus when he mated with Persephone in unspeakable union. Hearken to my voice, O blessed ones, and with my fair-girdled nymphs I breathe on you in a spirit of perfect agape.<sup>1060</sup>

*[Dionysus turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

⊛ (led by ♀): So mote it be.

♀: Then, Mohammed, who followed, is darkened and confused by His Nearness to our own Time, so that we say not save with diffidence that His Word ALLAH may mean this or that.

*[Mohammed comes out with a candle and a copy of the Qur'an. He places the Qur'an on the High Altar and turns to face the People while holding the candle.]*

But we are bold concerning His Doctrine of the Unity of God, for God is

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1058 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 71.

1059 *Magick in Theory and Practice*, chapter 7.

1060 Adapted from the "Invocation of Dionysus" from Orphic hymns.

Man, and he said therefore: Man is One.<sup>1061</sup>

⚡ (**Mohammed**): There is no god but Allah.<sup>1062</sup> Say: He is Allah, the One and Only; Allah, the Eternal, Absolute; He begetteth not, nor is He begotten; And there is none like unto Him.<sup>1063</sup>

*[Dionysus turns to place his candle on the High Altar, which he then kneels and adores]*

★ (led by ☩): So mote it be.

*[Pause]*

☩: All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little.<sup>1064</sup>

*[The veil is drawn to encompass the Magi and the candles]*

It was not for over a millenium that another Magus arose...

## PART II: The Discovery of the Stele

☩: For over 2,500 years, the Stele of Revealing laid undisturbed until it was discovered by a French archaeologist and placed in the Boulaq Museum in Cairo, Egypt under the inventory number 666. In March of the year 1904 era vulgaris, Rose and the Beast were on their honeymoon in Cairo, Egypt when the Beast decided to try to show Rose the elementals of Air known as the “sylphs.”

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1061 *Liber Aleph*, chapter 74.

1062 The first part of the *shahada* of Islam.

1063 Sura 112 of the *Qur'an*.

1064 *Liber AL*, II:56.

☉: Thee I invoke, the Bornless one. Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens: Thee, that didst create the Night and the day. Thee, that didst create the darkness and the Light. Thou art Osorronophris: Whom no man hath seen at any time. Thou art Iabos: Thou art Iapos: Thou hast distinguished between the just and the Unjust. Thou didst make the female and the Male. Thou didst produce the Seed and the Fruit. Thou didst form Men to love one another, and to hate one another. I am Ankh-af-na-Khonsu Thy Prophet, unto Whom Thou didst commit Thy Mysteries, the Ceremonies of Khem: Thou didst produce the moist and the dry, and that which nourisheth all created Life. Hear Thou Me, for I am the Angel of Apophrasz Osorronophris: this is Thy True Name, handed down to the Prophets of Khem.<sup>1065</sup>

*[A brief pause]*

☉: Hmm... no sylphs in sight at all...

*[☽ sways as if in a trance]*

☽: They are waiting for you.

☉: What's that?

☽: They are waiting for you.

☉: Who is waiting for me?

☽: It's all about the child.<sup>1066</sup>

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1065 From the "Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia."

1066 These are both things that Rose reportedly said to Crowley after the Bornless Invocation.

⊙: What nonsense is this?

♃: You have neglected and offended him. You must invoke him!

⊙: I make a sport of exposing people who claim clairvoyance, my dear. You should beware.

♃: He is waiting for you.

⊙: Well, then, let's prove the identity of this waiter and your authenticity as his messenger. What are his moral qualities?

♃: Force and fire.

⊙: Describe the conditions caused by him.

♃: Deep blue light.

⊙: Who is his enemy?

♃: Forces of the waters – the Nile.

⊙: What is his lineal figure?

♃: A triangle pointing downwards.

⊙: Its color?

♃: Red.

⊙: What is his planetary nature?

♃ : Mars.

☉ : What is his weapon?

♃ : The double wand of power.

☉ : What is his place in the temple?

♃ : The West, but it will soon change.

☉ : Out of this list of names, which one is he?

♃ : Horus.

☉ : *[aside]* Here is a novice to magick, a woman who should never have been allowed outside a ballroom, but she is now speaking with the authority of God, and proving her clairvoyance by unhesitating correctness. *[To Rose]* Come with me to the Boulaq Museum, and you will pick out his image.

♃ : They traveled to the Boulaq Museum in Cairo so that Rose could pick out the image of the god she saw. She passed by several images of Horus and the Beast smiled with glee at thinking he had disproved Rose's message. They went upstairs, and a glass case stood in the distance, too far off for its contents to be recognized, but Rose instantly recognized it.

♃ : There! There he is!

♃ : The Beast approached the case and saw that it was marked as Stele #666. At that moment he could not debate the authenticity of Rose's message, and he resolved to immediately rectify his previous scorn of Horus through an invocation.

## PART III: The Invocation of Horus

☉: Unprepared and uninvoking Thee, I, Perdurabo, Brother of Rosæ Rubeæ et Aureæ Crucis, am here in Thy Presence – for Thou art Everywhere, O Lord Horus! – to confess humbly before Thee my neglect and scorn of Thee.<sup>1067</sup>

How shall I humble myself enough before Thee? Thou art the mighty and unconquered Lord of the Universe: I am a spark of Thine unutterable Radiance.

How should I approach Thee? but Thou art Everywhere. But Thou hast graciously deigned to call me unto Thee, to this Exorcism of Art, that I may be Thy Servant, Thine Adept, O Bright One, O Sun of Glory!

Thou hast called me – should I not then hasten to Thy Presence? With unwashed hands therefore I come unto Thee, and I lament my wandering from Thee –but Thou knowest!

Yea, I have evil! If one blasphemed Thee, why should I therefore forsake Thee? But Thou art the Avenger; all is with Thee. I bow my neck before Thee; and as once Thy sword was upon it, so am I in Thy hands. Strike if Thou wilt: spare if Thou wilt: but accept me as I am. My trust is in Thee: shall I be confounded?

This Ritual of Art; this Forty and Fourfold Invocation; this Sacrifice of Blood – these I do not comprehend. It is enough if I obey Thy decree; did

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<sup>1067</sup> This entire invocation is adapted from the one used by Crowley as reported in *The Equinox of the Gods*, chapter 6.

Thy fiat go forth for my eternal misery, were it not my joy to execute Thy Sentence on myself? For why? For that All is in Thee and of Thee; it is enough if I burn up in the intolerable glory of Thy presence.

Enough! I turn toward Thy Promise. Doubtful are the Words: Dark are the Ways: but in Thy Words and Ways is Light. Thus then now as ever, I enter the Path of Darkness, if haply so I may attain the Light. Hail!

*[Drums begin a slow war-like beat or some other war-like music is played]*

*[People are prompted to "sing along: for the occurrences of "Thee, Thee I invoke!" "I invoke Thee!" and "ABRAHADABRA"]*

Strike, strike the master chord! Draw, draw the Flaming Sword! Crowned Child and Conquering Lord, Horus, avenger!

O Thou of the Head of the Hawk! Thee, Thee, I invoke! *[At every "Thee I invoke," throughout whole ritual, give the sign of Apophis; Rose can also put incense on the censer]*

Thou only-begotten-child of Osiris Thy Father, and Isis Thy Mother. He that was slain; She that bore Thee in Her womb flying from the Terror of the Water. Thee, Thee I invoke!

O Thou whose Apron is of flashing white, whiter than the Forehead of the Morning! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

O Thou who hast formulated Thy Father and made fertile Thy Mother! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

O Thou whose garment is of golden glory with the azure bars of sky! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

Thou, who didst avenge the Horror of Death; Thou the slayer of Typhon!  
Thou who didst lift Thine arms, and the Dragons of Death were as dust:  
Thou who didst raise Thine Head, and the Crocodile of Nile was abased before Thee! Thee, Thee, I invoke!



O Thou whose Nemyss hideth the Universe with night, the impermeable Blue! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

Thou who travellest in the Boat of Ra, abiding at the Helm of the Aftet boat and of the Sektet boat! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

Thou who bearest the Wand of Double Power ! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

Thou about whose presence is shed the darkness of Blue Light, the unfathomable glory of the outmost Ether, the untravelled, the unthinkable immensity of Space. Thou who concentrest all the Thirty Ethers in one darkling sphere of Fire! Thee, Thee, I invoke!

O Thou who bearest the Rose and Cross of Life and Light! Thee, Thee, I invoke! The Voice of the Five. The Voice of the Six. Eleven are the Voices. ABRAHADABRA!

Strike, strike the master chord! Draw, draw the Flaming Sword! Crowned Child and Conquering Lord, Horus, avenger!

By thy name of Ra, Hawk of the Sun, the glorious one, I invoke Thee! [*At every "I invoke Thee," throughout whole ritual, give the sign of Apophis; Rose can also put incense on the censer*]

By thy name Harmachis, youth of the Brilliant Morning, I invoke Thee!

By thy name, Mau, Lion of the Midday Sun, I invoke Thee!

By thy name Tum, Hawk of the Even, crimson splendour of the Sunset, I invoke Thee!

By thy name Khep-Ra, O Beetle of the hidden Mastery of Midnight, I invoke Thee!

By thy name Heru-pa-Kraat, Lord of Silence, Beautiful Child that standest on the Dragons of the Deep, I invoke Thee!

By thy name Apollo, O man of Strength and splendour, O poet, O father, I invoke Thee!

By thy name of Phoebus, that drivest thy chariot through the Heaven of Zeus, I invoke Thee!

By thy name of Odin, O warrior of the North, O Renown of the Sagas, I invoke Thee!

By thy name of Jeheshua, O child of the Flaming Star, I invoke Thee!  
By Thine own, Thy secret name Hoori, Thee I invoke!  
The Names are Five. The Names are Six. Eleven are the Names!  
ABRAHADABRA!

Behold! I stand in the midst. Mine is the symbol of Osiris; to Thee are mine eyes ever turned. Unto the splendour of Geburah, the Magnificence of Chesed, the mystery of Daath, thither I lift up mine eyes. This have I sought, and I have sought the Unity: hear Thou me!

In my hand is thy Sword of Revenge; let it strike at Thy Bidding! By the Sword I invoke Thee! The Voice of the Five. The Voice of the Six. Eleven are the Voices. ABRAHADABRA!

Mine is the Head of the Hawk! Abrahadabra!

*[Give Sign of Apophis at each "Abrahadabra"]*

I am the only-begotten-child of Osiris and Isis! Abrahadabra!

Mine is the Apron of flashing white! Abrahadabra!

I have formulated my Father and made fertile my Mother! Abrahadabra!

Mine is the garment of golden glory with the azure bars of the sky!  
Abrahadabra!

I have avenged the Horror of Death, I raised mine Head and the Crocodile of the Nile was abased before me! Abrahadabra!

Mine Nemyss hideth the Universe with night! Abrahadabra!

I travellest in the Boat of Ra, abiding at the helm! Abrahadabra!

I bearest the Wand of Double Power! Abrahadabra!

About me is shed the darkness of Blue Light! Abrahadabra!

I concentratest all the Thirty Ethers in one darkling sphere of Fire!  
Abrahadabra!

Mine is the Rose and Cross of Life and Light! Abrahadabra!

*[Remain in the sign until the conclusion of the invocation; drums/music ceases]*

Therefore I say unto thee: Come forth and dwell in me; so that every my Spirit, whether of the Firmament, or of the Ether, or of the Earth or under the Earth; on dry land or in the Water, or Whirling Air or of Rushing Fire; and every spell and scourge of God the Vast One may be THOU. ABRAHADABRA!

*[Sounds of storms: rain, lightning, thunder, et cetera]*

## PART IV: The Equinox of the Gods

*[♃ as Osiris/Jesus is in the East on a Throne that is within the opened veil of the High Altar; ♄ as Ma'at is in the North; ♁ as Isis is in the South; ♂ as Horus/Ra-Hoor-Khuit is in the West. The Holy Bible with Old & New Testament is on the superaltar in the East. The sounds of the storm continue.]*

♃: The Voice of the Lord upon the Waters: the Terror of God upon Mankind. The voice of the Lord maketh the Skies to tremble: the Stars are troubled: the Aires fall. Cursed, cursed be the Earth, for her iniquity is great. Oh Lord! Let Thy Mercy be lost in the great Deep! Open thine eyes of Flame and Light, O God, upon the wicked! Lighten thine Eyes! The Clamour of Thy Voice, let it smite down the Mountains! Let us not see it! Cover we our eyes, lest we see the End of Man. Close we our ears, lest we hear the cry of Woman. Let none speak of it: let none write it!<sup>1068</sup> No!

♄: No!

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1068 *The Vision and the Voice*, 29<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

ᚱ: No!

ᚲ: All is changed!

ᚷ: All is confounded!

ᚱ: Naught is ordered!

ᚲ: The white is stained with blood!

ᚷ: The black is kissed of the Christ!

ᚱ: Return!

ᚲ: Return!<sup>1069</sup> Tremble ye, O Pillars of the Universe, for Eternity is in travail of a Terrible Child; she shall bring forth an universe of Darkness, whence shall leap forth a spark that shall put his father to flight.

ᚷ: The Obelisks are broken!

ᚱ: The stars have rushed together!

ᚷ: The Light hath plunged into the Abyss:

ᚱ: The Heavens are mixed with Hell!

ᚲ: My Father shall not hear their Noise: His ears are closed: His eyes are covered with the clouds of Night.

ᚷ: The End!

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1069 This entire exchange is from *The Vision and the Voice*, 29<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

⚔: The End!

♁: The End! For the Eye of Shiva He hath opened: the Universe is naked before Him: for the Aeon of Saturn leaneth toward the Bosom of Death!

1070

♁: It is a new chaos that thou findest here: chaos for thee: for us it is the skeleton of a New Truth!<sup>1071</sup> I have opened mine eye, and the universe is dissolved before me, for force is mine upper eye-lid and matter is my lower eye-lid. I gaze into the seven spaces, and there is naught.<sup>1072</sup>

*[♁ chases ♁ out of his Throne to the West and then to the South and then to the North where he sits]*

♁: I have gone forth to war, and I have slain him that sat upon the sea, crowned with the winds. I put forth my power and he was broken. I withdrew my power and he was ground into fine dust. Rejoice with me, O ye Sons of the Morning; stand with me upon the Throne of Lotus; gather yourselves up unto me, and we shall play together in the fields of light. I have passed into the Kingdom of the West after my Father. Behold! where are now the darkness and the terror and the lamentation? For ye are born into the new Aeon; ye shall not suffer death. Bind up your girdles of gold! Wreathe yourselves with garlands of my unfading flowers! In the nights we will dance together, and in the morning we will go forth to war; for, as my Father liveth that was dead, so do I live and shall never die!<sup>1073</sup>

*[♁ takes the different books and objects from the High Altar that were set thereupon by the Magi and with each, ♁ holds them up and says:]*

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1070 This entire exchange is from *The Vision and the Voice*, 30<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

1071 *The Vision and the Voice*, 29<sup>th</sup> Aethyr.

1072 *The Vision and the Voice*, 22<sup>nd</sup> Aethyr.

1073 *The Vision and the Voice*, 22<sup>nd</sup> Aethyr.

Curse them!<sup>1074</sup>

*[After all have been thrown down, ♂ says:]*

Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds.<sup>1075</sup>

*[♂ spits on them and tramples them underfoot; ♀ takes the Stele of Revealing and places it on the superaltar and then sits in the West; ♀ takes The Book of the Law, places it below the Stele on the superaltar, and then she sits in the South; ♂ sits in the throne in the East]*

♂: Abrogate are all rituals, all ordeals, all words and signs!

♀: Ra-Hoor-Khuit hath taken his seat in the East at the Equinox of the Gods!

♀: And let Asar be with Isa, who also are one!

♂: But they are not of me!

♀: Let Asar be the adorant, Isa the sufferer!

♀: Hoor in his secret name and splendour is the Lord initiating!<sup>1076</sup>

*[A pause. ♂ gets up and stands before his throne]*

♂: The word of the law is Θελημα.<sup>1077</sup>

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1074 *Liber AL*, III:50.

1075 *Liber AL*, III:54.

1076 *Liber AL*, I:49.

1077 *Liber AL*, I:39.

☉☉☉☉☉ ☿ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

♂: Every man and every woman is a star.<sup>1078</sup>

☉☉☉☉☉ ☿ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

♂: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.<sup>1079</sup>

☉☉☉☉☉ ☿ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

♂: The word of Sin is Restriction.<sup>1080</sup>

☉☉☉☉☉ ☿ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

♂: So with thy all; thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.<sup>1081</sup>

☉☉☉☉☉ ☿ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

♂: Love is the law, love under will.<sup>1082</sup>

☉☉☉☉☉ ☿ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

♂: There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.<sup>1083</sup>

[ ♂ takes his seat in the throne ]

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1078 *Liber AL*, I:3.

1079 *Liber AL*, I:40.

1080 *Liber AL*, I:41.

1081 *Liber AL*, I:42-44.

1082 *Liber AL*, I:57.

1083 *Liber AL*, III:60.

⌘☉☼ : A ka dua / Tuf ur biu / Bi a'a chefu / Dudu nur af an nuteru!

## PART V:

### The Renunciation of the Slave-Ideals of the Old Aeon

[☿ passes out slips of paper and pens, and generally acts as the leader of the People]

☿ : If it is your Will to renounce the slave-ideals of the Old Aeon, Please write upon this paper, silently, and as briefly as you can, the name of the religion or ideology that you grew up with and the essential falsehoods or wrong conduct taught by that religion.

[Pause for ~1 minute]

♂♂ : Is there anyone present who wishes to disavow their previous ties to slave-ideals of Old Aeon religion with the ambition of embracing the Law of Thelema? Please rise.

☿ : Hoor hath a secret fourfold name; it is Do What Thou Wilt. Four words: Naught—One—Many—All... Thou—Child! Thy Name is holy. Thy Kingdom is come. Thy Will is done. Here is the Bread. Here is the Blood. Bring us through Temptation! Deliver us from Good and Evil! That Mine as Thine be the Crown of the Kingdom, even now. ABRAHADABRA.<sup>1084</sup>

[brief pause]

☿ : Brothers and sisters, is it your will to renounce the superstitious oppression of the Old Aeon?

☼ : It is.

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1084 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 2.



♁: We have to fight for Freedom against oppressors, religious, social, or industrial; and we are utterly opposed to compromise. Every fight is to be a fight to the finish; each one of us for himself, to do his own will; and all of us for all, to establish the Law of Liberty. Let every man bear arms, swift to resent oppression, generous and ardent to draw sword in any cause, if justice or freedom summon him!<sup>1085</sup> [Pause] Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

♣ : Love is the law, love under will.

♁ : I am come against sorrow, against weariness, against them that seek to enslave you. I pour you lustral wine, that giveth you delight both at the sunset and the dawn. Come with me, and I will give you all that is desirable upon the earth. Because I give you that of which Earth and its joys are but as shadows. They flee away, but my joy abideth even unto the end. Only those who fear shall fail. Those who have bent their backs to the yoke of slavery until they can no longer stand upright; them will I despise. But you who have defied the law; you who have conquered by subtlety or force; you will I take unto me, even I will take you unto me. Only if ye are sorrowful, or weary, or angry, or discomforted; then ye may know that ye have lost the golden thread, the thread wherewith I guide you to the heart of the groves of Eleusis. My disciples are proud and beautiful; they are strong and swift; they rule their way like mighty conquerors. The weak, the timid, the imperfect, the cowardly, the poor, the tearful – these are mine enemies, and I am come to destroy them. This also is compassion: an end to the sickness of earth. A rooting-out of the weeds: a watering of the flowers. O my children, ye are more beautiful than the flowers: ye must not fade in your season.<sup>1086</sup>

♁ : Please come forward and place your slip of paper in the fire.

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1085 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:57.

1086 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 10-14, 18-19, 23-27.

[ ♀ aids the People in accomplishing this, while ♂ says: ]

♂: I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men. Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross. I flap my wings in the face of Mohammed & blind him. With my claws I tear out the flesh of the Indian and the Buddhist, Mongol and Din. Bahlasti! Ompehda! I spit on your crapulous creeds. Let Mary inviolate be torn upon wheels: for her sake let all chaste women be utterly despised among you! Also for beauty's sake and love's!<sup>1087</sup> There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

♀: You will now stand in the posture that we call *dieu garde*, with your feet together at a right angle, and your thumbs linked before you.

[ ♀ demonstrates ]

♂: It is in this position that we break the bonds of slavery and forge those that lead to Freedom. You will now renounce the slave-ideals of the religions of the Old Aeon and their superstitions. At each query, make the loud declaration, "I renounce it!"

[Pause]

♂: Do you renounce the superstition of the Old Aeon?

♂: [lead by ♀] I renounce it.

♂: Do you renounce the tyranny of the Old Aeon?

♂: I renounce it.

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1087 *Liber AL*, III:49-56, as stated in the aforementioned letter from Crowley to Germer.

♂: Do you renounce the oppression of the Old Aeon?

♂: I renounce it.

♂: Repeat after me... BAHLASTI!

♂: BAHLASTI!

♂: OMPEHDA!

♂: OMPEHDA!

♂: The word of the law is Θελημα. Every man and every woman is a star. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law. The word of Sin is Restriction. Thou hast no right but to do thy will. Do that, and no other shall say nay. For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect. Love is the law, love under will.

*[Pause and hold up Mark of the Beast stamp]*

♂: By the Sign of the Mark of the Beast, I applaud your renunciation of the slave-ideals and celebrate that you have broken the bonds of the slave-gods of the Old Aeon.

*[♂ puts the Mark of the Beast on the inner left wrist of each individual with ♀ attending him if needed. After marking an individual, ♂ says to each:]*

♂: There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

*[When finished with the last person, ♂ goes up to the throne in the East]*

♁: Conquer! That is enough. Thou shalt have danger & trouble. Ra-Hoor-Khu is with thee. Fear not at all; fear neither men nor Fates, nor gods, nor anything. Money fear not, nor laughter of the folk folly, nor any other power in heaven or upon the earth or under the earth. Nu is your refuge as Hadit your light; and I am the strength, force, vigour, of your arms. Refuse none, but thou shalt know & destroy the traitors. I am Ra-Hoor-Khuit; and I am powerful to protect my servant. Success is thy proof: argue not; convert not; talk not over much! Them that seek to entrap thee, to overthrow thee, them attack without pity or quarter; & destroy them utterly. Swift as a trodden serpent turn and strike! Be thou yet deadlier than he! Drag down their souls to awful torment: laugh at their fear: spit upon them! I am the God enthroned in Ra's seat, lightening the girders of the soul. To Me do ye reverence! to me come ye through tribulation of ordeal, which is bliss. There is success.<sup>1088</sup>

*[The veil is drawn]*

☿: I witness and commend your renunciation of slave-ideals of the Old Aeon. A feast has been prepared to celebrate the Supreme Ritual that invoked Horus and the Equinox of the Gods, when the world entered a New Aeon of the Law of Liberty, ruled by the Crowned and Conquering Child.

*[☉ or ☽ stands at the head of the table and knocks 3-5-3]*

☉: Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

♁: What is thy Will?

☉: It is my Will to eat and to drink.

---

1088 *Liber AL*, III:11, 17, 42, 61-62, 69.

♣: To what end?

☉: That I may fortify my body thereby.

♣: To what end?

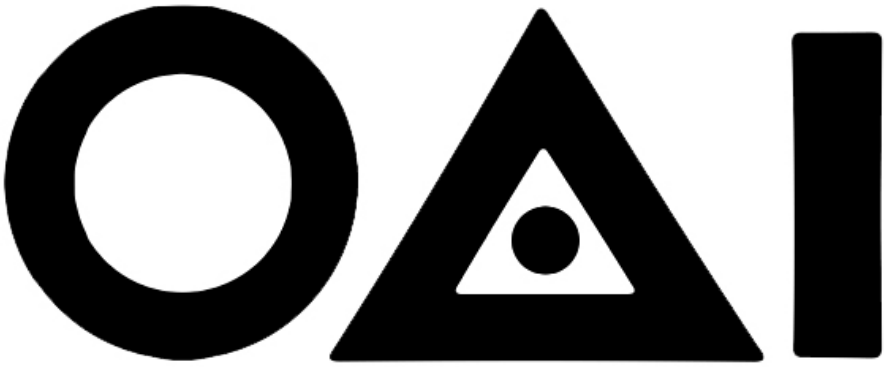
☉: That I may celebrate the feast of the Supreme Ritual and the feast for the Equinox of the Gods with joy and beauty.

♣: To what end?

☉: That I may accomplish the Great Work.

♣: Love is the law, love under will.

*[☉ knocks once, makes toasts if (s)he wills]*



# **PART V**

## **Miscellanea**





## CHAPTER 40

# INTRODUCTION TO THE MISCELLANEA

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You may have noticed the wildly varying styles in the previous chapters. I do not see writing as simply conveying information.

Writing is art, as said previously. The artistry of writing is just like the artistry of songs: there is rhythm, texture, harmonies, dissonances, patterns, disruptions of patterns, and so on.

Every written piece does not just leave one with a bit more knowledge; it leaves one with a feeling, just as a song does. One might inspire a feeling of being uplifted, another that of being inquisitive, another that of clarity. As the reader, I believe one should not just be looking for knowledge but, rather, for an *experience*.

Since I view writing as art, I naturally try to experiment with its many forms. I write essays with differing structures – not all of them have subsections, nor are they all similar lengths. As in the previous section, one can see experimentation with dramatic rituals and with dramatic plays.

In this “Miscellanea” section, I wanted to give the reader a taste of even further experimentation. I hope you will treat these pieces with an open mind, appreciating them artistically without too fine a comb of intellectual scrutiny. Many are not intended to be “intellectual” at all – in fact, I believe in a multi-modal approach to gnosis. Words are not the only, nor even arguably the best form of learning about Thelema and the Mysteries.

Therefore, in this section you will find a short play, inspired writings, letters written to Christians who have never heard of Thelema, aphorisms, a philosophical treatise, and more. I hope that, even if you disagree with the content, you are able to enjoy these pieces.

# CHAPTER 41

## BELLY OF THE BEAST: A SHORT PLAY

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*This piece was written in late 2009. I was reading through Liber LXV at the time and, one morning, had the idea (based on the first line of the fifth chapter of that book) to write a short play with the characters of Adonai, the Magister, and Crowley as prophet and scribe. I jotted down a note “Adonai, Magister, Crowley. Act 1: Unconsciousness; Act 2: Consciousness; Act 3: Super-consciousness” and left the house. On my return, I sat down and wrote out the entire play from start to finish in about 30 minutes. It has been performed twice: once at an open mic at Blazing Star Oasis and another time at 418 Lodge.*

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### Persons

- **The Magister** – V.V.V.V.V.
- **Adonai** – The Lord
- **Mind** – Crowley’s reasoning faculty and personality
- **Narrator** – Disembodied voice that helps explain what’s happening

### SCENE 1:

#### The Dawning of Awareness

**SETTING:** *Unconsciousness, i.e. Infinite blankness.*

**NARRATOR:** Outside time, there is nothing but utter darkness: a darkness so blank it has forgotten even its contrast with light. It is formless,

beyond relation, and unaware. To say these two characters are two names for One Thing may be confusing but no one ever judges that we are essentially conversing with ourself in dreams. Either way, the Magister is Adonai and Adonai is the Magister.

MAGISTER: Infinity is so... impersonal. Suppose We formulate Ourselves finite-ly?

ADONAI: To create anything from scratch One must formulate an entire Universe...

MAGISTER: Let Us form a Beginning, then!

ADONAI: Yet a Beginning is in Time which is only a category of Perception.

MAGISTER: We require perceptual apparatuses, then! Shall We fashion them out of extra clay?

ADONAI: I prefer simplicity: One Law will be uttered which will unfold into unfathomable complexity... and eventually, self-perception in certain complex organisms.

MAGISTER: How can anything evolve through time if time is simply a category of perception?

ADONAI: This system wasn't written with logical consistency in mind. You were the one who insisted on matter being both particles and waves, remember?

MAGISTER: Yes, and I wouldn't have it otherwise.

ADONAI: How can you have so many questions if We are One Thing?

MAGISTER: I enjoy hearing Myself speak; isn't creating a Universe a similar act of cosmic vanity?

ADONAI: We are quite beautiful.

MAGISTER: Granted... terrible, too, but no matter (at least not yet). Wait: If a Universe unfolds and no one is there to perceive it, does it still exist?

ADONAI: We know it turns on your notion of "existing" – and we have little time for semantics and jokes.

MAGISTER: Yes, indeed, No-Time at all which means we have Eternity... so don't we have time enough for one more Joke?

ADONAI: I suppose... Now, how do you work this thing?

NARRATOR: Out of formlessness, space and time emerged...

## **SCENE 2:** **Coming to Self-understanding**

*SETTING: Aleister Crowley's consciousness*

NARRATOR: Matter expanded and evolved into various forms. One of these was a human being known to many as Aleister Crowley. He lived about 1900 years after this particular species' most famous human sacrifice.

MIND: I have conquered a hundred slopes, beaten a thousand chess competitors, written endless words of poetry and prose... but lo! all my

creations eventually turn to dust. What could possibly rend this knot of suffering in my heart?

ADONAI: Greeting of earth and heaven! I am Adonai, Lord of the Universe!

MAGISTER: Must Our entrance always be so grandiose?

ADONAI: How would anyone know My superiority otherwise? Humans tend to ascribe authority and truth to whatever overpowers them.

MAGISTER: Unfortunate, but that is how it has unfolded. Go on.

ADONAI: Ahem! I am Adonai, Lord of the Universe: I am the Truth and the Life!

MIND: A voice! Is this a demon that speaks to me? APO PANTOS KAKODAIMONOS!

ADONAI: You cannot banish that which cannot die.

MIND: What is your word and your number?

ADONAI: Never mind these unnecessary quibbles, We've come bearing a message.

MIND: Are you a discarnate intelligence?

MAGISTER: Sure, if that will get you to listen to me.

MIND: ...So you are the Yechidah, I am the Ruach...

ADONAI: Stop your categorizing and listen!

MIND: Alright – what is this message you speak of?

ADONAI: The message is “Awake!” Awake to your True Self who is God. You are no more than a temporary concatenation of forces, weaved together to produce perception.

MIND: Why is my mind mired in multiplicity? Has man fallen? Are we as sinful and sorry as the Sunday school preacher says we are?

ADONAI: Forget their fairy tales: multiplicity is the device of unity for self-realization. In short, Eternity is in love with the productions of Time for thereby can the Unmanifest be made Manifest. Infinity can only be apprehended through Finitude.

MIND: So Aleister is God, then!

ADONAI & MAGISTER: No, you fool!

ADONAI: Aleister Crowley is a worm... yet it is through Aleister Crowley that We make Ourselves aware of Ourselves. Only through duality can the ecstasy of annihilation be experienced.

MIND: So I am formulated to destroy myself?

MAGISTER: Isn't the fruit pod of a plant grown to destroy itself so new life may be born thereby?

MIND: Yes, but I don't see why it must also be the case for me....

ADONAI: Perhaps we could have advanced evolution in a different

fashion but, in short, your evolutionary path necessitated shutting off various potentialities to make room for others... and in the process, awareness of one's true identity in Infinity was lost. It is not my fault if someone unrightfully claims to be King and suffers the inevitable consequences of taking on duties beyond his capacity: the ego was meant to be a messenger and interpreter, certainly not the General giving orders. I am the True Motion of all Beings and their True Self: only in uniting with me may Life be complete harmony.

MIND: Yet there are some who will never overstep their own bounds... and always think themselves their own ego.

MAGISTER: They are of no matter to Me, as all jokes are made at someone's expense.

MIND: So all of this suffering is one big punchline to you? You are nothing but a black and terrible god.

ADONAI: Such is the normal reaction to anything more complex and mysterious than oneself – I don't blame you.

MAGISTER: Things are much more savory when complemented with spice.

MIND: I see now that beauty is nothing without the ugly, depth nothing without height. Yet what is my complement?

ADONAI: The world is your bride, ready for the taking; the world is your master with laws inexorable and unchanging. The single fact is Experience and the single question is One or Two? Is Perception unified or is Perception mired in "me" versus "them"? The latter is ignorance and clinging to the personality, which forms, changes, and dies away; the

former is awareness: Awake!

MAGISTER: Thought is Two.

ADONAI & MAGISTER: We are One.

MIND: I have created a Word and a Symbol to express this truth!

ADONAI: No! Every symbol selects and arranges, but this Vision is of No Difference. Choose not, argue not, debate not, speak not, think not, create not. There is no difference between object and object; there is no difference between subject and object.

MIND: My pen is ready for writing: bestow upon me divine truths!

ADONAI: Truth cannot be communicated, only experienced: Be still and awake.

NARRATOR: The scribe drops his pen. The prophet relents in his thinking. Aleister Crowley is destroyed and only Adonai and the Magister remain.

### **SCENE 3:** **Returning to the world**

*SETTING: Aleister Crowley's superconsciousness*

MAGISTER: Back where we started again!

ADONAI: We both knew the Beginning is actually the End, anyhow. The Arcane Substance is already hidden inside the First Matter, after all.



MAGISTER: Perhaps we should hide it elsewhere, then?

ADONAI: No, I think this World is quite alright. What shall We do now that we have, again, come to Ourselves?

MAGISTER: I say we go for another ride. This Aleister Crowley has been cleansed of his Aleister Crowley-ness... we won't have the same problems before now that he has identified rightly with Us.

ADONAI: It is time to set in motion the next play of the game: when the Many becomes One, the One must reformulate itself in the Many.

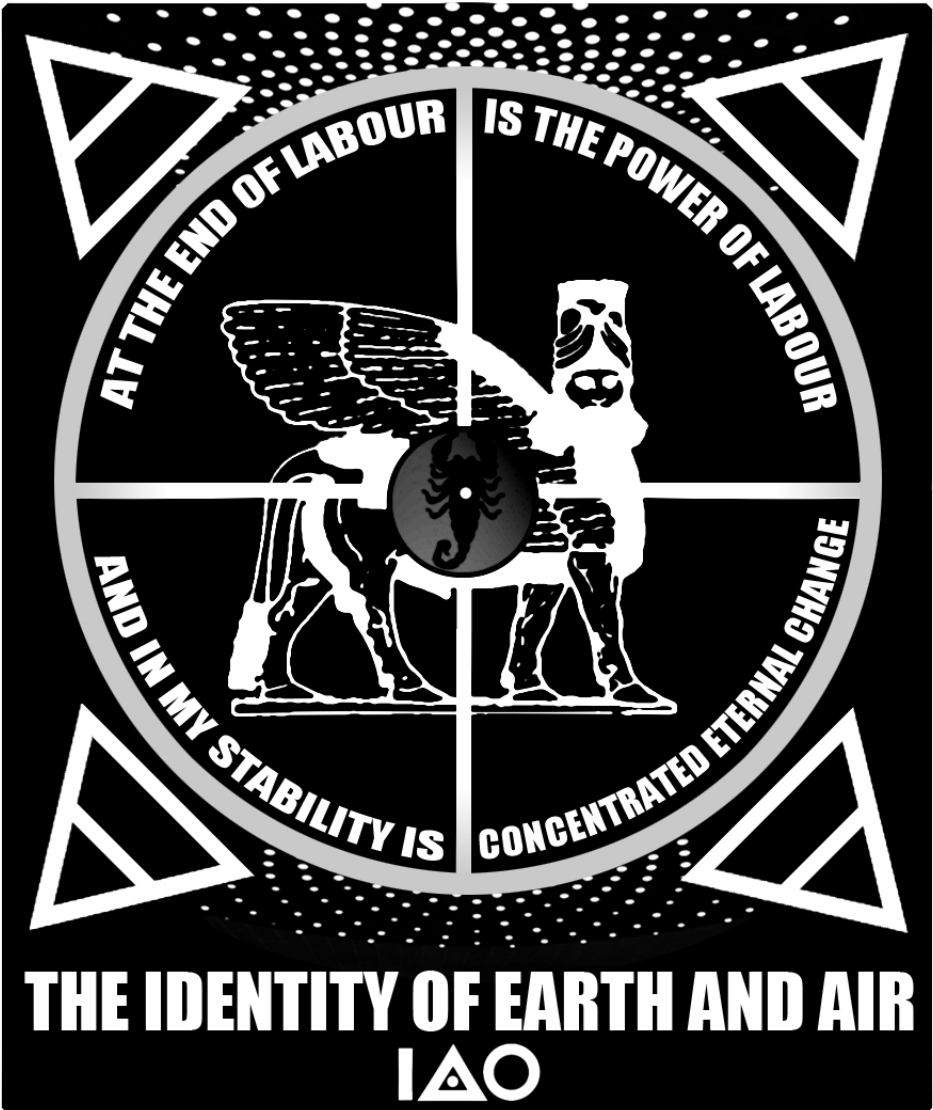
MAGISTER: I want to be a dog this time.

ADONAI: We are the animals, every single one of them... although unaware of the possibility of ecstasy through union of opposites.

MAGISTER: I know, I know. But I thought it would give some humorous person the chance to say "God really does live in a dog!"

ADONAI: Oh, We are so clever.

*Fin.*



*The Identity of Earth and Air*  
*is based on the 23<sup>rd</sup> Aethyr of The Vision and the Voice*

## CHAPTER 42

# CHRISTIANITY IS DEAD, THELEMA LIVES

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*This chapter was written as a series of short articles over about a month in early 2010. Its intended audience was Christians rather than Thelemites, and the writing style is intended to reflect this. It spawned some interesting responses from some Christians that are still readable today on my website, although I think the essays were more appreciated by Christian-raised Thelemites than those who still identified with Christianity.*

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Christianity is dead, Thelema lives.

In short, this is a polemical statement. We know there are billions of Christians as of this new vulgar decade of 2010. There are certainly a lot of Christians and they are not dead, nor do we want them dead. On the contrary, we want them to Live fully.

Christianity as a whole is dead, having been choked by the exoteric dogmas accumulated over centuries of superstitious and fearful tragedies.

The message of Christ has been perverted and used for political power. One need only take one glance to the right at the Sermon of the Mount as taught by Jesus and another glance to the left at the decadently opulent Vatican to see one of the most basic hypocrisies.

Christianity may be dead, but Thelema (Greek for “Will”) lives. The Law of Thelema can be summarized with a few short quotations from the *Book of the Law*:

*“The word of the Law is Thelema.”*

*“Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”*

*“Thou hast no right but to do thy will.”*

*“Love is the law, love under will.”*

*“There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.”*

## **God in Thelema is not the morbid Christian God**

*There is no god but man.*

These are the words written atop “Liber OZ,” a short work describing “the rights of man” in the New Aeon.

The old Aeon was the Aeon of Osiris, the Father and the Suffering man, encapsulated in the figure of Jesus Christ; before that was the Aeon of Isis, the pagan era. This is now the Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child.

Even Jesus foretold of this mystery when he said “And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.”<sup>1089</sup>

Thelema asserts in its own Bible that “Every man and every woman is a star,” that Godhead is “above you and in you”<sup>1090</sup> and is “the flame that burns in every heart of man, and in the core of every star.”<sup>1091</sup>

God is not some Being outside of ourselves. He is not some cloudy figure, perhaps an old man of sorts, that watches our every move and judges us. He is not a stern father that judges and rebukes you, but “the

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1089 Matthew 18:3.

1090 *Liber AL*, I:13.

1091 *Liber AL*, II:6.

Child-Voice of Love in thine own Soul!”<sup>1092</sup>

In a sense, Jesus was an example of the Man-God, who was both Man and God. In him was God made Man and Man made God. Even as he says, “I and my Father are one.”<sup>1093</sup>

In the symbol of the Unicursal Hexagram, we show God and Man as One. Traditionally, the Hexagram is formed of two separate triangles representing interlocking opposites of male & female, god & man, spirit & matter, *et cetera*. The unicursal hexagram – which literally means a hexagram that can be drawn in one stroke without lifting up a pen – symbolically asserts a unity between these complements.

One reason Christianity is dead is that the symbols are unbalanced. Christians praise good & life, and fear evil & death. In Thelema:

*“My adepts stand upright;  
their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells.”*<sup>1094</sup>

Since God is All, and since Man’s true identity is One with God’s (and God’s true identity one with Man’s) we move beyond opposition into unity with All things from Highest to Lowest. As it is said: “Love is the law, love under will”<sup>1095</sup> and Love means Union. Again it is written:

*“There is no grace,  
There is no guilt,  
This is the law:  
DO WHAT THOU WILT.”*<sup>1096</sup>

God is expressed by Doing one’s own Will, which – if pure – is

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1092 *The Heart of the Master*.

1093 John 10:30.

1094 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 40.

1095 *Liber AL*, I:57.

1096 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 44.

one with God's will and God's will is one with your own Will; in that, Thou art God. This is not a judgmental god of sin and hell and fear of punishment and endless retribution.

*“Remember all ye that existence is pure joy; that all the sorrows are but as shadows; they pass & are done; but there is that which remains... Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.”*<sup>1097</sup>

Thelemites even go so far as to call themselves Atheists because they identify so closely with God. As it is said: “To admit God is to look up to God, and so not to be God. The curse of duality.”<sup>1098</sup>

We simultaneously deny the dogmatic Theistic god of superstition and assert our identity so closely with the God who is All that we admit of No Other. This is the secret meaning of saying “There is no god where I am”<sup>1099</sup>:

*“This refers to the spiritual experience of Identity.*

*When one realizes one's Truth there is no room for any other conception.*

*It also means that the God-idea must go with other relics of the Fear born of Ignorance into the limbo of savagery.*

*We speak of the Idea of God as generally understood, God being 'something 'not ourselves' that makes for righteousness.’”*<sup>1100</sup>

The true God is one with ourselves, for “There is no god but man!”

## **Thelema has Certainty of Experience,**

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1097 *Liber AL*, II:9, 20.

1098 Old Comment to *Liber AL*, II:23.

1099 *Liber AL*, II:23; spoken by the Priest in the Gnostic Mass.

1100 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:23.

## not Superstitious Faith & Belief

*“I give unimaginable joys on earth: certainty, not faith, while in life, upon death; peace unutterable, rest, ecstasy; nor do I demand aught in sacrifice.”<sup>1101</sup>*

We must have faith! This is what innumerable Christians say and parrot all day long. We must believe! We must have faith! Faith that Jesus Christ is our Lord and Savior. This is nothing but a surrender of our God-given faculties of experimentation & reasoning to blind adherence!

This blind faith has led to the indiscriminate slaughter of people who simply do not espouse belief in the same God, or simply use a different name for God! *The Book of the Law* acknowledges “Every man and every woman is a star”<sup>1102</sup> in the company of Heaven.

This Heaven is not some place attained after we die but is here and now, even as Jesus tried to explain: “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.”<sup>1103</sup>

This blind faith has led to restriction of the freedom of others – such as, more recently, the prevention of equal rights for homosexual couples – innumerable times. The Law of Thelema enjoins us to “not repress or restrict any true instinct of your Nature; but devote all in perfection to the sole service of your one True Will.”<sup>1104</sup>

This blind faith has led to the infinite suffering of uncountable souls, who worry endlessly about their fate in some “here-after” instead of enjoying their life here and now on Earth.

This blind faith has led people to commit atrocious acts and

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1101 *Liber AL*, I:58.

1102 *Liber AL*, I:3.

1103 Luke 17:20-21.

1104 *Duty*, available in *The Revival of Magick*.

childishly negate their responsibility for them, saying “God told me to do it.” But if there is no god but man, you are still responsible!

In Thelema we abide by the certainty of our own experience, not blind faith. We only speak of God when we know God (and become God!).

*“It all depends on your own acceptance of this new law  
[Do what thou wilt], and you are not asked to believe anything,  
to accept a string of foolish fables beneath the intellectual level of a  
Bushman and the moral level of a drug-fiend.*

*All you have to do is to be yourself, to do your will, and to rejoice.”*<sup>1105</sup>

If we have faith, it is faith in ourselves. It is a faith in our Will to meet each moment with skillful and strong Love. This is a faith of action which is alive and dynamic instead of a faith of belief which is dead and stagnant. Not worrying if every action is sinful and guilt-ridden, we experience the pure joy of existence in each moment, having discarded the phantoms of fear and abiding in the strength & simplicity of the Law of Liberty, Do what thou wilt.

## **Thelema is Post-Christianity, not Anti-Christianity**

Concerns have been expressed regarding the approach of this series, which parallels more general concerns regarding the approach of Thelema to Christianity in general.

It is true that many people come initially to Thelema as something that challenges and goes directly against Christian ideals. After all, our prophet is known as the Beast 666, our Heaven is on Earth, and we live joyously without fear of grace or guilt, having discarded the priestly bogey of sin.

Thelema is not anti-Christian, but post-Christian.

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1105 *Liber DCCCXXXVII: The Law of Liberty.*



We do not simply reject all things Christian because of their association, but even as Christianity itself absorbed the Pagan elements of past religions so does Thelema absorb and supersede Christianity.

*“Every man and every woman is a star,  
and every one’s will is the will of God.”*<sup>1106</sup>

Further, in the central text of Thelema known as the *Book of the Law* it is written:

*“Aum! All words are sacred and all prophets true;  
save only that they understand a little...”*<sup>1107</sup>

And in another Holy Book of ours it is written:

*“To you who yet wander in the Court of the Profane we cannot yet reveal all; but you will easily understand that the religions of the world are but symbols and veils of the Absolute Truth. So also are the philosophies. To the adept, seeing all these things from above, there seems nothing to choose between Buddha and Mohammed, between Atheism and Theism.”*<sup>1108</sup>

From this it is easy to see we do not indiscriminately reject whatever is Christian but instead penetrate past the outer exoteric dogmas and superstitions and retain the gnosis preserved by each tradition.

Yet that gnosis has also been clouded by each tradition. In the *Book of the Law*, we also find cursing of the old “slave religions:”

*“I am in a secret fourfold word, the blasphemy against all gods of men.*

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1106 “The Tank” in *The Blue Equinox*.

1107 *Liber AL*, I:56.

1108 *Liber Porta Lucis*, line 19.

*Curse them! Curse them! Curse them! With my Hawk's head I peck at the eyes of Jesus as he hangs upon the cross.”*<sup>1109</sup>

Crowley writes, “The evident interpretation of this is to take the [secret fourfold] word to be 'Do what thou wilt,' which is a secret word, because its meaning for every man is his own inmost secret. And it is the most profound blasphemy possible against all 'gods of men,' because it makes every man his own God.”<sup>1110</sup>

We not only discard but actively fight against the tyranny, superstition, and dogma that have come through Christians throughout the ages and which is even inherent in Christianity itself. In this way we “curse” and “peck at the eyes of Jesus.”

We also unite all diverse symbols and methods under the banner of the Law of the Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child, “Do what thou wilt.” In this way “All words are sacred and all prophets true; save only that they understand a little...” It's even been said “Thelema is more Christian than Christianity, and more Satanic than Satanism!”<sup>1111</sup>

We hope that this essay and others that have been written will make it clear that we are not blindly against all things Christian but see the Law of Thelema as that which supersedes the Old Aeon of Suffering. Hopefully readers will look beyond mere appearances and initial impressions to find the True Message of this series. Not “Thy will be done” but “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law!”

## **Jesus is not the Savior, You are!**

*“The New Aeon proclaims Man as Immortal God, eternally active to do His Will. All's Joy, all's Beauty; this Will we celebrate.”*<sup>1112</sup>

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1109 *Liber AL*, III:49-51.

1110 New Comment to *Liber AL*, III:49.

1111 T Polyphilus, “What is Thelema?”

1112 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:35.

God's will is expressed by every man and every woman doing their wills. Man and woman's will is not inherently opposed to God's, but an expression thereof. In doing our own will we fulfill the Will of God.

*“Thou must (1) Find out what is thy Will. (2) Do that Will with a) one-pointedness, (b) detachment, (c) peace. Then, and then only, art thou in harmony with the Movement of Things, thy will part of, and therefore equal to, the Will of God. And since the will is but the dynamic aspect of the self, and since two different selves could not possess identical wills; then, if thy will be God's will, Thou art That.”*<sup>1113</sup>

Each person is a center of God's Light, we do not need to borrow or depend upon another's Light. Every man and every woman is a star, and the flame of God burns in the core of every star and the heart of all people. In giving forth our own light we give forth the Light of God.

Each person is a vehicle of God's Love. The stars of Mankind get their fill and will of love as they will, when, where and with whom they will! In performing acts of “love under will,”<sup>1114</sup> we express God's Love.

This isn't Will, Light, and Love of God that is clouded with the morbid insistence on your wretchedness, baseness, sinfulness, and unworthiness. On the contrary, “Beauty and strength, leaping laughter and delicious languor, force and fire, are of us.”<sup>1115</sup>

*“Bring us through Temptation!  
Deliver us from Good and Evil!  
That Mine as Thine be the Crown  
of the Kingdom even now.”*<sup>1116</sup>

We need not look up to God but look with even eyes... no, the

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1113 *Liber II: The Message of the Master Therion.*

1114 *Liber AL, I:57.*

1115 *Liber AL, II:20.*

1116 *The Book of Lies, chapter 2.*

same eyes! In a sense, Jesus was an example of the Man-God, who was both Man and God. In him was God made Man and Man made God. God “sent” Jesus to show that God and Man can be and are One.

When we come to know ourselves as God and perform our Will as one with God’s Will – that is when we become our own savior. We do not need a savior from sin, but a savior from the restriction – external and internal – that inhibits us from full expression of Will.

## **Thelema is Post-Christianity, not Anti-Christianity (part 2)**

“Not 'Thy will be done' but 'Do what thou wilt!’” Such is the slogan of this series. This very phrase speaks to not the destruction but the continuation, fulfillment, and perfection of Christianity in the Law of Thelema.

We do not say that Jesus is dead, or that Christians are dead. Christianity is dead, and Thelema lives. Thelema is the torch by which we pass on the Flame of Gnosis through the Aeons.

Whereas in the Old Aeon of the Suffering Man – symbolized by Jesus and Osiris – found the source of Light outside of Man in the person of Jesus, in “The New Aeon [we] proclaim Man as Immortal God, eternally active to do His Will. All’s Joy, all’s Beauty; this Will we celebrate.”<sup>1117</sup>

Every man and every woman is a star, according to the *Book of the Law* and each star is like the Sun: a center of life, light, force, and fire. That is, the Fire of God burns in the heart of every man and every woman. God is found in one’s own Heart – the Self of oneself, “Thou who art I beyond all I am, who hast no nature and no name, who art, when all but thou are gone, Thou centre & secret of the Sun.”<sup>1118</sup>

*“Each star has a function in its galaxy proper to its own nature. Much*

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1117 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:35.

1118 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

*mischief has come from our ignorance in insisting, on the contrary, that each citizen is fit for any and every social duty. But also our Law teaches that a star often veils itself from its nature. Thus the vast bulk of humanity is obsessed by an abject fear of freedom; the principal objections hitherto urged against my Law have been those of people who cannot bear to imagine the horrors which would result if they were free to do their own wills. The sense of sin, shame, self-distrust, this is what makes folk cling to Christianity-slavery.”*<sup>1119</sup>

The central rite of the Ordo Templi Orientis, the first of the many Orders to accept the Law of Liberty, is the Gnostic Mass. This rite is also more formally known as *Liber XV: Ecclesiae Gnosticæ Catholicæ Canon Missæ*. The Beast 666 himself writes, “[Liber XV] represents the original and true pre-Christian Christianity.”<sup>1120</sup> This Gnostic Mass is “the central ceremony of [the O.T.O.’s] public and private celebration, corresponding to the Mass of the Roman Catholic Church.”<sup>1121</sup>

The Mass itself reflects that Christianity has preserved the Gnosis – or True Wisdom – despite its exoteric dogmas and superstitions. “The Christian Religion is packed... with survivals of pagan rites.”<sup>1122</sup> As the Beast 666 says, “Christmas is at the winter solstice, the birth of Christ put for the birth of the Sun... It is rather amusing to observe that ultra-Protestants, in proving that Roman Catholicism is pagan and phallic, which they do quite irrefutably, need merely to be confronted with the proof of the Catholics that every point of their religion is derived from Scripture, to form the premisses of a syllogism, whose conclusion is that Christianity is but an adaptation of Phallicism.”<sup>1123</sup>

And with that, we close with a version of the “Lord’s Prayer” which is appropriate to this New Aeon of the Crowned and Conquering Child:

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1119 New Comment to *Liber AL*, II:58.

1120 “Præmonstrance of the A·∴·A·∴·” in *The Blue Equinox*.

1121 *Confessions*, chapter 73.

1122 *Liber DCCCLXXXVIII: The Gospel According to Saint Bernard Shaw*.

1123 *Liber DCCCLXXXVIII: The Gospel According to Saint Bernard Shaw*.

*Hoor hath a secret fourfold name: it is Do What Thou Wilt.  
Four Words: Naught-One-Many-All.  
Thou-Child!  
Thy Name is holy.  
Thy Kingdom is come.  
Thy Will is done.  
Here is the Bread.  
Here is the Blood.  
Bring us through Temptation!  
Deliver us from Good and Evil!  
That Mine as Thine be the Crown of the Kingdom, even now.  
ABRAHADABRA.  
These ten words are four, the Name of the One.*<sup>1124</sup>

## **Thelema Unites that which Christianity Divided Apart**

*“The word of the Law is THELEMA... Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. The word of Sin is Restriction. O man! refuse not thy wife, if she will! O lover, if thou wilt, depart! There is no bond that can unite the divided but love: all else is a curse.”*<sup>1125</sup>

One problem with Christianity, and symptomatic of Western thinking in general, is its tendency to see opposites as completely irreconcilable: God is opposed to Devil, God’s will opposed to man’s will, Life opposed to death, and even saintliness opposed to sinfulness.

The Holy Books of Thelema assert the complementarity and even Unity of opposites over and over again. Constantly we are urged to accept all things including both high and low, good and bad, dark and light:

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1124 *The Book of Lies*, chapter 2.

1125 *Liber AL*, I:39-41.

*“My adepts stand upright;  
their head above the heavens, their feet below the hells.”*<sup>1126</sup>

Instead of striving merely to the heights and light, we must also strive to our depths and to darkness to be at complete equilibrium. The Beast 666 writes:

*“The male must have completed himself and become androgyne; the female, and become gynander. This incompleteness imprisons the soul. To think 'I am not woman, but man' or vice versa, is to limit one's self, to set a bar to one's motion. It is the root of the 'shutting-up' which culminates in become 'Mary inviolate' or a 'Black Brother.'”*<sup>1127</sup>

The terms “Mary inviolate” and “Black Brother” are specific symbols used in *The Book of the Law* and *Liber 418: The Vision and the Voice* (which Crowley believed to be only second in importance to the *Book of the Law*) which can be studied therein. The basic idea of both these symbols is where the Ego shuts itself off from the world, insisting on a separate identity, proclaiming “I am I!” instead of the mystic statement of love under will, “Thou art That, and That am I!”<sup>1128</sup>

This goes back to the idea presented in the beginning of this section: the person represented by “Mary inviolate” or “Black brother” refuses to accept the complementarity and even unity of opposites, including self vs. other.

This is also begins to show how people accusing Thelema of base “selfishness” and “egocentrism” are actually fundamentally incorrect. They would be closer to the truth, though, if they insist on “Willishness” and “Willcentrism.”

We of Thelema do not divide but unite all things in “love under will” since Love is union. We unite in ourselves:

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1126 *Liber Tzaddi*, line 40.

1127 Commentary to *Liber LXV*, V:44.

1128 *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

- God & Devil
- Light & darkness
- Masculinity & femininity
- Good & evil
- High & low
- East & West
- Life & death
- Virtue & vice, *et cetera*

In this way, Thelema is a system of incorporation – Love that expands, assimilates, and includes all things – rather than castration, i.e. “And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out.”<sup>1129</sup> In this way we heal the rift in ourselves that Christianity has caused along with the attending neurosis & obsession over sin & salvation.

In short, Thelema unites that which Christianity has divided – the Soul of every man and woman.

*“For Perfection abideth not in the Pinnacles, or in the Foundations,  
but in the ordered Harmony of one with all.”*<sup>1130</sup>

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1129 Mark 9:47; Matthew 5:29.

1130 *Liber LXI vel Causae*.



THRILL WITH THE JOY OF LIFE & DEATH!



You don't have to be on vacation to enjoy life. Even traveling to and from work can be a sacred experience of the Sacrament of Existence. Quit using that old, beat-up worldview of yours, and realize the joy and freedom that is known as the Law of Liberty.

**DO WHAT THOU WILT  
SHALL BE THE WHOLE OF THE LAW**



*Enjoy Thelema!*

*Enjoy Thelema*  
is satire on old advertising.  
And yes, the placement of the tower is intentional.

# CHAPTER 43

## KNOWING & BECOMING: SHARP CLAWS & PURPOSELESS PLEASURE

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*This piece was written over the course of about four days in mid 2008. It is obviously heavily influenced by Nietzsche and, although it is not explicitly mentioned, Thelema. Its style is terse and littered with references to Western philosophy.*

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This work is a paradox and contains its quantum of hypocrisy. It relies on the relation of words and signs, an unfortunately confused but necessary method of communication. This treatise is an impetus to drive one to pasture with a blow.<sup>1131</sup>

Let us, for the moment, be practical and allow for the common way of speaking of things. That is, let us pass over the inadequacies of language, with its implicit yet nefarious subject and object, and understand what this is about. It is about the futility of knowing and the joy of becoming.

### I. Anti-philosophy

Knowing and becoming: one might believe from such a title that this would be, at least partially, a work of epistemology... But then one would be (unfortunately) disappointed. What can we know? What do we know we know? Such mental circles leave us tired and unsatisfied. We might as well beat our heads into a wall repeatedly; at least that would leave us satiated – that is, unconscious. I would rather have a prod than a *priori*.

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1131 Heraclitus: “Every beast is driven to pasture with blows.”

One might also be deluded into thinking this is a work on philosophy – it is, rather, anti-philosophy. Instead of fighting fire with fire, why not try water? Metaphysics consist of misinterpreted metaphors from those unfortunate enough to try to communicate their experiences; teleology arises from the confusions known as “God” and “self”; ethics are the pronouncements of the power-hungry controllers (another paradox: the highest value is valueless-ness); eschatologies are the pronouncements of the vindictive & fearful. My metaphysic: no categories, no labels; my ethic: no values; my eschatology: each moment is an end in itself, especially for your precious :self.” Purpose, self, agency, virtue, right and wrong – these are the delusions of a typical human thought-system.

## **II. Ravenous action**

This treatise is, in a sense, a call to action but not to political action, let alone moral or spiritual action, whatever those mean. Don't think, don't speak, don't calculate, don't contemplate, don't justify, don't criticize, don't explain – act. These are all reactions – if one is to re-anything one should simply rejoice. We are no different from a virus, a plant, or a wolf – so let us sharpen our claws and go whatever way without delusions.

Satiation, comfort, unchangeability – these are the marks of a human philosophy, but are they practical? Are they realistic? But what is “reality,” or rather, who cares? Utility is more useful than debates about reality, but even utility presupposes some kind of end, some kind of target, some kind of purpose. Yet life itself is no more important than death – in fact, it is meaningless without it. The play of power requires no purpose, let alone a guiding principle or an agent.

## **III. Thought and its child, the philosopher**

The most egregious error of the earth was the emergence of those called “philosophers.” They do nothing but reveal their own implicit

beliefs, their own prejudices. “Cogito ergo sum?”<sup>1132</sup> Thought is not evidence of being or a self - it is evidence of thought, but tautologies are boring (nor do they sell books well). “The unexamined life is not worth living.”<sup>1133</sup> That surely sounds like the chastisement of one who has wasted much time in examining (psychologists might call it “effort justification”!). “Beauty is truth, truth beauty?”<sup>1134</sup> But what if our truths are terrible and ugly? “*Libertie, egalitie, fraternitie?*”<sup>1135</sup> True liberty – each constellation of action expressing its full potential – is at odds with that leveling force of the poor & wretched known as equality. “Act only according to that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should be a universal law?”<sup>1136</sup> What... Act as if one was a tyrant of conduct at all moments? And what if one's maxim is that maxims are prison cages of the free & spontaneous spirit?

Which thinker is bold enough to recognize that thought is a useless circle? There is no specific thought or set of thoughts (nor is there a specific action) that is worth anything, that justifies anything, that satiates anything. And so we should lay these things to rest in their rightful place – the garbage heap of history.

#### IV. Freedom in flux

What is it to Know thyself?<sup>1137</sup> To Be thyself? Is there a true and steady essence to portray? There is nothing but a flux of relations, a becoming and by-going, although constrained by certain unavoidable necessities (e.g. one's human body). But, subjectively, one can do nothing but cast away the cloaks that conceal and conflate – social roles, repetitive relationships, philosophical dispositions... that is, any attachment to

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1132 Descartes' famous “I think therefore I am.”

1133 Socrates: “The unexamined life is not worth living.”

1134 John Keats: “Beauty is truth, truth beauty.”

1135 Slogan of the French Revolution and inspirer of American values: “Liberty, equality, fraternity.”

1136 Kant's “categorical imperative.”

1137 “Know Thyself” was written at the Temple of Apollo at Delphi.

anything. One's true being, that nebulous concatenation which is the self-and-environment interaction, can only spring forward spontaneously without thought, without consideration, without adherence to idea, without "philosophy." No masks are necessary for this performance - is known through acting and each quantum of self-knowledge is out-dated the instant it forms. Ego, ergo, is a fancy fraud in the face of the power-play of things.

Becoming trumps being; action trumps thinking; flux trumps stagnation – but these are less helpful aphorisms than revelations of reality, things as they are if one would look beyond convention. There are no laws beyond human mind-excretions<sup>1138</sup>: The ought's are infinitely more mendacious than the are's, and even those are misleading (and eventually outdated). Only when one has given up everything does one gain everything – that is, there is no thought of gain or loss.

## V. Sinister signs

Now let us return to language, although we have been steeped in it all this while (hence this work's hypocrisy). Language is to be left to logicians and traders of goods: Experience cannot be bought or traded and it is exactly because of this that experience cannot be spoken of (without stepping over it & on it). It is precisely when we communicate ourselves that we forget ourselves, that we falsify ourselves. Language is to be left to critics and excuse-makers: but we need no excuse for our art - that is, our life.<sup>1139</sup>

Words incorrectly assume a steadiness of meaning and project a false sense of stability onto this flux of relations known as "self." We contain multitudes,<sup>1140</sup> are multitudes, and so the play of paradox and the

1138 A reference to *Liber AL*, III:60, "There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt."

1139 A reference to *Intro to Zen Buddhism* where D.T. Suzuki writes, "Life is fact and no explanation is necessary or pertinent. To explain is to apologize, and why should we apologize for living? To live – is that not enough? Let us then live!"

1140 Walt Whitman, "Song of Myself," stanza 51: "Do I contradict myself? / Very well then I contradict myself, / (I am large, I contain multitudes.)"

cacophonous euphony of contradiction are then language's cure for itself.

## VI. The aesthetic sense

Anyone with an aesthetic sense knows it applies to more than just art, for the world is a work itself (though I don't posit a doer behind this deed nor beauty beyond our interpretations – that is, “in itself”). One reacts to art in the same way to people: with vanity. They reflect facets of ourselves and so “ugly” people (in action & in form) and “ugly” art are reminders of our own potential for idiocy, for weakness. Beauty is that which reveals ourselves to ourselves in the most triumphant way – hence the beauty of strength in cruelty & destruction, the beauty of boundlessness in far-reaching thoughts, the beauty of over-fullness in extravagance, the beauty of simplicity in poverty.

Ugliness is the natural interpretation of & reaction to those things we wish to trample, and yet we are told to love all equally, even our enemies... Only if this is the love of a gardener in tearing out the weeds to help the flowers<sup>1141</sup> – but the weeds cry “savagery!” and “injustice!” Only if this is the love of benevolence and mercilessness being coterminous, being contained in one action. And so what is beauty to me is often cruelty to you.

## VII. Cautiousness in the face of causality

“I have willed it!” or in more scientific terms “I have caused it!” Such are the fables of modern interpretations of things - the “I” that caused but especially causation itself. Causality can only exist in artificial circumstances – that is, in your mind's contrivances. No one thing can cause another thing: what caused the first thing to cause? Shall we negate

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1141 *Liber Tzaddi*, lines 25-26: “The weak, the timid, the imperfect, the cowardly, the poor, the tearful - these are mine enemies, and I am come to destroy them. This also is compassion: an end to the sickness of earth. A rooting-out of the weeds: a watering of the flowers.”

or ignore the setting which allowed this to happen? Only in an isolated vacuum could one somewhat rightfully speak of a cause, but there are no vacuums in the universe, there is no isolation: all things are in a continuum – conditioned by each other, or rather by itself. Only when we do violence to the world – that is, when we slice one facet from another & pretend things to be alone with each other – does the idea of causation arise. The thought or feeling of willing is no evidence of agency, but rather evidence of a misunderstanding – our “internal certainties” are falsities. A useful explanation need not be based in reality – more often it is based in convenience.<sup>1142</sup> Some may argue that this strips man of his dignity, of his virtue, of his responsibility... yet one cannot take away something which was never there to begin with.<sup>1143</sup>

## VIII. Errors of essence

The soul is the essence of one's being, so people have said – now that word is often replaced with “consciousness” as if this is more convincing. This modern-day “soul” is not one's essence, it is the reflection on the surface of the water with infinite & unfathomable depths – it is more of a petal than a seed. Consciousness is an evolutionary appendage, adeptly able at confusing itself with “explanations.” There is nothing immovable, stable, or essential about consciousness, let alone “eternal.” But why can we not be satisfied in being a ripple? The eternal self can only be an identification with all things – but then there is no self left over as one thinks of it.

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1142 A reference to Nietzsche's *Gay Science* where he writes “Life is no argument. The conditions of life might include error.”

1143 A reference to Mark Twain's essay “What is Man?” where an old man is telling a young man that there is no free will: “Young Man: Doesn't it somehow seem to take from the dignity of the deed? Old Man: If there is dignity in falsity, it does. It removes that.” One cannot take away something which was never there to begin with.

## CHAPTER 44

# APOPTHEGMS AND INTERLUDES

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*These aphorisms were written mostly in 2008 and 2009, and were originally grouped together under the title “Various Musings While Walking.” This came from a line from Nietzsche, “All truly great thoughts are conceived by walking,” and virtually all of them were actually conceived while walking. In homage to Nietzsche, this chapter is titled the same as his own chapter of aphorisms in Beyond Good and Evil. Some are more enigmatic than others, some are more polemical, but each are meant to inspire thought in different ways.*

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- Existence is God identifying himself with Man; the Great Work is Man identifying himself with God.
- People don't fear & worship things; they fear & worship the ideals they've built up of things.
- Pure will is to not strive but nonetheless conquer.
- *Physical-spiritual law* – Evolution stagnates without challenge and catastrophe.
- People agree with each other even when they don't truly agree in fear of that primal punishment: exclusion (excommunication).
- Metaphysics consists of misinterpreted metaphors.
- In our metabolism is both catabolism & anabolism; in our circulation, systole & diastole; in our respiration, inhalation & exhalation; in our



conversation, speech & silence. Dialectics dissect our inherent wholeness.

- We are immersed in action. Reason is often after-the-fact or simply puts over-simplified names to the complex interactions of forces at work (e.g. “I am playing the piano.”) Reason does not and can not guide action in the majority of an individual’s circumstances. People act in accordance with their instincts and justify their acts to themselves and others with Reason (or name their instincts with Reason).

- *Things change*: it shows one's character whether one sees this fact as a mark of the sorrow & suffering of the world or a mark of its joy.

- Today we deem any deviation from normal consciousness to be “pathology”; perhaps there's a future where anyone who has never deviated from normal consciousness is deemed “pathological.”

- *Attitude* – All things, even all systems, treated as a means toward our continual transforming & growth – anything treated as an end is the quickest road to stagnation; a gushing river, not a settled pool.

- One knows harmony & satiation to the degree one has experienced dissonance & hunger.

- God & Soul are, have always been, and will always be Perfect. The Perfect doesn't require any further fixing; the only logical thing to do in this case is experience the play of Perfection with the natural attitudes of gratitude & enjoyment.

- *Morality as misgivings* – Our sense of morality grows in proportion to our weakness and fear before the realities of Nature.

- *The taste of ego-dissolution is bittersweet* – Envy, pity, and enmity all

require an ego-concept (a sense of self as separate from the world)... and so do ownership (objects, actions, and even thoughts are no longer “one's own,” for who is there to own things?) and moral responsibility (who is it that is responsible if there aren't separate agents or selves in the world?). The perception of Unity is both wonderful and terrible.

- The faithful person criticizing the rational does not realize the amount of reason in their arguments. The rational person criticizing the faithful does not realize the amount of faith in their beliefs.

- Compassion for the flower is cruelty to the weed and vice versa... but who decides what is a “flower” and what is a “weed”?

- The full expression of life's joys escape us insofar as we forget death's inevitable presence.

- Each moment is its own purpose.

- Can any idea be truly said to be thought by the thinker? Thoughts occur, they are not thought.

- The wise don't search for the One True Opinion but, instead, discard all their opinions; likewise, the awakened don't search for the One True Thought but, instead, discard all thoughts. The knowledgeable have conquered knowledge; the thoughtful have conquered thought.

- Raja yoga is the flame of concentration. Bhakti yoga is the ocean of all-encompassingness. Jnana yoga is the dagger of discrimination. Karma yoga is the spinning disk of detached action.

- The artist is one who creates beauty out of ridiculous and arbitrary restrictions.

- Having a powerful mind is one of the best gifts one can receive. Having a powerful mind is one of the worst curses one can endure.
- *Equilibrium* – It's more pleasurable and instructive to rise from a great depth than to maintain a steady balance.
- Language is communication that asserts division and differentiation (subject & object). Music is communication which unites in resonance.
- *Identity* – a calamitous cage for the ignorant, and a persona-play for the wise.
- Music is crystallized will.
- Lust for experience is not a means to an end, a purpose towards some thing; it is an end in itself. The lust of man is the boundless blossoming of the flower.
- *The Mystic Experience* – Infinite in Identity, Finite in Appearance; Immediate yet Ineffable; Uniform in its Essence, Diverse in its Expression; Inexhaustible in Name and Image yet inevitably Inconceivable with the Mind; Ultimately unspeakable in the end although endlessly spoken about.
- Solitude, not loneliness. Communion, not assimilation.
- Our perceptual framework is overlaid by a syntax reinforced by language: there exists a subject (noun) separate from some object/non-subject performing some action/verb. Is the syntax “true” or simply economical for the body?
- Man's lot is not to live & survive but to develop & conquer; that is,

extend one's self beyond oneself.

- *The world* – Arbitrary... but how beautiful! & wondrous!
- *The many change and pass, the One remains* – Transitive verbs are misleading; all things are the various modifications of a unified Subject in itself, and therefore as a whole it is never modified. The deed, the doer of the deed, and the situation which makes the deed possible are all arbitrary distinctions in the unified Subject.
- *Ideal* – The body athletic; the mind elastic; the emotions energetic; the spirit ecstatic.
- Even as the powerful body demands a physical overcoming for satiation, so too does the powerful mind seek continuous psychological overcoming.
- To criticize and complain is to set one's motive outside oneself – to create is to relocate it within.
- *A parable of Will & Reason* – When we get to a certain rhythmic motion while on a bicycle, at a certain point one does not even need to touch the handlebars, let alone direct them, to avoid crashing.
- You enjoy yourself most when your self is lost in the enjoying.
- Korzybski reminds us that “the map is not the territory”: *the mind can only be a map-maker*.
- Peace is unrestricted movement.
- God – and Soul, being One in Essence with God – are beyond all

quality. God (and Soul) become intelligent, strong, purposeful, capable, cunning, productive, and wise (and their opposites!) only insofar as He becomes Man. Where Man is not, God is barren.

- Purpose is the mind's attempt to understand the chaotic & voracious Motion of things.

- *Attainment as Understanding, not Sacrifice* – It is self-sacrifice for the minister (ego) to acknowledge he works for the King (Will) only when the minister mistakenly believes he is the King. The only thing sacrificed is a misunderstanding.

- The harshest critics are always the disciples.

- Spiritual attainment does not correct all the “ills” in the world: a world without corruption & chaos is a fantasy world. Many people look to spiritual attainment to end all sorrows and obtain the good life, but this is only a delusional phantom. Attainment doesn't change the world, it changes the perception of the world. The world is constantly changing; change implies motion; motion implies friction; friction implies conflict: the only way to escape this world is to falsify it.

- To act reasonably is not necessarily to act in accordance with Reason.

- *The Tower* – Magick (and Yoga) means disintegration and corruption; one expands oneself by knocking down & dissolving boundaries.

- Our notion of the world can only be a useful fiction.

- *Strength is not invulnerability* – it takes great strength to allow oneself to be vulnerable to oneself and others.

- Perhaps one gives up selfish motives only for more subtle forms thereof.
- *God & Worship* – First we said there are many Gods but ours is the true God; then we said there is no other God but God; now we say there is no God but Man. If God is Man, the World is a process of Self-Exploration. If God is Man and Worship is celebration of the Highest part of some-thing, then our Worship is love of great Men & Women. Worship is to raise Man to its fullest development (if a pinnacle can ever be found) and celebrate Us in all Our diversity... for there is no other god.
- *Ineffability* – It is said that “those who know do not speak, those who speak do not know,” but it is rather that they can not say. It is then, at this point, the job of the philosopher to complain and the job of the artist to create & re-arrange.

## CHAPTER 45

# 0-1-2 THEORY OF PHENOMENOLOGY

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*This was written in late 2008 and its form is influenced by Wittgenstein's Tractatus Logico-Philosophus. The theory is phenomenological and therefore seeks to explain the world as it is experienced subjectively by each individual. It can be read by going from point 1.0 to 2.0 to 3.0 and then reading the sub-points that expand on the original points.*

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**1.0: This is a theory about phenomenology – that is, about the world as it is experienced.**

- 1.1: This theory does not make metaphysical claims about the nature of the world, but rather the ways of approaching or viewing the nature of the world.
  - 1.11: Experiencing these “states” may give rise to various metaphysical claims.
    - 1.111: An approach from state “2” (4.0-4.21) might give rise to viewing the world as “many” (pluralism) whereas an approach from state “1” (5.0-5.31) might give rise to viewing the world as “one” (monism).
    - 1.112: It would be hard to approach anything from 0-state (3.0-3.12).
  - 1.12: If any metaphysical claim can be made, it is that the world may be experienced in multiple ways (1-state and 2-state) and therefore explanation coming from one state may not apply to another.
    - 1.121: In this case, it would be beneficial (in the sense of more encompassing) to accept the world as both “one” and “many” (As Nietzsche does with his conception of the

world in *Will-to-Power* and Crowley does with his pronouncement that the world is both “None [which corresponds in this case with the 1-state] and Two”).

- 1.13: Propositions hold different amounts of conviction in different “states.”
  - 1.131: For example, in the “2-state,” the ego’s reality seems obvious and apparent but in the “1-state” it seems obviously to be a misnomer or mistake.

**2.0: There are three possible “states” of experience, called “0,” “1,” and “2” (or “Many”) based on their characteristics.**

- 2.1: The 0 state is discussed in point 3.
- 2.2: The 2 state is discussed in point 4.
- 2.3: The 1 state is discussed in point 5.

**3.0: The phenomenological state “0” is that which we know as “unconsciousness.”**

- 3.1: The 0-state is characterized by lack of awareness.
  - 3.11: Examples include being knocked unconscious, anesthesia, and dreamless sleep.
  - 3.12: In this sense, the 0-state approaches, approximates, and potentially is identical with the phenomenological state of and after death.
  - 3.13: There is a certain state of such absorption in the “1” state where all awareness is obliterated and is phenomenologically identical with the 0-state (e.g. *Shivadarshana*).

**4.0: The phenomenological state “2” (or “Many”) is that which we normally understand as “consciousness.”**

- 4.1: The 2-state is characterized by an awareness consisting of a “subject” which experiences various “objects” as well as an awareness of objects being distinct from one another.
  - 4.11: Because of the apparent opposition of subject & object, this is named the 2-state. Because awareness in the 2-state is not limited to one thing but potentially infinite things, it is also



called the Many-state.

- 4.111: Examples include normal waking consciousness and dream-filled sleep. It also includes abnormal waking experiences such as depersonalization and out-of-body experiences as the subject-object dichotomy is retained.
- 4.2: As mentioned earlier (1.11), viewing the world from the 2-state may give rise to viewing the world as “many” (pluralism).
  - 4.21: Theologically, the opposition often takes the form of God vs. Man or God vs. the World or Heaven vs. Earth; it can also take the form of *nirvana* vs. *samsara* in Dharmic terms, for example.
  - 4.22: Socially, the opposition takes the form of man vs. man, one group vs. another group.
  - 4.23: Perceptually, the opposition takes the form of “me” vs. the environment or subject vs. object.

#### **5.0: The phenomenological state “1” is not normally given a name according to modern psychology like the others.**

- 5.1: The 1-state’s fundamental characteristic is the consideration or understanding of the world (including the normal “self”) as a continuous, unitary phenomenon.
  - 5.11: The necessary corollary of this is “ego dissolution” (the ego diminishes or dissolves into the all) or what may be called “ego expansion” (the ego expands to encompass and identify with the all).
    - 5.111: In either case, the ego as it was known, a phenomenon of partiality, has become coterminous with the world “as a continuous, unitary phenomenon” (c.f. 5.1).
- 5.2: The 1-state retains some characteristics of consciousness (2-state) and some characteristics of unconsciousness (0-state).
  - 5.21: The 1-state retains the characteristics of the 2-state insofar as one is still potentially able to communicate, use memory, complete tasks, *et cetera*, although they may be viewed “in a

different light” even though the normal subject-object duality does not persist.

- 5.22: The 1-state retains the characteristics of the 0-state insofar as the subject-object dichotomy does not persist as well as other divisive (in the sense of separating any “A” from any “not-A”) thoughts.
- 5.23: The 1-state retains many aspects of 2-state consciousness but also retains many aspects of 0-state unconsciousness and therefore the terms “consciousness” and “unconsciousness” are not fitting to describe it.
- 5.3: As mentioned earlier (1.11), viewing the world from the 1-state may give rise to viewing the world as “one” (monism or *advaita* in the sense of “non-dual”).
  - 5.31: The name of this unitary/non-dual substance does not matter but it has been called God, *Brahman*, *Adi-Buddha*, Nature, Energy, The Universe, One/Nothing/All, *et cetera*
    - 5.311: This opposes the dualistic conception of the world as Heaven vs. Earth (see 4.21) and instead comes up with propositions like “Man is God,” (Thelema) “God is Nature,” (Spinoza), or “Nirvana is Samsara” (Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism).

**6.0: These states are not mystical or supernatural in any way but are natural states of an organism.**

- 6.1: These states may be realized in multiple ways.
  - 6.11: The 0-state may be realized, as already mentioned (3.11), through a blow to the head or anesthesia (and potentially infinite other ways).
  - 6.12: The 1-state may be realized through a certain neurological state or shock, ingestion of a certain drug, or lack of sensory stimuli (and potentially infinite other ways).
- 6.2: A hypothesis: The 2-state is simply a state of relative equilibrium which may be brought to the 1-state through excessive

excitatory sensory processes or inhibition thereof.

- 6.3: A paradox?: How could a state which sees all as one (1-state) maintain that its existence arises from natural states which are a partial section of this continuous phenomenon?
  - 6.31: An answer: What is necessary to realize the 1-state is consciousness in some form, and so even if the world was perceived as a continuous phenomenon, the realization of this requires an awareness of sorts.
    - 6.311: Consciousness & perception require a perceptual apparatus (the senses and the neuro-physical composition as a whole).
    - 6.312: “Realizations” are forms of consciousness or perception.

## CHAPTER 46

# THE OUTBURSTS OF BROTHER VICTUS

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*The Outbursts of Brother Victus, which originally included the subtitle “The impetuous wanderings of a delusional mind,” was written over a period of five days in 2007. One “outburst” was written per day; they were each written at a table that looked out to the Pacific Ocean. I would get a general idea of what I wanted to write – or more often it was actually a powerful image or series of images that I wanted to convey – then I would write down each Outburst. I consider them “inspired” writings: I wrote each Outburst start to finish without stopping, and the original manuscript has virtually no corrections or edits.*

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## The First Outburst

### Birthpangs of V.

### ...and the issuing forth of the Wandering Lords

Who is this brother Victus and from whence does he come?

V. is but as a bundle of rags, a tumbleweed, or a sandcastle. Various ever-changing substances make up the physical constituents we often call the body, and various ever-changing substances make up the psychic constituents we often call the mind, the personality, the psyche, and others. A mighty river, roaring and laughing, is V.

As one river may come from another, but all ultimately return to the Boundless Ocean, so is V. one river amongst infinite others. V.’s words are as the natural rushings of delight of the river. These words are at once the fiery echoes of one soul and also the reverberations of timeless archetypes, common to all existences.

Why should the inane babblings of such “V.” be worthy to be set in ink? What official, authorized decree demanded the distribution of such daring diatribes? None. V. is as an aggregate of experience, synthesizing and organizing and presenting a new sublime Arrangement for the World. Other such entities may use this or not – whatever they deem successful.

Is V. an illustrious adept or a miserable worm? He is both of these but ultimately neither as he knows such masks to be restrictive to his movements. We may merely admit “V. is” and it is his nature to speak.

Truly, let all the doubts pass and we shall hear the pronouncements of V.:

0. The Supreme Reality which is the Ultimate Nameless begets all, transforms all, destroys all, and transcends all.

1. This Nameless is a continuum – a unity which extends infinitely in all directions.

2. The Ultimate Nameless is the source of Existence, which is the complementary conflict of dualities.

3. The interaction between a Perceiver and that-which-is-Perceived gives rise to the appearance of the Universe and its infinite forms.

2. The Universe is a Fool’s Knot, resolved into its natural Equilibrium when this Two unites to One.

1. In this are all opposites resolved and Reality is seen to reside in that Joy beyond sorrow and happiness.

0. Though It abides in ecstasy, the Wheel continues to turn and the Universe proceeds in accordance with Its Will.

V. is as a burning star, whirling in delight through the expanse of Space. About him cluster the Lords of the Night of Time, the Wandering Lords that make the Harmony of the Spheres. Unto each, V. beseeches to learn their Lesson.

First, from the black depths of Eternity arises the terrible visage of Time – He is Saturn, devouring his children, and She is Kali, dancing

triumphant on the corpse of Shiva. From This emanates the worlds: “I crush the adamantine fortresses and gobble the galaxies. Time is one condition, one rule, in the game of my Play: the World. That which exists will soon come to rest in the infinite cavern of my belly. Therefore be thou without attachment; for all waves crash upon the shore, but all eventually retract into the Sea. The musical vibrations of song grace our ears but eventually fade back into the omnipresent Silence. The Being who walks in conformity with my Law: he Goes as an eternally self-spinning Wheel, with the water droplets of Experience not clinging to the frame.”

Next, Jupiter comes in a round of regal overtones: “Thou art King of thine own universe,” he speaks. “Therefore rule all with the merciful hand of Love. All must be allowed to expand and move in its appointed, natural motion in thine Kingdom. Therefore, also, Love all Things – and this means come into Right Relation with them, while understanding and appreciating their part of the Whole.”

Mars bursts out in a flurry of swords and crushed yells: “The Will is paramount and all in its path must be utterly obliterated,” declareth he. “All that hinders the one-pointedness of the Will shall be abolished. The King must order his Kingdom as a doctor would treat an ailing body, or a gardener would treat a weed-ridden garden. Those factors restricting or prohibiting the full potential, the full expression of the Self must be eliminated.”

The Sun beams forth the Radiant Light of Truth and proclaims that, “All is one. Thy star is but one in the Continuum of the Ultimate Nameless. Therefore, harmonize thy universe into a Whole, for in Reality there is naught but this. Keep this knowledge of the Unity-of-all-things always in mind, even in times when thou art thou and I am I.”

The delicate leaves of luster illuminate the lavish likeness of Venus: “All is joy! All is beautiful!” pronounceth she. “Each thing is a perfect facet in the Omni-Gem of Unity. Bind all things into the radiance of this Gem and abide in the multitudinous Glory of its reflections.”

Mercury chimes in with a sweet voice of harmony: “Seek

equilibrium in all things,” he advises, “and order the Mind to react elastically to all circumstances. Unite each thought to its opposite and realize the fatuity of all these thoughts, all speech, and all knowledge. Then shalt thou arise Master of both sides.”

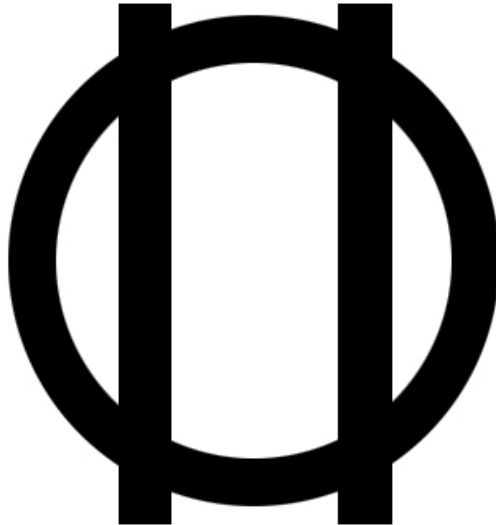
The Moon gleams and glamorously gabs, “All is flux, the waxing and waning of my veil. Therefore, flow with the River and press ever onwards to conquer new ideas, worlds, and things.” And as soon as she had come, she flutters onward to ever pursue her course.

All these whirl around an invisible and unfathomable core, which issues, understands, and integrates all things. V. abides in this center and contemplates the proclamations of the Lords that Wander.

## ————— *The Second Outburst* —————

*[original content lost]*

This is offered to replace the original content of the Second Outburst:



# *The Third Outburst*

## **The whole in the part, and the cosmic body**

Although V. is but part of the Whole, his Being bursts forth the infinitudes of the cosmos. To V., each thing is a symbol, all swirling together in one turbulent system. All things appear as a portion of a patchwork, woven together by the thread of Love.

V.'s heart overflows with the rapturous embrace of life – it brings forth galaxies and burns like the core of a sun. What terrible acquaintance can V. not bind together in his heart?

V.'s mouth chomps at the bit of life. The vibrations of thought find expression in his Words and his Songs. V. builds a mountain of discourse with Apollonian accuracy, and V. dissolves all in the Dionysian love-cry to Eternity. V. begets like the first fiery gestations of Time, and he devours with the greedy hunger of a fresh kill. What can satisfy his ravenous depths?

V.'s feet leap like a goat and shuffle like a monk. Each person marches to their own drummer, and V.'s is an enchanting rhythm. Endlessly undulating throughout the aeons, V. knows even his rest to be part of the Great Motion. Abiding in sublime simplicity, V. knows even his greatest strides to be but a facet in the cosmic Egg of Rest. What Motion may further fuel his Joy?

V.'s mind comprehends as the vast womb of space engulfs the milky span of stars. V. is both an architect and a builder – he is both a judge and an executioner. Beneath these chaotic complements lies the still pool of Suchness, where all thought is as a rippling contamination upon the empty fullness of its magnanimity. Though cloaked in stillness, the roots of omnipotence branches out in Its depths. From this, V. buds forth with the flowers of Ecstasy.

V. hath bloomed like a rose, expanding and opening unto the



Light. Now, V. retracts himself like a turtle into his shell, so he may abide in the silent peace of Darkness.

## *The Fourth Outburst*

### The God-puzzle

V. dances and rejoices in the playgrounds of Eternity. The planets and star clusters are but parts of the game of cosmic motion.

But what of God in such a Universe?

God is as an extra piece in V.'s jigsaw puzzle. All interweaves into a harmonious Whole – what need is there for such a thought? Had V. not heard such a word, would not the trees still take root – would not the Sun's illimitable exuberance still grace our world?

It is said that God is the greatest good. Show V. the greatest evil and he will kneel with equal respect. Can a one-sided coin be said to exist? V. can not acknowledge a God who's omnipotence does not work with both the hands of mercy and of severity.

The Universe is a perfect and boundless system. How shall we limit the illimitable? For each mask we affix to the indefinable, we constrain the universal Word to a smaller expression. The universe? Nature? God? Each name contains a sliver of truth at the expense of the whole reality. V. sees no benefit in such labels – he would rather go his Way, and perform his acts of Love amidst the Ultimate Nameless.

Many look to the heavens for consolation. V. gazes up to the sky and knows himself to be part of the brotherhood of stars. He cleans his diamond-heart in the furnace of meditation, and the Child-Voice of Eternity bellows from within. The thread of divinity does not weave the boundary of unreachable heights – it weaves itself through our innermost places. All is a beautiful, though unruly, tapestry!

# *The Fifth Outburst*

## **The turning of seasons, and the clumsiness of grammar**

In V.'s head lies winter wisdom, in his arms is the fragile touch of autumn, in his legs is the strong solace of summer, and in his heart is the eternal spring. V. takes his delight in all the seasons, binding the highest to the lowest into a pillar of Love.

What could possibly trouble V., who rides upon the ever-changing Wheel of ecstasy? His enemies lie in wait with subtle disguises. V. proclaims his most nefarious foe to be part of the very fabric of his own manifestation: grammar! For, that which utters "I" utters falsehood.

V. wishes to speak, but he knows there to be no subject nor object. Shall he keep his silence, lest his tongue confuses his heart? Nay. V. hath affixed himself in equilibrium between This and That, and he knows them in truth to be one. This double wand V. wields as he proclaims those many falsehoods that may only point towards Truth.

V. paints a landscape through the tricks of color to express that place of Beauty wherein he abides. As a smell digs up memories past, V.'s paintwork brings forth the rapture of all in the hearts of men. V. strikes the loud chord of Unity so all sympathetic souls may resonate with him.

Through such speech, V. finds Silence.

## CHAPTER 47

# A COMMENTARY ON THE OUTBURSTS OF BROTHER VICTUS

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*This commentary was written a few months after the original Outbursts. I wanted to write down a commentary while I still remembered the various implications and allusions with which the Outbursts were charged. It is intended to aid the reader in potentially appreciating the Outbursts in a deeper and richer way.*

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The very title of this work demands further investigation. The full title is “The Outbursts of Brother Victus, or the impetuous wanderings of a delusional mind.” Here we have an almost self-deprecating subtitle, calling the mind “delusional” and its wanderings “impetuous.” Why this is comes out only in the Fifth Outburst when it is written: *“What could possibly trouble V., who rides upon the ever-changing Wheel of ecstasy? His enemies lie in wait with subtle disguises. V. proclaims his most nefarious foe to be part of the very fabric of his own manifestation: grammar! For, that which utters 'I' utters falsehood.”*

Here V. admits the fatuity of speech because of the constraints of grammar, specifically that of the necessity of using a subject that is distinct or in division from an object. In this way, V. is saying that these writings are not absolute truth, but fingers pointing to the moon, so to speak, and the danger in confusing the map for the territory is great. Therefore, all these writings are denounced as both “impetuous” and “delusional.”

Even so, V. dares to speak them, so let us dare to understand them.

# **The First Outburst**

## **Birthpangs of V.**

### **...and the issuing forth of the Wandering Lords**

“The Outbursts of Brother Victus” are composed of five “outbursts” that vary in length. The very use of the term “outburst” connotes something specific. An outburst naturally follows the overflowing of some container, and V. is overflowing with life-intoxication. These writings therefore spring naturally from him, as he confirms by calling them “wanderings” of the mind, and elsewhere within the text itself.

The first outburst is entitled “Birthpangs of V. and the issuing forth of the Wandering Lords,” the most esoteric of the titles. Here we have a typical religious (and even psychological) process of death to the former “self” and a rebirth as a new more whole self. A second “spiritual” birth is common to many religions, and here the individual has become V., a sort of name for the adept or a name for that consciousness that typifies V. In an occult sense, V. is a neophyte and knows the truth that Kether (One) is in Malkuth (Many) & Malkuth in Kether, but after another manner. There are often themes of the higher (Kether) and lower (Malkuth) being joined in one. Even so, V. makes absolutely no claims to various occult “grades” or any kind of specific “spiritual attainment.”

The “issuing forth of the Wandering Lords” refers to the seven classical planets as symbolic of the workings of the macrocosm. It is commonly known in Western occultism as stated above in Qabalistic terms that “as above, so below” (from the Emerald Tablet of Hermes), and the macrocosm of planets mirrors the inner workings of the microcosm of V. (in particular his psyche, and the various aspects of the collective unconscious within).

Now we turn to the text itself:

## **Who is this brother Victus and from whence does he come?**

First we have an introduction of sorts to V., who is understood to be Victus. This name means both “way of life,” and “sustenance” itself as the word “victuals” attests to. Also, this name refers to the verb “to conquer” but in the past tense – therefore, Victus is the name of one who has conquered themselves and become the way of life itself.

There are many other meanings to “V” by itself. Examples of this include V being 5 in Roman numerals and 6 in Hebrew (Vav), therefore reflecting  $5 = 6$ , the union of Microcosm and Macrocosm. The shape of V suggests 2 merging into 1 or 1 expanding into 2. “V” is also related to many other words, including “Via,” “Veritas,” and “Vita,” the way, the truth, and the life. One may study the 4<sup>th</sup> Aethyr in *The Vision and the Voice* for even further meanings.

**V. is but as a bundle of rages, a tumbleweed, or a sandcastle. Various ever-changing substances make up the physical constituents we often call the body, and various ever-changing substances make up the psychic constituents we often call the mind, the personality, the psyche, and others. A mighty river, roaring and laughing, is V.**

Here a very Buddhist conception of the self is given with both the body and mind of V. being proclaimed to be impermanent and composed of various “constituents.” Even in the face of such temporality, V. is a “roaring and laughing” river: a conception of ever-flowing force and the joy that comes from the exertion thereof.

**As one river may come from another, but all ultimately return to the Boundless Ocean, so is V. one river amongst infinite others. V.’s words are as the natural rushings of delight of the river. These words are at once the fiery echoes of one soul and also the reverberations of timeless**

**archetypes, common to all existences.**

Here the “river of V.” is understood as one river among many that come from a “Boundless Ocean” – a symbolic conception of the infinite – and therefore V. recognizes himself as part of a greater whole that he is born from and returns to.

Secondly, we understand that these words, this entire work of “The Outbursts” are the “natural rushings of delight” of himself, and therefore once again these Outbursts are seen to be the natural overflowing of delight and not a “forced” intellectual treatise.

Further, V. claims that although these words come from one individual, their import is universal across humanity.

**Why should the inane babblings of such “V.” be worthy to be set in ink? What official, authorized decree demanded the distribution of such daring diatribes? None. V. is as an aggregate of experience, synthesizing and organizing and presenting a new sublime Arrangement for the World. Other such entities may utilize this information or not – whatever they deem successful.**

Here V. answers whether his writings are even worth reading and whether some society or authority decreed them. His answer is that there is no justification nor authority, simply a new “Arrangement for the World” being presented, and others may use this or not as they deem fit. V. asserts that “whatever they deem successful,” acknowledging the relative and highly diverse circumstances that individuals find themselves in.

**Is V. an illustrious adept or a miserable worm? He is both of these but ultimately neither as he knows such masks to be restrictive to his movements. We may merely admit “V. is” and it is his nature to speak.**

V. once again addresses the questioning of his authority by announcing he is both an adept and “a miserable worm,” images of the highly exalted and lowest misery of man respectively. V. sees these labels as “restrictive to his movements” and simply says it is his nature to speak, and therefore there is no justification – just as a flower has no justification for blooming but does so in accordance with its own nature, so does V. issue this treatise.

### **Truly, let all the doubts pass and we shall hear the pronouncements of V.:**

We now have seven lines of text arranged according to number. The very numbers of this sequence are important: they begin with zero, proceed to three, and return to zero – exactly as V. said he came from a Boundless Ocean (identified with the zero here) and will return thereto. These pronouncements, being in the very First Outburst, mirror Eastern spiritual classics like the *Tao Teh Ching* in that they assert the most fundamental, universal, and unfortunately paradoxical truths in the first chapter. The total of 7 lines shows it is of the nature of Love<sup>1144</sup> and Perfection, showing the harmony with the Divine Trinity with the mundane quaternity.

### **0. The Supreme Reality which is the Ultimate Nameless begets all, transforms all, destroys all, and transcends all.**

V. asserts something called “The Supreme Reality” and calls it “the Ultimate Nameless,” once again hearkening back to the restriction of labels and names. This conception is nearly identical to that in the *Tao Teh Ching* where it is said “the Tao that is spoken of is not the Tao.” This “Ultimate Nameless” has the power of creation, preservation (or more accurately, transformation), and destruction (much like the Hindu conceptions of the Trimurti or the powers of any supreme God), showing

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1144 7 is the number of Netzach, the Qabalistic Sefirah of Venus or Love.

no force to be outside this conception. Therefore this Supreme Reality contains the idea of omnipotence. It also “transcends” this trinity, not being limited thereto, similar to that which is said in the *Bhagavad Gita*, “I, who am all, and made it all, abide its separate Lord.”

The term “Ultimate Nameless” undoubtedly comes from *Liber LXV*, II:46, yet V. was not entirely familiar with the text at the time. He'd surely read it before yet it was actually several years later that he realized the very same term was used in that Holy Book.

### **1. This Nameless is a continuum – a unity which extends infinitely in all directions.**

In this next line, the “Nameless” is understood to be a continuum, which naturally transcends opposites (once again an attack against the dialectics of the mind and their attempt to clothe the unclothe-able). Since it is “a unity which extends infinitely in all directions,” this Nameless also contains the idea of omnipresence. It can be seen as parallel to the spatial infinity of Nuit as when She mentions “the consciousness of the continuity of existence.”<sup>1145</sup>

This line, referring to the “unity” of the Nameless, is appropriately in line 1 (1 being the numerical symbol of unity).

### **2. The Ultimate Nameless is the source of Existence, which is the complementary conflict of dualities.**

Next this Nameless is understood to be the source of “the complementary conflict of dualities” which gives rise to that thing we understand as “Existence.” Here life itself is understood in terms of dualities, much like the Tao is understood to manifest in the polarities of yin and yang. Appropriately, this is the second line, referring to duality.

It is notable that there is an “Ultimate Nameless” and an

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1145 *Liber AL*, I:26.



“Existence.” These are simply different names for the fundamental Thelemic ontology of “None and Two” or simply 0 and 2.

### **3. The interaction between a Perceiver and that-which-is-Perceived gives rise to the appearance of the Universe and its infinite forms.**

In the third line we have a reaffirmation of this doctrine of the Universe (or “Existence”) coming from the interplay of two things, which are in this case “a Perceiver” and “that-which-is-Perceived.” This interplay between these two particular dualities is what gives rise to Perception, the sense of awareness, i.e. the perception that there is anything at all in the first place. This doctrine is nearly identical to the Hindu conception of Creation where Purusha, the unified “First Man,” thinks “This am I” (or “That am I”) and in this proclamation commits the blunder (or perhaps it was entirely intentional?) of creating the dualistic universe, starting from the first split of duality (the first “word”).

This line is the third line, and represents the two, the duality, splitting into infinite different forms. This conception is similar to the Tao, which states something like “From the Tao came the two, from the two came the three, and from the three came ten thousand things [the Chinese phrase that points to infinite things although under the figure of 'ten thousand']”. After this line we return to 2.

### **2. The Universe is a Fool’s Knot, resolved into its natural Equilibrium when this Two unites to One.**

The Universe is then asserted under the figure of a “Fool’s Knot,” which is a knot in rope that looks quite complicated and unravel-able but in fact untangles easily by pulling with the right amount of force. There is a further occult meaning, which relates to “The Fool” of the Tarot, under the number of 0 (the number of continuity & unity-beyond-attributes). The “Fool’s Knot” is also a reference to the title of chapter 61 in Crowley’s

*Book of Lies.*

The “Equilibrium” is restored when the “Two unites to One” as when the fool’s knot is pulled out and seen to be a coherent unity. This refers to the mystical experience of uniting subject and object in one’s consciousness, known as *samadhi* to the Hindu yogis. In our ontology, it might be said to be named “becoming Naught.” The Naught or 0 is always in Equilibrium as 0 represents the union and annihilation of opposites of 1 and -1 (or simply  $x$  and  $-x$ ).

**1. In this are all opposites resolved and Reality is seen to reside in that Joy beyond sorrow and happiness.**

In this next line, another line attributed to the number 1, we see that once the Two is united back into One, “Reality is seen to reside in that Joy beyond sorrow and happiness.”

“Reality” is seen in the One, not in the Many, although there is a relative reality to those things in the Many (wood may float on water, although they are One). In no case does V. ever speak of rejecting the many, earth, or “illusion” – in fact, V. consistently speaks of his embrace thereof.

Here we also see a conception of “Joy” (capitalized to obviously distinguish it from the lower-case “joy” or “happiness”) that transcends notions of duality – sorrow & happiness. This “Joy” is identical with the *ananda* (“bliss”) of Hindu sages, who include it as one of three parts of reality: *sat-chit-ananda* (usually translated as “being, consciousness, bliss”).

**0. Though It abides in ecstasy, the Wheel continues to turn and the Universe proceeds in accordance with Its Will.**

Now, V. refers to this Nameless as “It” (similar to that Hindu conception of “That” or *tat*, identified with Brahman, the limitless

godhead).<sup>1146</sup> Further, he identifies It with the symbol of a “Wheel” (appropriate as this is line 0, 0 being another form of the symbol of the circle or wheel of infinity). It is specifically identified with the axle of this Wheel which remains motionless as the Universe turns around it.

Here we have a dynamic (as opposed to static) conception of this Reality that resides “in that Joy beyond sorrow and happiness” – although “It abides in ecstasy” (another reference to *ananda* that is a natural product of union of opposites), the Universe still proceeds in accordance with the Universal Will – understood as *karma* by Hindu and Buddhist cultures, and various scientific laws in the Western scientific scheme (especially Newton’s Law that every cause produces an equal and opposite reaction).

**V. is as a burning star, whirling in delight through the expanse of Space. About him cluster the Lords of the Night of Time, the Wandering Lords that make the Harmony of the Spheres. Unto each, V. beseeches to learn their Lesson.**

In passing from this numerical arrangement, we return to the more normal prose, signifying a shift of topic.

V. compares himself to a star, recalling the statement found in Thelema that “Every man and every woman is a star.”<sup>1147</sup> A sort of mandala-like symbol is formed here, with “a burning star” at the core and the “Lords of the Night of Time” – a name for the seven classical planets in Western occultism – all orbiting around this core. This entire mandala-conception is named “the Harmony of the Spheres.” Each facet of this arrangement psychologically represents an aspect of the collective unconscious, an archetype, potentiality, or facet of one’s self that may be integrated and so bring the entire being to a “higher level.”

Jung often spoke of the conscious assimilation of unconscious contents, and so this section may be viewed as a voluntary invocation of

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1146 See references to “IT” in *Book of Lies*, chapters 31, 49, and elsewhere.

1147 *Liber ALI:3*.

the various powers of V.'s psyche, understood in a figure as the seven planets around the "star" of V.'s true or inner self.

**First, from the black depths of Eternity arises the terrible visage of Time – He is Saturn, devouring his children, and She is Kali, dancing triumphant on the corpse of Shiva. From This emanates the worlds: "I crush the adamantine fortresses and gobble the galaxies. Time is one condition, one rule, in the game of my Play – the World. That which exists will soon come to rest in the infinite cavern of my belly. Therefore be thou without attachment; for all waves crash upon the shore, but all eventually retract into the Sea. The musical vibrations of song grace our ears but eventually fade back into the omnipresent Silence. The Being who walks in conformity with my Law: he Goes as an eternally self-spinning Wheel, with the water droplets of Experience not clinging to the frame."**

The planets come forth in traditional occult order of Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Venus, Mercury, Luna.<sup>1148</sup> One might say this is the order of how far the planets appear to be from Earth (although Venus would look closer than Mercury presumably as one exception), but really there is no "order": they are all important and different facets, just like an arm, a nose, a leg, and a kidney are all important facets of the body.

First, Time (finite) emerges from Eternity (infinite) – the infinite is cloaked in the finite and relations of time & space appear and "from This emanates the worlds." This entity of Time is identified with both Saturn and Kali, emphasizing the androgynous (or hermaphroditic) nature of this being (or one might say "power" or "force" so as to not implicitly posit a separate being nor overly anthropomorphize it). The conceptions of both Saturn and Kali are traditionally violent, with the former eating his children and the latter trampling the body of Shiva and wearing a necklace of fifty decapitated heads. This does not necessarily mean that this force is "evil," but rather from the individual perspective this force is

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1148 This is the order that, if one were looking at the Qabalistic Tree of Life, going from the "top" to the "bottom," symbolic of the process of creation or – in this case – birth.

often perceived as malignant. Even so, the force – understood under the symbol of a “Lesson,” which is the issuing forth of force from the unconscious potentiality – must be assimilated or one will remain “incomplete” and fragmented.

The essential lesson here is that, in the world, all things are temporary and eventually perish – a truth often contemplated by the Buddhist under the name of *anicca* (“impermanence”), which is understood to be one of three conditions of all existence. To counter this, we are bidden to “be thou without attachment.” The doctrine of non-attachment is common to many older systems including Taoism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and even Thelema in the west<sup>1149</sup>.

Once again, one “who walks in conformity with my Law” is one who “Goes” – a dynamic conception of “enlightenment” as opposed to static where one might sit dumbly in a “Heaven” without action. The power “To Go” is considered the 5<sup>th</sup> Power of the Sphinx that one attains with the harmony of the other 4 Powers, and – similarly – the power of a God is to Go, as shown in the symbol of the Ankh being that of a sandal-strap.

Also, it should be mentioned that the World is called “my Play,” which can be interpreted in a few ways. First of all, a play is a sort of show that is put on, comedy and/or tragedy ensues, and it ends with everyone afterward understanding it was only a play although they are fulfilled by the experience thereof. That is the perspective of one who works and lives without attachment or “lust of result.” Also, “play” can be simply seen in the sense that a child will play – the world is understood to be an experience of delight that is not to be taken all too seriously. This is similar to the Hindu conception of the world as *lila*, or “play” (usually understood, like in the *Bhagavad Gita*, to be the “play” of Krishna, or some other deity that is considered supreme). All these conceptions are essentially alike in that elements of joy and non-attachment are present, and these might be understood to be the “Lesson(s)” of Saturn.

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1149 *Liber AL*, I:44, “For pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.”

Next, Jupiter comes in a round of regal overtones: “Thou art King of thine own universe,” he speaks. “Therefore rule all with the merciful hand of Love. All must be allowed to expand and move in its appointed, natural motion in thine Kingdom. Therefore, also, Love all Things – and this means come into Right Relation with them, while understanding and appreciating their part of the Whole.”

Jupiter being of kingly disposition himself speaks of kingly things.<sup>1150</sup> V. is told to be a King of his own universe, a conception or symbol that brings strength, sureness, honor, wisdom and also great responsibility. We are told to “rule all with the merciful hand of Love,” both “mercy” and “love” being of the nature of Jupiter.<sup>1151</sup>

By Love he certainly does not mean sloshy sentimentality but “com[ing] into Right Relation” with “all Things.” This means to allow things “to expand and move in [their] appointed, natural motion,” but often some kind of action is needed to take to restore this natural motion (e.g., the natural motion of the Will of the self). Love means union, and “Right Relation” simply means achieving union in a way that fulfills rather than thwarts the nature of those things which are uniting. Duty consists in figuring out what that “Right Relation” is in each situation.

The repetition of the letter “R” is significant as it Qabalistically relates to the Sun, which is also a Kingly planet, but mostly because of words such as “regal,” “rex,” “raj,” “rule,” and other similar words.

**Mars bursts out in a flurry of swords and crushed yells: “The Will is paramount and all in its path must be utterly obliterated,” declareth he. “All that hinders the one-pointedness of the Will shall be abolished. The King must order his Kingdom as a doctor would treat an ailing body, or a**

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1150 Reminiscent of *Liber LXV*, I:11, “Nor is it fitting for the cobbler to prate of the Royal matter. O cobbler! mend me this shoe, that I may walk. O king! if I be thy son, let us speak of the Embassy to the King thy Brother.”

1151 Jupiter is attributed to Chesed, or “Mercy,” on the Qabalistic Tree of Life.

gardener would treat a weed-ridden garden. Those factors restricting or prohibiting the full potential, the full expression of the Self must be eliminated.”

This “Will” is capitalized to distinguish it from a normal sense of willpower, or conscious volition. This Will can only be the natural or true motion of the totality of the self, including both conscious and unconscious factors in harmony. The kingdom or universe of V. is symbolized as an ailing body, and all sicknesses being diversions from “the one-pointedness of the Will.” By eliminating these illnesses, the “body” may come to full health and allow “the full expression of the Self.” The essential lesson of Mars is to eliminate all things that hinder this natural expression of the Self, understood under the figure of the Will.

The repetition of the letter “P” is significant in that it is Qabalistically identified with Mars.

**The Sun beams forth the Radiant Light of Truth and proclaims that, “All is one. Thy star is but one in the Continuum of the Ultimate Nameless. Therefore, harmonize thy universe into a Whole, for in Reality there is naught but this. Keep this knowledge of the Unity-of-all-things always in mind, even in times when thou art thou and I am I.”**

The Sun, a reflection of that supreme inner Star that these seven planets revolve around, is naturally speaking of the Unity of things. The Sun is a symbol of the *imago dei* and the Monad. The essential lesson of Sol is to understand the “Unity-of-all-things” (by harmonizing all into “a Whole,” or One) and always remember this, even in normal dualistic consciousness when subject & object appear. V. consistently has the attitude of accepting and affirming life, even the dualistic life of division full of both happiness and sorrow.

**The delicate leaves of luster illuminate the lavish likeness of Venus: “All is**

joy! All is beautiful!” pronounceth she. “Each thing is a perfect facet in the Omni-Gem of Unity. Bind all things into the radiance of this Gem and abide in the multitudinous Glory of its reflections.”

Venus then proclaims that all experiences of this One, this “Omni-Gem of Unity” (a symbol that recalls the Buddhist mantra *Aum mani padme hum* which is translated loosely as “Aum, the jewel in the heart of the lotus”), are of the nature of joy, beauty, and perfection. This is reminiscent of Thelema’s pronouncement that “Existence is pure joy. The sorrows are but as shadows – they pass & are gone.”<sup>1152</sup>

Once again V. is bidden to understand the unity of all things, but also to “abide in the multitudinous Glory of its reflections.” That is, V. is to perceive the Unity of existence, but also take his joy among the Many, the diverse conditions of normal dualistic existence (the “multitudinous reflections” which imply many as opposed to one.).

The repetition of the letter “L” is significant in that it is the letter of Balance, Libra, which is ruled by Venus.

**Mercury chimes in with a sweet voice of harmony: “Seek equilibrium in all things,” he advises, “and order the Mind to react elastically to all circumstances. Unite each thought to its opposite and realize the fatuity of all these thoughts, all speech, and all knowledge. Then shalt thou arise Master of both sides.”**

Mercury tells V. to (1) “seek equilibrium in all things,” (2) “order the Mind to react elastically to all circumstances,” and (3) “unite each thought to its opposite and realize the fatuity of all these thoughts.”

The first injunction applies to all things, and not just of the mind. The conception of equilibrium runs throughout nearly every religious tradition (the Qabalistic Tree of Life is balanced by two complementary pillars, God in the Christian sense rules the world by both Christ and the

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1152 *Liber AL*, II:9.



Devil, the Jewish God is both merciful and wrathful, the Tao is manifest by the balance of yin and yang, Buddha preached the Middle Way, *et cetera*). Mercury traditionally bears the caduceus, a symbol of interweaving and balanced opposites – a symbol this lesson most likely refers to. As it says in *Liber Librae*, “Equilibrium is the basis of the Work.”

Since Mercury rules Air and the mind in western occultism, he speaks naturally of the mind. V. is told two things that may initially appear to be contradictory – to order the Mind and also to realize the fatuity of the mind – but this is not so. When one sees the opposite of one thought, one realizes the extent that the first thought is both true and false and the extent that the opposite is true and false – only then can one say that one truly understands an idea and “then shalt thou arise Master of both sides.”<sup>1153</sup> Even so, this does not show that thoughts are fatuous or useless. What is meant here is that the mind cannot ever possibly accurately designate or express Truth because Truth is in unity and the mind works in terms of dualities – subject & object, good & bad, light & dark, *et cetera*. Nonetheless, the mind has many uses (and one may even be tempted to use language to speak of various truths as V. obviously is attempting to do here in these Outbursts), and it would be impractical to discard the mind because it is a hindrance at some points.

When one attains to the knowledge of the unity of things, 2 + 2 still equals 4 and leaves are still green. There is a saying in Zen Buddhism: “before *satori* [illumination into the nature of reality], chop wood, carry water. After *satori*, chop wood, carry water.” This knowledge of unity does not stop the spinning of the Wheel of Time, nor does it abrogate one from one’s natural duties; it simply is a switch or transference of the point-of-view. Knowledge of all sorts of things including mathematics, science, the classics, *et cetera* will indelibly help one in the world and add to one’s understanding thereof, so it should not be shunned but ordered neatly.

The most important thing is that the Mind is to “react elastically” to

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1153 Also perhaps a reference to the attainment of Master of the Temple in the Western scheme of grades where one arises as a Master beyond dualities, in the Supernal triangle where contradiction is unity.

all situations, and this means that the Mind must be able to figure the most efficient method of action in the greatest variety of situations – and how may the Mind do this if it has no experience of things like foreign places, mathematics, different languages, different perspective, and so on...?

**The Moon gleams and glamorously gabs, “All is flux, the waxing and waning of my veil. Therefore, flow with the River and press ever onwards to conquer new ideas, worlds, and things.” And as soon as she had come, she flutters onward to ever pursue her course.**

The world is once again shown to be impermanent, in a constant state of flux analogous to “the waxing and waning of [the Moon’s] veil.” We are told to “flow with the River,” an obvious attempt to say not to struggle incessantly against the indefeasible inertia of nature, its inherent flux and reflux, ebb and flow. We are told to “press ever onwards to conquer new ideas, worlds, and things,” once again emphasizing the dynamic nature of things and counseling to move with them like the onrush of a river; this also reflects the Moon as a symbol of spiritual aspiration.

The repetition of the letter “G” is significant insofar as it Qabalistically is attributed to the Moon.

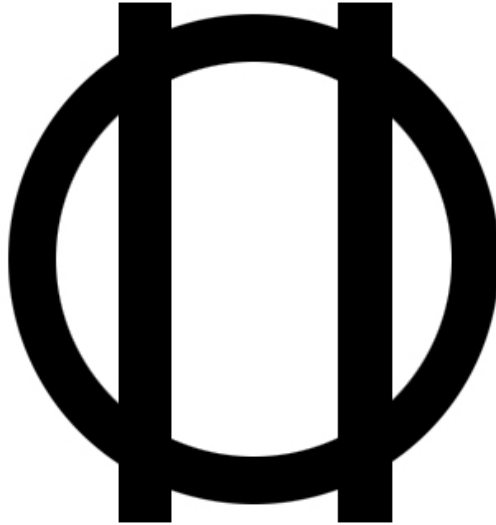
**All these whirl around an invisible and unfathomable core, which issues, understands, and integrates all things. V. abides in this center and contemplates the proclamations of the Lords that Wander.**

These different “entities” are seen to be different facets that issue from a core, like a common mandala image as said before. V. abides in that core, and “contemplates the proclamations of the Lords that Wander.” V. has come through an initiation or an ordeal of sorts (isn’t birth the first universal ordeal of all humanity?) but remains ever calm and unattached, although he is enriched by this experience.

# The Second Outburst

*[original content lost]*

This is offered to replace the original content of the “Second Outburst:”



A lone symbol appears as the “Second Outburst.” No commentary is truly necessary and any words will necessarily be an attempt to contain the uncontainable, but some aspects are worth mentioning. First of all, this symbol shows “pillar established in the void”<sup>1154</sup> or the Lingam being one with the Yoni; from this the Child leaps in laughter. Further there is the doctrine of  $0 = 2$  and  $2 = 0$  being asserted in symbolic form. The 0 expresses itself in vibrational complements of perception.

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1154 See *Liber LXV*, V:5, 23-25.

# **The Third Outburst**

## **The whole in the part, and the cosmic body**

Although V. is but part of the Whole, his Being bursts forth the infinitudes of the cosmos. To V., each thing is a symbol, all swirling together in one turbulent system. All things appear as a portion of a patchwork, woven together by the thread of Love.

V. recognizes himself as part of the whole but a partaker therein. The potencies of the universe are also found within V. He recognizes the cosmos as a “turbulent system” of “swirling” symbols, each “as a portion of patchwork.” This conception is of the universe as both a whole, the whole “blanket” that is being made, and also of the many individuals within as portions of patchwork, and all is “woven together by the thread of Love” – perhaps just a poetic flourish, but all things are declared to be of the nature of joy, beauty, love, *et cetera*, often by V. Love is the law, after all.

**V.’s heart overflows with the rapturous embrace of life – it brings forth galaxies and burns like the core of a sun. What terrible acquaintance can V. not bind together in his heart?**

The focus on these next sections are on various parts of the body of V. and their relations to universal symbols and themes. Here the heart is equated with the burning “core of a sun” – again with stellar symbolism as in the First Outburst.<sup>1155</sup> It is this very overflow that V. speaks of that created these Outbursts, one such “galaxy,” or cluster of ideas, that he may bring forth from his core. In this “rapturous embrace” of all things, V. questions whether there is anything terrible enough to overcome his

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1155 See *Liber AL*, II:6.

overflowing love – a sort of challenge to the universe.

**V.'s mouth chomps at the bit of life. The vibrations of thought find expression in his Words and his Songs. V. builds a mountain of discourse with Apollonian accuracy, and V. dissolves all in the Dionysian love-cry to Eternity. V. begets like the first fiery gestations of Time, and he devours with the greedy hunger of a fresh kill. What can satisfy his ravenous depths?**

Attention now turns to the mouth, where V. once again proclaims his lust for life. The mouth produces words and is said to express “the vibrations of thought” (vibrations being especially appropriate symbols for thoughts since thought is dualistic) in both “Words” and “Songs” – poetry and prose. In this line, V. adopts Friedrich Nietzsche’s aesthetic dichotomy of Apollonian/Dionysian, relating to “Words” and “Songs” respectively. They are the ordered and harmonious expressions (Words) as well as the wild and chaotic ones (Songs).

They are further related to the creation and destruction of things, both of which are “powers” of V.<sup>1156</sup> V. both begets and devours, like the Big Bang or a hungry predator. That is, V. realizes he is God of his Microcosm and therefore has similar god-like powers of creation and destruction. On this note of hunger, V. questions whether anything “can satisfy his ravenous depths” – again, with the tone of a sort of challenge to the universe, this time issued from the mouth.

**V.'s feet leap like a goat and shuffle like a monk. Each person marches to their own drummer, and V.'s is an enchanting rhythm. Endlessly undulating throughout the aeons, V. knows even his rest to be part of the Great Motion. Abiding in sublime simplicity, V. knows even his greatest**

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1156 Qabalistically this doctrine is understood as the balance between the red sphere of Geburah, “Severity,” and the blue sphere of Chesed, “Mercy.” It is also reflected in the doctrine of Pan (“All”) as both Pangenetor (“All-Creator”) and Pamphage (“All-devourer” or “All-destroyer”).

**strides to be but a facet in the cosmic Egg of Rest. What Motion may further fuel his Joy?**

The attention now comes to V.'s feet which both "leap" and "shuffle," emphasizing that he is both active & virile as well as controlled & contemplative.

V. makes a reference to Henry David Thoreau's line about "each person marches to their own drummer," seeing feet as symbols of independent and unique Motion. V. proclaims that his own march is "enchanting" (he is "enchanted" in the same sense that he is "life-intoxicated," in a kind of rapture).

Life itself is compared to a song, "endlessly undulating throughout the aeons," as if Life is an eternal dance. Here V. asserts a sort of paradox of rest in Motion and motion in Rest,<sup>1157</sup> then he challenges again, comparing each Motion – proper to the present contemplation of feet as symbols – or each experience as fuel for "his Joy," the rapture of Experience.

**V.'s mind comprehends as the vast womb of space engulfs the milky span of stars. V. is both an architect and a builder – he is both a judge and an executioner. Beneath these chaotic complements lies the still pool of Suchness, where all thought is as a rippling contamination upon the empty fullness of its magnanimity. Though cloaked in stillness, the roots of omnipotence branches out in Its depths. From this, V. buds forth with the flowers of Ecstasy.**

The architect is to the builder as the judge is to the executioner in the sense that both the architect and judge make the decision, and both the builder and executioner carry out this order. The difference between the architect and the judge is that the former is issuing decisions for construction and the latter is issuing decisions for destruction – once again

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1157 A common paradox, often called Being (Rest) and Becoming (Motion), or Qabalistically expressed as 2=9 and 9=2.

showing V. as both creative and destructive.

This creation and destruction is understood merely as a dichotomy – “chaotic complements” – and V. asserts that there is a sort of third that is transcendent of these opposites, much like the Tao is transcendent of the workings of the yin and yang. He calls this “the still pool of Suchness” and dualistic thought is called a “contamination upon the empty fullness of its magnanimity” – a complete contradiction, something which attempts to jostle the mind out of its normal dichotomized view of things into that very transcendent Suchness that is mentioned.

The symbol of the mind resting as a still body of water with thoughts as ripples obscuring the uncontaminated view comes from Patanjali’s *Yogasutras* and other Hindu and Buddhist literature where it is a fairly common metaphor for the mind. V. says that although this “pool of Suchness” is “cloaked in stillness, the roots of omnipotence brancheth out in Its depths” – in a sense, a warning against thinking “It” impotent by the mere appearance of stillness. This conception of “the roots of omnipotence” branching out to the depths is also a symbol of the unconscious and its seemingly infinite (at least to the conscious ego) potencies. It is a microcosmic reflection of Infinity’s omnipotence being “my hair the trees of Eternity”<sup>1158</sup> or the “Gnarled Oak of God.”<sup>1159</sup>

**V. hath bloomed like a rose, expanding and opening unto the Light. Now, V. retracts himself like a turtle into his shell, so he may abide in the silent peace of Darkness.**

V. “expands” – or exists in extension in space and time – in the world like a blooming rose, “opening unto the Light,” reminiscent of the Rosicrucian symbol of the solar Rose-Cross. It is also reminiscent of the proclamation from the Golden Dawn of “Khabs Am Pekht” or “Light in Extension.” It is a symbolic reflection of 0 blooming or expanding into 2, the Darkness of Naught expanding into multitudinous forms.

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1158 *Liber AL*, I:59.

1159 *Liber A'ash*, line 0.

V. retracts himself, meaning he retracts his attachment/awareness to the senses “like a turtle into his shell,” a conception of *pratyahara* used by Hindu yogis. This is a symbolic reflection of 2 returning to 0, of the dualities abiding in the Silence of Nothing.

## **— The Fourth Outburst —**

### **The God-puzzle**

This Outburst is entitled “The God-puzzle.” So far, the word “God” has not been mentioned once in the text although many analogies to various conceptions of God(s) have been made in the commentary. Here V. finally addresses the inevitable question of “what of God in your universe?” It may be noted that the whole tone of this particular chapter is less formal and given attention with the sort of seriousness of a child at play (as Nietzsche might say). Contemplation of God should not make one feel sorrowful and helpless, it should bring joy and strength. V. therefore talks and reasons with the candor of a child.

**V. dances and rejoices in the playgrounds of Eternity. The planets and star clusters are but parts of the game of cosmic motion.**

Once again, V. sees life as a “playground” where one may “dance and rejoice.” That is, it is not a place of sorrow but a play wherein one may partake in acts of “love under will” which each generate Joy. All things again are asserted to be part of “the game of cosmic motion.” The mention of “playgrounds” and a “game” are indications of a Child-like attitude, i.e. one of openness, energy, and playfulness.



**But what of God in such a Universe?**

**God is as an extra piece in V.'s jigsaw puzzle. All interweaves into a harmonious Whole – what need is there for such a thought? Had V. not heard such a word, would not the trees still take root – would not the Sun's illimitable exuberance still grace our world?**

V. makes a somewhat startling claim that “God is as an extra piece.” The very metaphor reinforces the view of Existence as a play or a game. More specifically, V. is claiming that the *thought* of God “is as an extra piece” in that it is not needed for a coherent view of the self and universe. V. considers God as “a thought” and “a word” and not an *a priori* metaphysical truth. He says that the Sun will still shine even if the thought of God does not arise – life moves forward constantly in all domains – mineral, plant, and animal – and the very idea of God does not even come into play, except in somewhat modern times. Why bog down one's Joy with complex and contradictory metaphysical notions?

**It is said that God is the greatest good. Show V. the greatest evil and he will kneel with equal respect. Can a one-sided coin be said to exist? V. can not acknowledge a God who's omnipotence does not work with both the hands of mercy and of severity.**

V. contests the claim that “God is the greatest good” by saying that the greatest evil deserves “equal respect.” He backs up this claim by asking the rhetorical question “can a one-sided coin be said to exist?” of which the answer is “no,” for all manifestation implies opposites, as asserted above in the First Outburst. V. claims that omnipotence must work “with both the hands of mercy and of severity,” a reference to the balanced pillars of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. The essential assertion is that the common notion of God is lopsided and incomplete.

The Universe is a perfect and boundless system. How shall we limit the illimitable? For each mask we affix to the indefinable, we constrain the universal Word to a smaller expression. The universe? Nature? God? Each name contains a sliver of truth at the expense of the whole reality. V. sees no benefit in such labels – he would rather go his Way, and perform his acts of Love amidst the Ultimate Nameless.

V. now justifies his claim by saying that any label given to “reality,” even “the universe” (or the “Ultimate Nameless”) is essentially constraining upon the thing-in-itself, again reinforcing the fatuity of speech & thought in expressing the Absolute. V. sees no benefit in labels, although he arbitrarily uses one, “the Ultimate Nameless” to be specific, to describe the reality – a name particularly and paradoxically suited to point to the fact that it is Nameless. Again, the motifs of the conception of life as in constant motion and as expressions of love are repeated.

Many look to the heavens for consolation. V. gazes up to the sky and knows himself to be part of the brotherhood of stars. He cleans his diamond-heart in the furnace of meditation, and the Child-Voice of Eternity bellows from within. The thread of divinity does not weave the boundary of unreachable heights – it weaves itself through our innermost places. All is a beautiful, though unruly, tapestry!

V. does not look to some superior or other-worldly force for consolation – instead of looking up to a superior, “he gazes up to the sky and knows himself to be part of the brotherhood of stars.” It is reminiscent of the line from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, “Ye look aloft when ye long for exaltation; and I look downward because I am exalted. Who among you can at the same time laugh and be exalted?”

Next a symbolic conception of the cleaning of “his diamond-heart in the furnace of meditation” is given: the diamond-heart refers again to the Buddhist mantra *Aum mani padme hum* (“Aum, the jewel in the heart

of the lotus”) and essentially refers to that point of illuminated consciousness (*chit* in Hindu terminology). Naturally it is “contaminated” by the diverse thoughts that cluster about it, but it is cleaned “in the furnace of meditation” – for meditation burns away the dross<sup>1160</sup> to reveal this inner illuminated consciousness, just as a gem is made perfect by applying friction to the outside. This illuminated consciousness is understood in dynamic form as “the Child-Voice of Eternity,” for Voice is an active, dynamic thing rather than any image of stillness.

Divinity is asserted not to be in a heaven “of unreachable heights,” but it is found in “our innermost places.” The Kingdom of Heaven is within, as has been said. Once again a proclamation of the beauty of all things, while admitting and accepting the chaos of it all, is given.

## *The Fifth Outburst*

### **The turning of seasons, and the clumsiness of grammar**

**In V.’s head lies winter wisdom, in his arms is the fragile touch of autumn,  
in his legs is the strong solace of summer, and in his heart is the eternal  
spring. V. takes his delight in all the seasons, binding the highest to the  
lowest into a pillar of Love.**

V. sees that the four seasons also find their microcosmic equivalent in himself. The eternal spring in the heart is also a reference to Alexander Pope's line “Hope springs eternal in the human breast.”

Once again V. asserts his transcendence of dualities by “binding the highest to the lowest in a pillar of Love,” a reference to Kether (“the

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<sup>1160</sup> In Hinduism, the term for spiritual austerities and practices is *tapas* which implies heat and burning.

highest”) and Malkuth (“the lowest”) being the extremities of the Middle Pillar of the Qabalistic Tree of Life. Together they form the Infinite Pillar of existence, the *axis mundi* that stands at the center of one's Universe.

**What could possibly trouble V., who rides upon the ever-changing Wheel of ecstasy? His enemies lie in wait with subtle disguises. V. proclaims his most nefarious foe to be part of the very fabric of his own manifestation: grammar! For, that which utters “I” utters falsehood.**

A question arises as to whether any trouble could come to V. who has built such a “pillar of Love.” He admits that there are “subtle enemies,” one of which is grammar itself, the means of manifestation of words. He asserts that the positing of a subject, an “I,” is the positing of a falsehood. Therefore the most nefarious enemies are the ones that come from within that are part of the necessities of living, i.e. the need to think and speak.

**V. wishes to speak, but he knows there to be no subject nor object. Shall he keep his silence, lest his tongue confuses his heart? Nay. V. hath affixed himself in equilibrium between This and That, and he knows them in truth to be one. This double wand V. wields as he proclaims those many falsehoods that may only point towards Truth.**

V. continues on the theme of the previous paragraph by admitting that there is in truth “no subject nor object,” except through the application of dualistic thought. He wonders if he should keep complete silence in fear of inherently uttering falsehoods. He reassures himself of his transcendence of complementary opposites – here understood in terms of perception of “This and That” – and recognizes they can be used to “point towards Truth.” This, as mentioned in the introduction to this commentary, is most likely the foremost reason for subtling this work “the impetuous wanderings of a delusional mind.”

V.'s “double wand” is the duality of thought and speech, likening himself to the Magus, That which created the Universe out of dualities. This entire paragraph is reminiscent of the conversation between Adept and Angel in *Liber LXV*:

*“It is certain that every letter of this cipher hath some value; but who shall determine the value? For it varieth ever, according to the subtlety of Him that made it. And He [V.V.V.V.V.] answered Him [Adonai]: Have I not the key thereof? I am clothed with the body of flesh; I am one with the Eternal and Omnipotent God. Then said Adonai: Thou hast the Head of the Hawk, and thy Phallus is the Phallus of Asar. Thou knowest the white, and thou knowest the black, and thou knowest that these are one. But why seekest thou the knowledge of their equivalence? And he said: That my Work may be right. And Adonai said: The strong brown reaper swept his swathe and rejoiced. The wise man counted his muscles, and pondered, and understood not, and was sad. Reap thou, and rejoice!”*<sup>1161</sup>

**V. paints a landscape through the tricks of color to expresses that place of Beauty wherein he abides. As a smell digs up memories past, V.'s paintwork brings forth the rapture of all in the hearts of men. V. strikes the loud chord of Unity so all sympathetic souls may resonate with him.**

V. compares his using of dualistic words and thoughts to explain reality to a painter expressing a landscape by “the tricks of color” on a two-dimensional surface. Then V. gives a hopeful proclamation that his words will bring others back to their rightful places as partakers of “the rapture of all,” and that his words are like a “loud chord of Unity so all sympathetic souls may resonate with him.”

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1161 *Liber LXV*, V:52-56.

**Through such speech, V. finds Silence.**

V. has found the Silence beyond the dualisms of speech and silence through the manipulations of this dichotomy (whose efficacy and validity were questioned above), just like a finger pointing to the moon. It is like removing a thorn out by the use of a thorn: such is the way to transcend duality while still embracing it.

**None and Two**  
was inspired by certain Taoist diagrams

## CHAPTER 48

# THE SOLAR-SERMONS OF BROTHER VICTUS

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*This text was written in 2009 and was similarly inspired like the Outbursts. It consisted of taking certain lines from the Holy Books which were generally less well-known and essentially writing short sermons on them. This form was inspired by certain sermons by the Christian mystic Meister Eckhart. The commentary, which mostly shows references, appears in footnotes and was added several months later.*

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### SERMON I

*“Thou hast fastened the fangs of Eternity in my soul, and the Poison of the Infinite hath consumed me utterly.”*

*–Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente vel LXV, III:39*

Material poison destroys the body and spiritual poison destroys the self (which itself... comes from the body!) Materially, poison brings ruin; Spiritually, poison brings death... and New Life.<sup>1162</sup> The spirit-sun inside-and-beyond every man and every woman is an inexorable and illuminating star.<sup>1163</sup> Each one wishes to Will its own Law, and each one is clouded by the darkness of Separateness.

“Separateness,” perhaps but not a “Fall”... let alone a collective Fall; “Separateness,” perhaps but not our “Ignorance,”<sup>1164</sup> unless it be the “Ignorance” of a Child, that is, the ecstatically joyous possibility of

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1162 *Liber Stellae Rubae*, line 61, “But I will overcome thee; the New Life shall illumine thee with the Light that is beyond the Stars.”

1163 *Liber AL*, I:3.

1164 Both East and West of all times have asked this question in many forms: “Why is Man separate from God?” The general conception in the West is The Fall of Man and Original Sin. The general conception in the East is Ignorance, *adviya*.



seemingly infinite Knowledge & Understanding in infinite breadth & depth<sup>1165</sup>; “Separateness,” perhaps but not on the Rational-Intentional Command of some Higher Being... unless that Being be Self of our selves, the Becoming of All things!<sup>1166</sup> “Separateness” perhaps, but Separateness is the best game in the world!... it is the world!

Clouds of Separateness cluster around each Star, as well as a mind & body. Each star is both the All, the General, and the Particular, the Individual. The Non-dual must become Dual in order for Experience, Self-reflection, and Interaction.<sup>1167</sup> The Dual (Personality) is what the Non-dual (Im-personality) is Doing at any particular point in space & time.

Many Stars forget their Royal Heritage among the company of heaven<sup>1168</sup>; Man & Woman’s Stars have been lost in deep caverns, peering out only through narrow chinks.<sup>1169</sup> Dare I say some explosives are needed? Or instead: Fangs to pierce our thick hides! Or instead: Poison to corrode the rust & muck away... from a Child’s eyes.

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1165 *Liber AL*, I:28-30, “None, breathed the light, faint & faery, of the stars, and two. For I am divided for love’s sake, for the chance of union. This is the creation of the world, that the pain of division is as nothing, and the joy of dissolution all.”

1166 *Liber Samekh*, Section A:2-4, 9-10, Section Ff:1-3, & Section G:1-2, “Thee, that didst create the Earth and the Heavens. Thee, that didst create the Night and the Day. Thee, that didst create the darkness and the Light... Thou didst make the Female and the Male. Thou didst produce the Seeds and the Fruit... This is the Lord of the Gods: This is the Lord of the Universe: This is He whom the Winds fear... I am He! the Bornless Spirit!... I am He! the Truth!”

1167 *Liber AL*, I:4-5, “Help me, o warrior lord of Thebes, in my unveiling before the Children of men! Be thou Hadit, my secret centre, my heart & my tongue!”; Also, *Liber LXV*, II:4-6, “Stooping down, dipping my wings, I came unto the darkly-splendid abodes. There in that formless abyss was I made a partaker of the Mysteries Averse. I suffered the deadly embrace of the Snake and of the Goat; I paid the infernal homage to the shame of Khem. Therein was this virtue, that the One became the all.”

1168 *Liber AL*, I:2, “The unveiling of the company of heaven.”

1169 William Blake’s *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, “But first the notion that man has a body distinct from his soul is to be expunged; this I shall do, by printing in the infernal method, by corrosives, which in Hell are salutary and medicinal, melting apparent surfaces away, and displaying the infinite which was hid. If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro’ narrow chinks of his cavern.”

The Poison is the Formless Fire,<sup>1170</sup> formless because It exhausts all specific forms, fire because it is wicked and greedy... it holds back nothing, it consumes Everything... distinction being destroyed,<sup>1171</sup> the Center is in All places,<sup>1172</sup> Beginning & End are nowhere. Self is the Fire that consumes self – it has dissolved billions before in infinite wrath and will coagulate billions more in infinite love...

*“Thou hast fastened the fangs of Eternity in my soul, and the Poison of the Infinite hath consumed me utterly.”*

*–Liber Cordis Cincti Serpente vel LXV, III:39*

## SERMON II

*“Eternity is the storm that covereth me.”*

*–Liber A’ash vel Capriconi Pneumatici, line 32*

Eternity is the storm that penetrates me: It is the flaming sword<sup>1173</sup> piercing my heart, my blood leaking out to make the ground fertile. Don’t you know the sight of spilled blood in sunlight is the most beautiful thing?<sup>1174</sup> It is the Sacrament which perpetuates Beauty itself! Eternity is the lightning-arc coursing through my veins, penetrating my veins, becoming my veins: Don’t you know all Lightning Flashes<sup>1175</sup> are followed by a

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1170 Wynn Westcott’s translation of *The Chaldean Oracles*, aphorism 199, “When thou shalt behold that holy and formless Fire shining flashingly through the depths of the Universe: Hear thou the Voice of Fire.”

1171 *Liber AL*, I:22, “Bind nothing! Let there be no difference made among you between any one thing & any other thing; for thereby there cometh hurt.”

1172 *Liber AL*, II:3, “In the sphere I am everywhere the centre, as she, the circumference, is nowhere found.”

1173 In the Hermetic Qabalah, the Path of the Flaming Sword is also the Path of Creation itself; also, here the Flaming Sword brings one into Paradise instead of guarding & keeping one outside as in the Old Aeon, c.f. Genesis 3:24

1174 Aleister Crowley’s *Book 4*, “Very few people know that blood freshly spilled in the sunlight is perhaps the most beautiful colour that is to be found in nature.”

1175 Qabalistically, the Lightning Flash runs through all ten Sephiroth... again, this symbol of destruction, like a flaming sword, is actually coterminous with Creation in

Thunder-Clap whose name is... the Lion-roar of Rapture!<sup>1176</sup>

Eternity is the storm that envelops me: It is the Ocean which swallows up all Rivers, It is the Ground which swallows up all Flowers. Eternity is a war-like Man who slays through laughter<sup>1177</sup> (with the Joke called Existence<sup>1178</sup>): Eternity is a fertile Woman in love with the productions of Time.<sup>1179</sup> It is the Permanence whose name is Now and Forever; It is the Impermanence whose name is Possibility of Love... It is That whose Name is Insatiable Lust and whose Word is... Inexorable Will!<sup>1180</sup>

Eternity is the storm that invigorates me: It is the Pillar of Cloud-Enjoyment in the Day and the Pillar of Fire-Aspiration in the Night.<sup>1181</sup> It is Growth & Death, but death only as possibility for new Growth; It is Work & Sleep, but sleep only as possibility for new Works; It is War & Peace, but peace only as possibility for new Wars.<sup>1182</sup> Yet all our largest strides are minute facets of the Cosmic Egg of Rest,<sup>1183</sup> all of our fights are part of one

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the Hermetic Qabalah.

1176 *Liber Stellae Rubae*, lines 63-66, "I, the force that have created all, am not to be despised. And I will slay thee in my lust. Thou shalt scream with the joy and the pain and the fear and the love – so that the LOGOS of a new God leaps out among the Stars. There shall be no sound heard but this thy lion-roar of rapture; yea, this thy lion-roar of rapture."

1177 Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "I should only believe in a God that would know how to dance. And when I saw my devil, I found him serious, thorough, profound, solemn: he was the spirit of gravity- through him all things fall. Not by wrath, but by laughter, do we slay. Come, let us slay the spirit of gravity!"

1178 See *The Book of Lies*, chapter 14.

1179 A quotation from William Blake's *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*.

1180 Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Like a storm do the suns pursue their courses: that is their travelling. Their inexorable will do they follow: that is their coldness."

1181 A reference to Moses' wandering in the desert in Exodus.

1182 A reference to the fact that *samadhi*, "Union with God/Non-Ego/Universe/All," "Attaining to 0," "Solve" or infinite other names should not be viewed as the Goal but as a Pool which one can dip into temporarily, only to spring back into Duality, "Coagula," *et cetera*, refreshed and invigorated. Also a reference to Friedrich Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, "Ye shall love peace as a means to new wars – and the short peace more than the long."

1183 Crowley's "An Essay upon Number" where he writes, "0. The Cosmic Egg"

Great Love. Osiris is still a black god, but black is the color of... the most fertile soil!

Eternity is the Child-King bedecked in scarlet & gold,<sup>1184</sup> standing with one foot forward<sup>1185</sup> in between the pillars of Complementation<sup>1186</sup> & Contradiction,<sup>1187</sup> glancing with a super-heated eye and grinning a cold smirk whose name is... Pitiless Love!

Eternity is the storm that leads me: Infinity behind, Infinity in front, and Infinity on all sides! Yet all converge in the Immaculate Art-piece called This Moment. One thousand dead forefathers, all for one Child whose name is Now. Eternity is a Pharaoh, wanting Pyramids built in Her honor, so let us build Ourselves four-square. Our Walls shall be called Light and Life and Love and Liberty though each Side reflects & depends on the others; and its apex... Eternity Herself Enthroned!<sup>1188</sup>

“Eternity is the storm that covereth me.” It is the Womb of Warmth and the Tomb of Sleep; It is the Cool Shade from which we leave to venture out into Sun-soaked Days and which we return therefrom. The storm-clouds cover me and all other stars: there is Nothing but formless black-and-white... Eternity is that dark cloud-cover whose name is Chaos, waiting for the Lightning Bolt whose name is... Man!<sup>1189</sup>

*“Eternity is the storm that covereth me.”*

*–Liber A’ash vel Capriconi Pneumatici, line 32*

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1184 Martial & Solar colors, the colors of the Lord of Force and Fire, Five and Six... also the colors of the Wine and the Host.

1185 The position of One who Goes, i.e. the Fifth Power of the Sphinx which is gained once the other Four are balanced and perfected

1186 Above the Abyss, opposites are complements, are one thing.

1187 Below the Abyss, opposition is contradiction, they are two things.

1188 A sight seen at performances of Gnostic Masses (*Liber XV*)... when performed properly.

1189 A reference to a line in *Little Essays Towards Truth*, “Man”: “Yea, verily, and Amen! the task [of the Great Work] is tireless and its joys without bounds; for the whole Universe, and all that in it is, what is it but the infinite playground of the Crowned and Conquering Child, of the insatiable, the innocent, the ever-rejoicing Heir of Space and Eternity, whose name is MAN?”

### SERMON III

*“The great goddess that bendeth over the Universe is my mistress;  
I am the winged globe at her heart. I contract ever as she ever  
expandeth; At the end it is all one.”*

*–Liber DCCCXIII vel Ararita VI:1-3*

Less than All cannot satisfy Man,<sup>1190</sup> so no Mistress less than Matter Herself can suffice... No! Only That which created all Matter and all Universes can be my mistress! All that is not I is the top lever and all that is I is the bottom lever and together we contract & expand, filling the Bellows with Air so the Fire of Experience may leap up! All that is not I is the black-cold Abyss, All that is I is the white-hot Life running through it... “At the end it is all one.”

She is the hilt and I am the blade; yet aren't we two parts of the Flashing Scimitar in a Child's Swordplay? She ever expandeth as I contract; yet aren't we the two nimble Feet in a Child's Dance? She always discloses and I always seek for more; yet aren't we two sides of a Coin in a Child's Game? She is the fertile & rocky ground and I am the hard roots pushing down & inward; yet aren't we the Ingredients for a Child-Flower? “At the end it is all one.”

Both sides agree to the rules, for otherwise the Game would never begin! Soon... White has fortified its position, and Black has garnered one final assault. He strikes hard & low... Checkmate! Chest-thumping of victory is mixed with a cry of defeat: yet, in the end, White & Black shake hands and say, “Good game!” The King inside the Game is always in danger of being toppled, but the King who organized the Game in the First Place does not fear falling, Himself being outside of “failure”... and “success”! Matter & Motion, Male & Female, Energy & Rest, Love & Hate, Death & Life, Absolute & Conditioned, One & Many, Silence & Sound, Up & Down, Star & Sky... “At the end it is all one.”

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1190 William Blake's *There is No Natural Religion*.

Every end for one is a beginning for another: only thereby may we sing many-varied Songs. Every end for one is a beginning for another: that is why you are called Neophyte & Initiate! Every end for one is a beginning for another: for a cup that is filled to the brim wills to spill & bestow its Wine on all sides. Every end for one is a beginning for another: the Summit is only there to give a short glance, appreciating the Path one's trodden, so one may quickly return thereto! It is all one... at the Beginning!

*“The great goddess that bendeth over the Universe is my mistress; I am the winged globe at her heart. I contract ever as she ever expandeth; At the end it is all one.”*

*–Liber DCCCXIII vel Ararita VI:1-3*

## SERMON IV

*“It is not known if it be known.”*

*–Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni sub figura CLVI, line 21*

There is a false god whose name is Knowledge:<sup>1191</sup> he speaks with great profundity and causes great changes but does not Understand. There is a false god whose name is Ratio: he analyzes accurately and synthesizes carefully but does not Understand. There is a false god whose name is Relation: quantities and qualities are his words, descriptions and predictions are his speech, for he doesn't know how to Sing... because he does not Understand. He knows the minute measurements of all things but does not Understand.

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1191 In the Hermetic Qabalah, this refers to the “false Sephirah” called “Da'ath,” which literally means “Knowledge.” It is the false crown of the Sephiroth below the Abyss, which are all mired in duality. The general idea is that “Knowledge” corresponds to all philosophical & scientific knowledge whereas “Understanding” corresponds to direct experience of Unity, gnosis, *et cetera*. This distinction is made in the “Mundaka Upanishad” of Hinduism, where the author divides all knowledge into *apara vidya*, material-intellectual knowledge, and *para vidya*, Divine knowledge

There is a Great Goddess whose name is Understanding:<sup>1192</sup> She speaks not, having all possible words in her Ear already... yet She desires infinitely-varied Speech; She argues not, having resolved all contradictions in her Silence... yet she desires infinitely-varied Conversations; She hungers not, having all things in her Belly already... yet she desires infinitely-varied Sustenance.

Will is hot<sup>1193</sup> you say... but aren't Autumn & Winter as necessary as Spring & Summer? Will is pure<sup>1194</sup> you say... but aren't the impurities in rocks giving them their colorful luster? Will is joyous<sup>1195</sup> you say... but doesn't a bit of Suffering clean off dross-desires? Will is one-pointed<sup>1196</sup> you say... but isn't the peak of a Mountain supported by a foundation in all directions? Will is divine you say... but don't trees grow tall with their roots cracking demonic rocks and sucking up the darkest, chthonic waters? Names constrain and distinguish... yet the only Sin is to Restrict!<sup>1197</sup> Have you ever seen the unspeakable lament & furious frustration of a horse who sees open fields before herself yet is harnessed to a sturdy post? Names are sturdy posts and harnesses! Trying to force ill-fitting clothes on a Lioness is not recommended!<sup>1198</sup>

True Self cannot be named, True Will cannot be described, Truth itself is beyond Knowledge... If you try to contain it, you can be sure it will leak out in all directions; if you try to grasp at it, you can be sure it will fall through your fingers; if you try to douse it, you can be sure there will be steam... and more fire! He who has the How does not care about the

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1192 In the Hermetic Qabalah, this refers to the third Sephirah, "Binah," which literally means "Understanding" or "Intelligence," corresponding to the *Neschamah* or Intuition of the Soul (aren't words so troublesome?) It is above the Abyss, which is unity.

1193 The Will is often said to correspond with the element of Fire.

1194 *Liber AL*, I:44.

1195 A reference to just about every writing of Aleister Crowley on Thelema.

1196 *Liber II: The Message of the Master Therion* and also the "nail sermon" of *Liber CL: De Lege Libellum*.

1197 *Liber AL*, I:41.

1198 Portions of this section was incorporated into a chapter of *The Lost Sutra of Harold*, which was first published in *Thelema Sutras* in 2013, e.v.

Why<sup>1199</sup> ... or the What or When! He who has eliminated all Why's does not even care much about How's! There is no Why, Whither, or Whence...<sup>1200</sup> there is no "I know," but simply "I go!"

All Knowledge is Relation: but what of That which contains all things in Itself, having no other to relate to? All Knowledge is Ratio: but what of That which contains all forces in Itself, having no other to compare to? God or Nature...<sup>1201</sup> or Self! All-form I call the Self, though It can't be named! All-force I call the Will, though It can't be named! To know the Truth, one must not know! One doesn't know Truth, one becomes Truth.<sup>1202</sup>

*"It is not known if it be known."*

*-Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni sub figura CLVI, line 21*

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1199 *Bagh-i-Muattar*, chapter 36: "Who hath the How is careless of the Why."

1200 *Liber AL*, II:30-31, "If Will stops and cries Why, invoking Because, then Will stops & does nought. If Power asks why, then is Power weakness." Also, see *Liber LXV*, II:17-26.

1201 A reference to Baruch Spinoza's pantheistic statement, "*Deus sive Natura*" ["God or Nature"]. It is amended to *Deus sive Natura sive Ego*.

1202 *Little Essays Towards Truth*, "Truth": "Truth is our Path, and Truth is our Goal; ay! there shall come to all a moment of great Light when the Path is seen to be itself the Goal; and in that hour every one of us shall exclaim: 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life!'"



# CHAPTER 49

## THE KEY

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*This text was similarly inspired like the Outbursts and Solar-Sermons. It was written in 2013; the entire text and the images which go along with it were all written down hastily in a single day. The images were later re-created digitally for their preservation. It essentially details a new conception of the Major Arcana of the Tarot and a corresponding metaphysic involving the Tarot Trumps detailing a creation story of sorts.*

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UNMANIFEST NAUGHT



LINGAM/  
FORCE

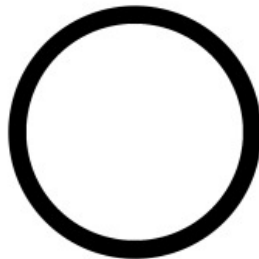


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MANIFEST NAUGHT

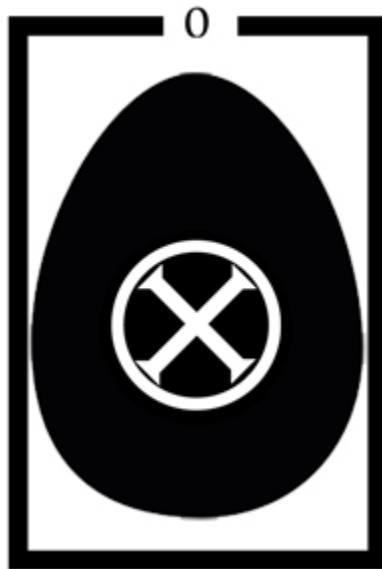


YONI/  
FORM

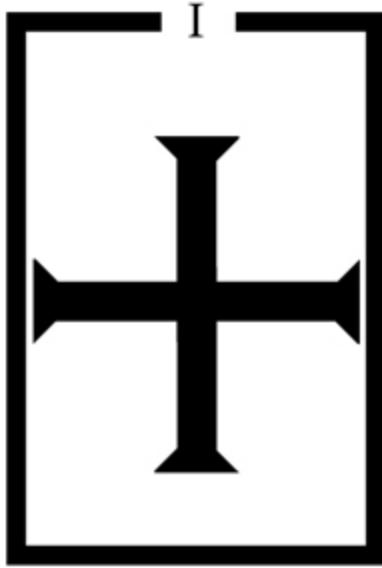


These are the permutations of IT.

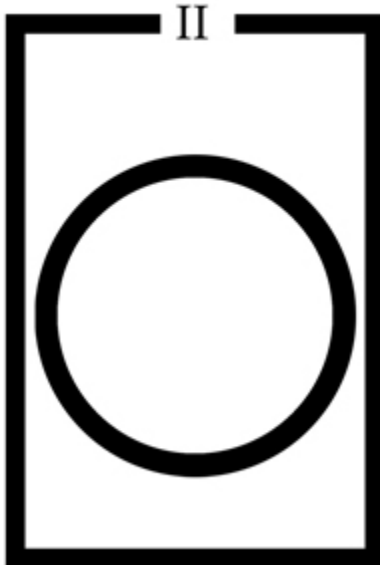
0. Before the beginning, All abides complete but Unmanifest and Unknown.



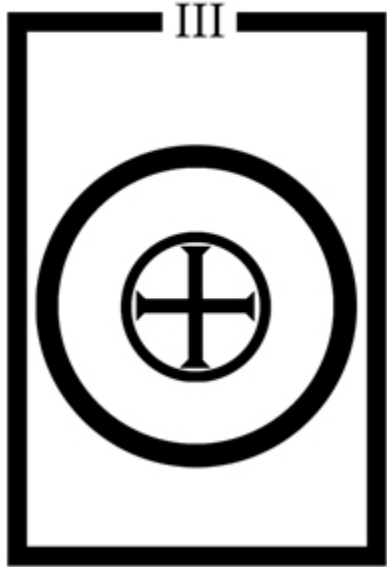
1. The Universe is THAT whereby IT becomes known to Itself.  
Thus was the Root of Force established.



2. This was separated and intermixed with the Root of Form.



3. Together, they were the Mother of Many, the beginning and ending of all Forms.



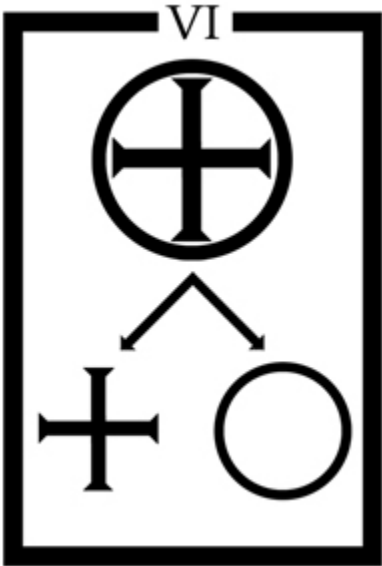
4. Together, they were the Father of Many, the beginning and ending of all Forces.



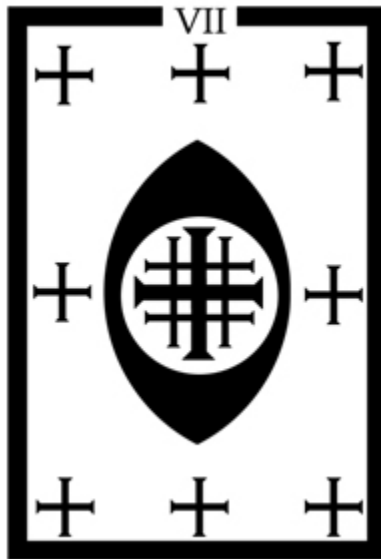
5. And thus out of Mystery was the Universe initiated to evolve through Space and Time.



6. And thus was the Universe divided for Love's sake, for the chance of Union.



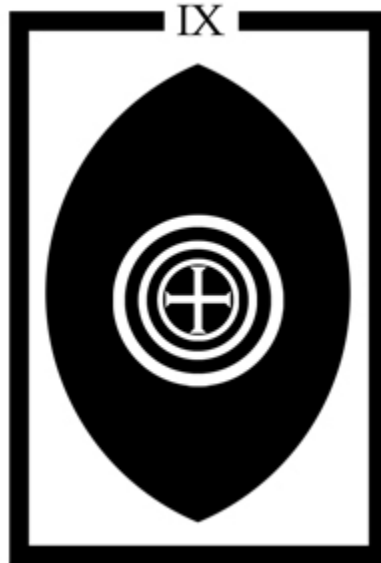
7. Thus was the Cup of Universal Life was given a Boundary, that the Sacrament of Existence may be perpetuated by All, and the Sacrament of Non-Existence may be partaken of by None.



8. Thus did the Simple become Complex, the Original Two became the Myriads of Many, though All was still but None.



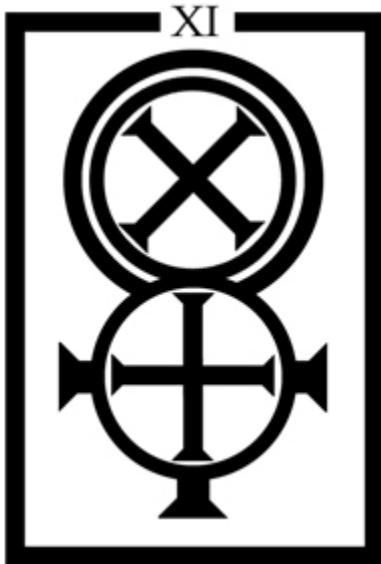
9. The Mystery appeared hidden within Darkness, though the Darkness was but a self-woven Veil of Naught.



10. The Many shifted cycle after cycle, though the One remained Unshifted at its axis.

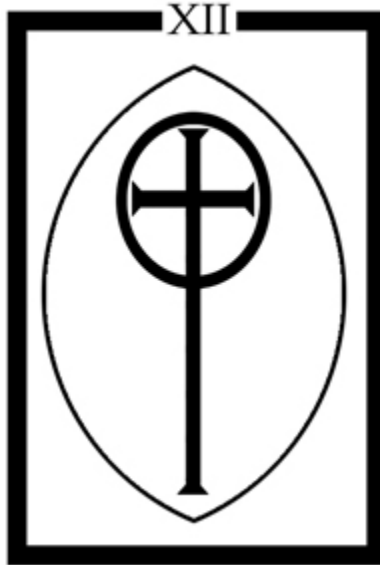


11. And the Two allowed for the Generation of Light and of Life through their Love.

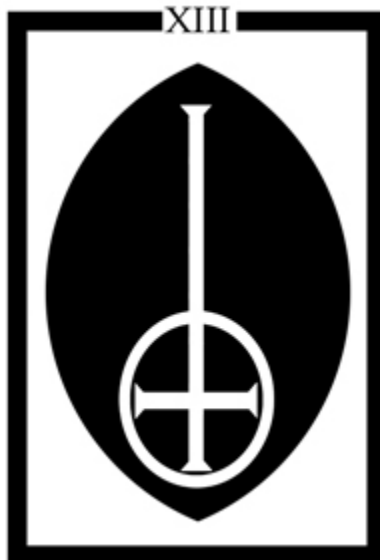




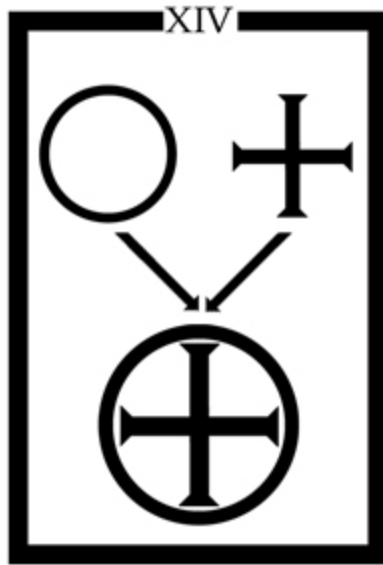
12. Thus was Life bound to the Cross of Death.



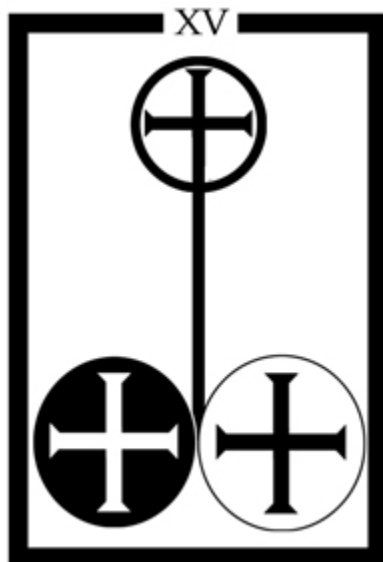
13. Thus was Death the Soil of Life.



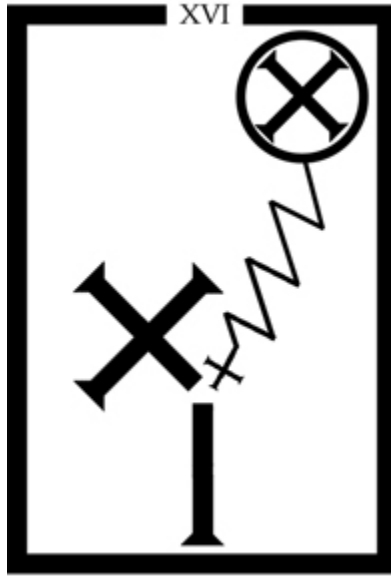
14. The Chosen Unite in their Art so the Naught may become Manifest, Perfect in its Union.



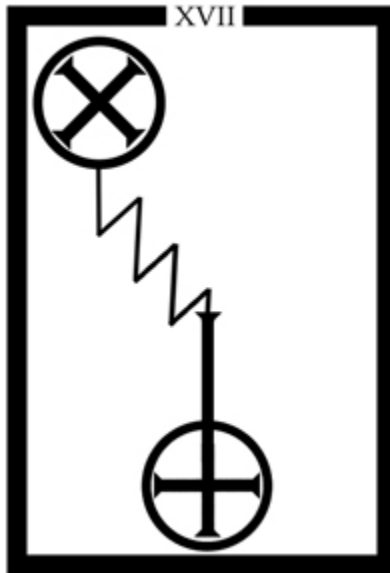
15. And Force is wielded to Enslave and to Liberate.



16. And the Old is perpetually destroyed by Fire for the New.



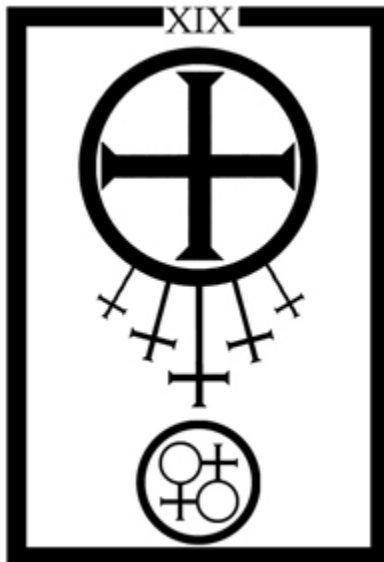
17. The None sends a Star of Hope for the Inspiration of Wisdom.



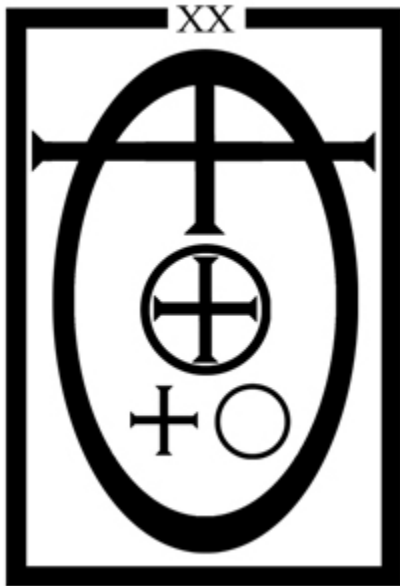
18. That the Light may break through the Veil of Darkness.



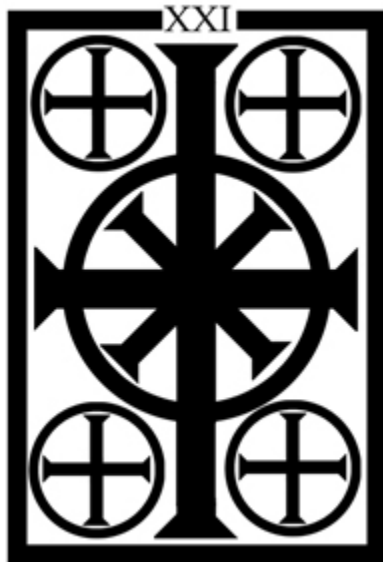
19. And the One shine upon Many, and the All be beheld by None.



20. The New Aeon will become established through Flame of Force, that the One may be known by Many.



21. And the New Order will become established through Flood of Form, that the Naught may know itself through All.



**And of All that has been spoken, Naught is True.**

## CHAPTER 50

# THE LOST SUTRA OF HAROLD

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*The Lost Sutra was first written in 2012 and re-worked in 2013 for Thelema Sutras, which was released in the same year. It is the only text re-produced in these Collected Writings that is also previously published. It is included because it really is an interlude in Thelema Sutras and is intended to stand on its own. Plus, I hope more people are able to read it this way as it is one of my personal favorites. Anyone who has read all the way through these Collected Writings to this point will notice that the Lost Sutra draws from various other writings of mine which, at least at the time, were not nearly as well-known. I have not yet determined whether it is philosophy masked as a joke or a joke masked as philosophy. Enjoy.*

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## INTRODUCTION

*by Omniscient Narrator*

If omniscience is a characteristic of divinity, I cannot imagine how She bears this burden with such carefree delicacy. I would trade it for mere multiscience any day of the week, for omniscience curses one with the knowledge not only of all truth but all falsehood as well. To peer into the porous channels of Harold's brain, one must withstand much falsehood, indeed. I will not even deign to describe what I have discerned within *you*, dear reader.

Despite what misgivings I may have in relating this tale to my readers, I can unhesitatingly swear that everything here written actually happened. Certain, and most true.<sup>1203</sup> That is, thoughts occurred that lead

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<sup>1203</sup> "Certain, and most true" is a reference to the Emerald Tablet of Hermes, which begins with the line, "This is true without lie, certain and most true." I have always

to their being put onto these pages. That these words are written are evidence that they were thought; that they were thought is evidence of their having happened. They have happened and, with your most noble assistance, they will happen again for a second showing in your mind's theater. Being omniscient, I am fully aware that this demonstration is not particularly convincing. Unfortunately for you, most dear reader, I never claimed to be omnibenevolent.

Since both Harold and myself have a weakness for witticism, and I – containing all knowledge of past, present, and future in my dissociated database – have foreseen that many of the more obscure, cheap, coarse, or crude allusions, implications, and references may pass uncomprehended, unnoticed, unexposed, unappreciated, and many another un-words.<sup>1204</sup> Therefore, in my wisdom and unparalleled foresight, I have appended several notes at the end of each page. If it be your style to want to know the various references being made and you happen to enjoy looking back and forth incessantly, this effort will not have been in vain. If it be your style to read undistracted or to generally blunder through books, then I understand, though I do not necessarily hold your choice in high regard. Regardless of your decision, if you proceed any further, I foresee great laughterful caresses of nihilistic absurdity in your near future.<sup>1205</sup>

Though I know all things, I still cannot seem to understand my own motives in deciding to put down this story in material form. Your motives in taking time out of your brief blip of a life on this space-rock are even more unclear yet. Some things, it seems, remain unknowable and one must simply accept them. Therefore, I hope you will join me and Kierkegaard<sup>1206</sup> at the edge of this cliff, and take a leap of faith into

found it a little disconcerting for anyone to begin by asserting the truth of what they are going to say before it's even said. Don't you think?

1204 “Many another un-words” is an obscure reference to the list of Saints in the Gnostic Mass where a couple lists of names with the phrase “and many another...” There is a virtue to expediency in ritual at times.

1205 “Laughterful caresses” is a reference to *Liber AL*, II:63, “Thou art exhaust in the voluptuous fullness of the inspiration; the expiration is sweeter than death, more rapid and laughterful than a caress of Hell's own worm.”

1206 Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855) was an existential philosopher who basically



Harold's world.

*The most knowledgable storyteller that the publisher could afford,*  
Omniscient Narrator

## **PART 1: The Bursting-Forth of Harold from the Great Womb of Time**

*“Life does not cease to be funny when people die  
any more than it ceases to be serious when people laugh.”*  
–George Bernard Shaw

Harold was a good fetus: healthy, happy, content. He might have fashioned himself the anti-Jonah<sup>1207</sup> – willingly enveloped in the dark but warm caverns of the great maternal whale-belly – if it weren't for the fact that subject and object were not yet distinguished in his world-awareness. For now, he was a veritable Harpocrates,<sup>1208</sup> giving the eternal Sign of Silence in that unmanifest state of pure potentiality. Yet this eternal now had a paradoxically abrupt end.

No one seems to discuss how utterly messy the incarnation of a God into Matter really can be. Salty blood spewed from the averse mouth of the mother, basking the sterile hospital accoutrements in a thick film of

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formulated the idea we know of as the “leap of faith” where one's knowledge has gaps and one can think and argue and debate and be skeptical, yet at a certain point one must make a leap and believe or at least start acting without thinking too much. This, obviously, has positive and negative aspects but the whole point is that even an omniscient narrator has to make a leap of faith at a certain point. Does *everything* need to be spelled out for you?

1207 Jonah was, of course, the Pinnocchio of his day, having been swallowed by a great sea creature in a story that comes from a certain collection of poorly-written fables. Being the anti-Jonah therefore implies a willing (rather than involuntary) engulfment in the great sea creature's belly.

1208 Harpocrates is a Greek form of the Egyptian Horus, and he was the god of Silence. He is used in ceremonial magick to represent silence, defense, and the unmanifest potential of Existence.

birth-refuse. It is said that a Buddha can be identified by certain oddities of the infant's body upon birth. No one knows who said it, but someone, somewhere, at some point, certainly said something similar. When Harold popped head-first out of the Great Womb of Time,<sup>1209</sup> birthed from black eternity into the light of limitation, he seemed to give a sacred mudra to the wise men gathered about the birth-table: the fingers of his right hand were clenched except for the medius, which was extended with force and grace into the air as if to say in response to his birth, "This insult has not gone unnoticed." It was almost as if Harold, from the moment of exiting the tight quarters of his nine-month confinement, determined to enter upon that great Path of Return<sup>1210</sup> back into the womb. Freud would certainly be proud.

Harold gasped for air, choked on his own cries, and then a bellow burst forth from his bowels. The sacred sound emitted from the flapping vocal chords of his buttocks, announcing the coming of the Lord like the blowing of the ram's horn by the Hebrew high priest.<sup>1211</sup> He had just exited the holy tabernacle, having been himself the Ark of the Covenant, the hallowed symbol of the covenant of God and beast mixed into one.<sup>1212</sup>

Harold's throat cleared and he cried as most infants do, but the doctors stood back slightly astonished. The infant's cry sounded like a death-rattle: his bloody film was his death-jacket, his umbilical cord was his noose. Harold was alive, but the first moments of life seemed to be spent in symbolic acknowledgment of his inevitable death. Already, he had grasped the immortal truth of mortality, the unchangeable fact of his

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1209 The Great Womb of Time is a reference to the Qabalistic sphere of Binah, the Great Mother of form, whose color is black and to whom is attributed Saturn, Chronos, Kali, *et cetera*.

1210 The Path of Return refers to a certain system of enlightenment where the original Fall from Eden, or the Supernal Triangle, is rectified by returning thereto.

1211 The ram's horn is the Jewish shofar which is blown to mark important times of the year. The use of the shofar is here conflated with – er, I mean “skillfully synthesized with” – the uttering of the true pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton by the High Priest of the Temple.

1212 The reference is to *Liber AL*, III:34, “...another soul of God and beast shall mingle in the globed priest...”

changeability.

“An evil omen,” one doctor muttered.

“Nonsense, it is a portend of a savior!” another doctor cried.

“I think I pooped a little,” whimpered the mother.

Thus entereth Harold into the Abyss of Consciousness.

## **PART 2: From the Mouth of Babes <sup>1213</sup> comes a lot of Nonsense**

*“Reality is merely an illusion, albeit a very persistent one.”*

*–Albert Einstein*

“Consider the color green,” Harold commented to a group of peers gathered at his feet. Harold swept his hand through the air in a grand gesture, “It surrounds us, it binds us, it bursts from the very ground upon which we walk!” The group nodded in agreement, enraptured by the impassioned plea to partake in that rarest of all human qualities: deep thinking.

“We all agree upon the green-ness of this green,” Harold continued while plucking out a few pieces of grass from the ground, “yet consider this: Perhaps what I see as green, you see as red!” He pointed viciously at a person perched in front of the crowd, who was taken aback with a gasp. “Perhaps what I see as green, you see as blue!” The entire crowd Ooh'ed and Aah'ed in amazement at these divine truths. “It may be that you may even see the entire world in a blend of colors of which I have never nor will ever perceive!” The crowd furrowed their brows simultaneously in the fruitless endeavor of attempting to imagine a color they had never perceived before.

“Green!” we say, ‘green!’ We all use the same word, but how do we know we all are talking about the same color? I demand an answer!”

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1213 “Out of the mouth of babes” is a phrase that originally comes from the New Testament, and it has come to refer to Tom Hanks in the movie “Big.” It otherwise refers to the fact that children often speak surprising truths.

After a brief pause, one fearless explorer of philosophy raised her hand. “Yes, my dear? Do you know the answer?” Harold questioned in an almost sarcastic condescension.

“I believe the answer is that we don't know,” she replied with a rare blend of timidity and confidence.

“Indeed, we *don't* know! Not only this, but I have learned from a reliable source that what we perceive as green is exactly what it is not. We see by means of light, which bounces off this grass and enters into our eyeballs. The nature of the light that bounces off carries the message of 'green' to our brains, yet consider this as well! If green-ness is exactly what is reflected off of the grass, it has absorbed all other colors: it is everything *except* green! What we see is exactly what is not!” The crowd gasped in horror – Harold thought he could hear mutters of “the world is a lie” and even a “God is dead!”<sup>1214</sup>

“Yes, troubling isn't it? We can't even agree upon the color of grass! Not only can we never agree upon the simplest thing as to the color of grass, we are blinded by our use of the same term to describe it. Not only this, but our very perception of the grass is more than an illusion – it is an outright lie! We must all write to our Congresspeople and declare that free speech has gone too far! We the people demand that grass tell our brains the truth! We demand to see reality, not the inverted cloak that we have heretofore called 'awareness!' In the name of freedom, in the name of reality, in the name of Truth! Down with tyranny! Down with illusion! Down with ignorance! To arms, my brothers and sisters, to arms!”

The outbreak of battle-cries amongst the people was cut short by the bell clanging its repetitive and abrasive song across the field. Recess was over, and all the children followed Harold back into the preschool.

Thus preacheth Harold to the people.

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1214 “God is dead” as Nietzsche said, “and we have killed him.” You've been caught red-handed, dear reader, but I won't tell anyone.

## PART 3: The Precepts<sup>1215</sup> and Percepts of a Lonely Pedestrian upon the Path of Perfection

*“Prisons are built with stones of Law,  
Brothels with bricks of Religion.”*  
–William Blake

When Harold crossed the Rubicon<sup>1216</sup> of thirteen years old, he became a Buddhist. While he joined no monastery and wore clothes that made him indistinguishable from any other pedestrian on the streets, he was a fan of numbered lists and so the allure of Buddhism was inescapable. He was, after all, known to be prone to bouts of spiritual impulsivity.

Harold was absolutely certain of the Three Characteristics of existence – everything contained suffering, everything was impermanent, nothing had a substantial self. He was utterly convinced of the necessity of the Three Refuges of Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, and he firmly believed the Four Noble Truths were the only logical conclusions to any rudimentary analysis of the nature of the world.<sup>1217</sup> The Five Precepts, on the other hand, did not interest Harold. They actually seemed to him to be cruel jokes played by the Buddha upon the weak-minded rabble who

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1215 The Five Precepts are an ethical code taken by the laypeople of Theravada and some forms of Mahayana Buddhism, which include (1) abstaining from taking life, (2) abstaining from stealing, (3) abstaining from sexual misconduct, (4) abstaining from false speech, and (5) abstaining from alcohol and other intoxicants. Those who understand the truth of *anatta* simultaneously perceive these Five Precepts as an incredibly bad joke by the Buddha.

1216 Crossing the “Rubicon” means that one has reached the point of no return and is a reference to Caesar's crossing of the river, which started a civil war. It is an obscure way to refer to the war on oneself that occurs both in starting puberty and in becoming an ascetic.

1217 The Three Characteristics are *dukkha* (suffering), *anicca* (impermanence), and *anatta* (no-self). The Three Refuges are in *buddha* (the awakened one), *dharma* (the teaching of the Buddha), and *sangha* (the monastic community). The Four Noble truths are (1) the diagnosis of *dukkha*, (2) its etiology, (3) its prognosis, and (4) its treatment. The Five Precepts are explained above, and I'm too lazy to repeat myself.

were too stupid to see through them.

“I cannot abstain from taking life unless I stop breathing so that I might not unintentionally inhale microscopic lifeforms, in which case I would be shortly taking my own life,” Harold explained to a man at a bus stop.

“I cannot abstain from stealing because there are no substantial selves with which to possess other substantial objects,” he continued. “I cannot abstain from sensuality and sexual conduct because I have just hit puberty, and I am convinced that the forces of hormones rival that of gravity. Further, adultery implies possession and I cannot begin to believe that there can ever be property in human flesh except through the machinations of that most insidious human abortion known as the Court.” Harold started to pace around the man, swinging his limbs about to exaggerate his points. “I cannot abstain from false speech because words and names are the foremost of all lies, attributing solidity to that which is, by its nature, impermanent and ever-changing.”

The bus then arrived and the man got on quickly, not having understood a word of what Harold was describing since he didn't speak English. Harold didn't seem to notice or care and continued his diatribe while pacing excitedly, “I cannot abstain from intoxication unless it so be that I remove all senses, for they all distort perception as much as alcohol – even worse, because we don't count ourselves 'drunk' when imbibing sights and sounds and all the rest! The Two Truths doctrine, the Three Characteristics, the Three Refuges, the Four Noble Truths, the Five Aggregates, the Six Senses, the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, the Eightfold Path, the Nine Yanas, the Ten Perfections, the Twelve Links of Dependent Origination, the Fourteen Unanswerable Questions<sup>1218</sup>... I

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1218 The Two Truths doctrine refers to the differentiation between relative or conventional truth on the one hand and absolute or ultimate truth on the other hand. The Three Characteristics, Three Refuges, Four Noble Truths, and Five Precepts are explained above. The Five Aggregates refer to the ever-changing clusters of form, sensation, perception, mental formations, and consciousness itself that create the illusion of solidity of self and world. The Six Senses refer to the five normal senses and the mind as the sixth sense. The Seven Factors of Enlightenment refer to seven

accept all of these, but I can never accept the Five Precepts!” At the culmination of his paeon, Harold took off his sandals, placed them on his head, and walked away. The bench at the bus stop then spontaneously achieved enlightenment.<sup>1219</sup>

Thus initiateth Harold the bench of Bodhisattva Boulevard.

## **PART 4: The Inexorable Mutability of Phenomena, or How Harold Achieved the Grade of $2^{\circ}=9^{\square}$ <sup>1220</sup>**

*“When your child comes down the stairs, this is the First Moment all over again; this is Buddha meeting Buddha over toast, over milk, over mu tea & coffee & porridge & brown rice. We never had breakfast before!”*

*–Baba Ram Dass*

At some point, Harold lost his sandals so he was forced to walk barefoot through suburbia. He came upon a childhood friend's house and knocked on the door three times.

“Who is it?” came a voice from inside. Harold knocked five more

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factors or virtues that lead to enlightenment including mindfulness, discernment, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity. The Eightfold Path refers to the eight non-sequential steps that Buddha gave as the treatment for the ailment of suffering. The Nine Yanas refer to nine spiritual practices as delineated by a school of Tibetan Buddhism. The Ten Perfections are ten qualities or paramitas of awakened ones. The Twelve Links or *nidanas* of Dependent Origination refer to the twelve interdependent causes of *samsara*. The Fourteen Unanswerable Questions refer to fourteen questions about metaphysics that the Buddha refused to answer.

1219 Harold putting his sandals on his head refers to the 14th koan in *The Gateless Gate* where Nansen comes upon monks arguing over a cat, cuts the cat in two pieces, and Joshu, upon hearing this from Nansen, places his sandals on his head and walked out of the room whereupon Nansen said, “If you had been there, you could have saved the cat.”

1220 The Grade of  $2^{\circ}=9^{\square}$  refers to the “Zelator” grade of A.·.A.·., which is a system of spiritual advancement in the Western Esoteric Tradition. Since 2 refers to the 2nd Sefirah of Chokmah on the Tree of Life, to which is attributed Force and Change, and 9 refers to the 9th Sefirah of Yesod, to which is attributed the Foundation and Stability, the equation of 2 and 9 refers to the resolution of the paradox of Motion and Rest.

times.

“Who's there?” the concealed voice said a bit louder. Harold knocked three final times,<sup>1221</sup> and the door swung open. “Goddamnit, Harold. You only have to knock once.”

“I must have picked up a certain Masonic breed of OCD on my way here,” Harold confessed. “May I come inside and perhaps borrow some shoes?”

“Of course.” The friend stepped back and motioned to show Harold inside. Upon entering, Harold felt a heavy darkness in the house.

Harold inquired, “Have you been meddling with the Goetia, my brother?”<sup>1222</sup>

“I work with demons every day, but not of the Goetic breed,” the friend replied, for he worked in the IT field. Harold began to chuckle to himself. His chuckle slowly broke into a heaving guffaw and his friend turned to him, “Have you gone more mad than usual?”

“I have found that laughter is the best banishing,” Harold replied. His attention turned to the kitchen sink, where a brittle pyramid of dirty dishes lay since ancient times. “In return for your hospitality, may I wash your dishes?”

“Whatever floats your boat, I guess,” the friend conceded.

“My boat floats on the firmament in the car called Millions-of-Years!”<sup>1223</sup> Harold exclaimed.

“Yeah, OK, just don't break anything.”

Harold shuffled to the sink and began to wash the dishes. The laughter also had the unintended side-effect of loosening the girders of his

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1221 The knocking of 3, then 5, then 3 refers to the series of knocks that is used in “saying Will” in Thelema and in other rituals. It adds to a total of 11 knocks, the number of the Great Work accomplished, where the 5, or Microcosm, is in the midst of or united with the 6, or Macrocosm.

1222 Harold asking about meddling with the Goetia refers to Allan Bennett (a.k.a. Bhikku Ananda Metteya) saying something similar to Aleister Crowley upon meeting him.

1223 “The car called Millions-of-Years” is a reference to a line from *Liber LXV*, a Holy Book of Thelema. It is itself likely a reference to the Sun being conceived as a “car” or “bark” (boat) that sails across the firmament. In any case, Harold is suffering from a fit of grandiosity.



soul.<sup>1224</sup> As Harold scrubbed, the veil of illusory solidity washed away. He looked at the dishes and thought to himself, “A bunch of dirty dishes piled up at random is the most beautifully noble structure ever created<sup>1225</sup> – who would ever say it is unclean or in need of tidying?” Harold then lifted his head and glanced out the window to the pool outside. A deck chair that he had once sat in a year or so ago caught his eye, and he immediately put down the spoon and sponge in his hands to investigate further. Concerned about the welfare of his patio furniture, the friend followed him outside.

Harold stopped next to the deck chair and turned to his friend. He remarked, “The meeting of an object like this deck chair at some point in the future illustrates the futility of all attachment.” Without letting his friend respond, Harold turned back to the deck chair and offered a greeting.

“Hello, chair, you aren't quite the same as I remembered you.” A seemingly eternal moment passed. “...Nor am I quite the same either,” he confessed. “In fact, it seems we are two strangers meeting for the first time... although memory insists otherwise!”

“What in Geb's name are you blathering about?”<sup>1226</sup> the friend asked in mild desperation.

“*Panta rhei*, brother.<sup>1227</sup> I am not who I am.<sup>1228</sup> Nor are you, so each moment we spend together we must introduce ourselves anew.

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1224 “Loosening the girders of the soul” is a reference to *Liber AL*, III:61, “There is an end of the word of the God enthroned in Ra's seat, lightening the girders of the soul.”

1225 The dirty dishes being “piled up at random” is a reference to Heraclitus who wrote, “The fairest universe is but a heap of rubbish piled up at random.”

1226 “What in Geb's name are you blathering about” is a reference to a similar line from *The Big Lebowski*, and Geb is a name of an Egyptian god of earth. He worships a god of Earth, i.e. the friend is a typical secular materialist, lacking any sense of purpose or wonder.

1227 “*Panta rhei*” means “everything changes” or “everything flows,” which is a saying attributed to Heraclitus, and the general idea being discussed is similar to Heraclitus' notion that one cannot step into the same river twice.

1228 “I am not who I am” is a reference to a similar line said by Iago in *Othello*, which is an inversion of the Biblical “I am that I am” that Jehovah said was his name when speaking from a burning bush in that old, crazy ass book of myths.

Nothing lasts, but nothing is lost.”<sup>1229</sup>

“Why, then, nothing would have solidity!” the friend complained, “Nothing would be worthwhile; there would be no action or goal that was justifiable! God save us!”

“God? I have no need of that hypothesis,” Harold said while channeling LaPlace.<sup>1230</sup> “Besides, the world is only justifiable as an aesthetic phenomenon.<sup>1231</sup> Everything that is, is enough.<sup>1232</sup> Sit back and enjoy the show, then!” Harold then turned, walked through the house, and back onto the street, having forgotten why the 5-minutes-ago-Harold went there in the first place.

Thus solveth Harold the paradox of Motion and Rest.

## **PART 5: The Tavern of Spiritual Intoxication, and how Harold forsaked Buddhism**

*“All this talk about 'suffering humanity' is principally driven based on the error of transferring one's own psychology to one's neighbour... It is necessary that we stop, once and for all, this ignorant meddling with other people's business. Each individual must be left free to follow his own path.”*

*–Aleister Crowley*

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1229 “Nothing lasts, but nothing is lost” is the name of an album by the band “Shpongole” who made hella trippy music, man. Who knew that *The Big Lebowski*, Egyptian gods, Heraclitus, *The Bible*, and Spongole could all be strung together in a single piece of conversation?

1230 “I have no need of that hypothesis” was said by the physicist LaPlace when supposedly asked by Napoleon where the Creator was in his work on astronomy. Or something. I can't really remember the details, but it seemed like a badass thing to say.

1231 “The world is only justifiable as an aesthetic phenomenon” is a reference to a virtually identical line from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*. Or that's at least my distorted memory of it.

1232 “Everything that is, is enough” is something that Osho's mother said to him, or something similar to that – as you can see, I tend to cite and reference things even though I can't really even remember what they are. That isn't very congruent with being an omniscient narrator, is it?

Harold then picked up his head and realized he was alone, but his feet had led him to the threshold of a bar called the Motley Cow.<sup>1233</sup> He caught a glimpse of an attractive, young lady entering the bar and immediately determined to break the third and fifth Precepts as soon as possible.<sup>1234</sup> He passed by some picketers who claimed that alcohol was mortal sin that condemned one's soul to eternal torment and approached the tavern.

Upon arriving at the entrance, Harold was confronted by the ever-looming Dweller on the Threshold.<sup>1235</sup> “Got your ID?” he asked.

Harold said, “I may look young, but that is because my inner child helplessly shines through my pores. This inner child, though, has an inner cantankerous grandma who, I assure you, is quite authentic: she smells of mothballs and Maltomeal.” Harold flashed his fake ID after flashing his wit, and the Dweller let him pass into the tavern, for Harold knew the most worthwhile weapons against authority were confusion and confidence.

Harold glanced around and saw the basic buffoonery one would expect within a place with such a ridiculous name. College students drunkenly drowned themselves in debauch, throwing themselves headlong into the hopeless Hunt, destined for destruction regardless of how many wingmen guided their ways.

The sights saddened Harold who exclaimed, “Oh, pitiful sorrow! Oh, wretched existence! Oh, cacophonous babbling of blind creatures!” For he was wont to confuse the promptings of his irritable bowels for pangs of conscience. All of the relentless pleasure-seeking put a bad taste in Harold's mouth. He considered all the pub-crawlers to be miserable maggots feasting upon their own livelihoods. Harold lamented, “Some

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1233 The Motley Cow is the name of a town in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

1234 The third and fifth precepts refer to abstaining from sexual misconduct and abstaining from imbibing alcohol, respectively. But you're keeping track anyhow, aren't you?

1235 The Dweller on the Threshold is a figure in Western occultism that is either seen as the Guardian of the Mysteries or a personification of one's “evil” or shadow side.

men are born posthumously, but it seems many are prehumously dead!”<sup>1236</sup> He shook his head dramatically, perching his brow delicately upon his forefinger and thumb before throwing his head back and outward to exclaim, “It seems no one has even begun to grasp that First, most Noble Truth! Is there no hope for humanity? Is there no help for the widow's son!?”<sup>1237</sup>

In the grips of despair, tumbling down the tunnel of tumultuous desperation, Harold caught hold of a crag of cherubic comprehension. He realized his irreparable error: it was *he* who was sorrowful, not those who tumbled about the tables! In a flash, his Buddhism was seen as nothing more than typical teenage angst, sublimated onto the plane of spirituality. Harold grabbed a nearby imbibor by the collar and shook him, “Mea culpa! Mea culpa! Mea maxima culpa!”<sup>1238</sup>

Harold spun on his heel and the entire Motley Cow was transformed into the Heavenly Hathor. The bar-goers were saints whose intoxication was spiritual ecstasy. The bartender was the very Hierophant of the Mysteries, distributing the draught of divine gnosis. Those who stood outside with signs of sin were purse-proud yet ultimately penniless<sup>1239</sup>: they were puffed up with the flatulent air of falsity. “The next round is on me!” Harold proclaimed triumphantly. Everyone cheered, and in the excitement, Harold slipped away since he had forgotten to go to an ATM.

Thus exiteth Harold from the path of renunciation.

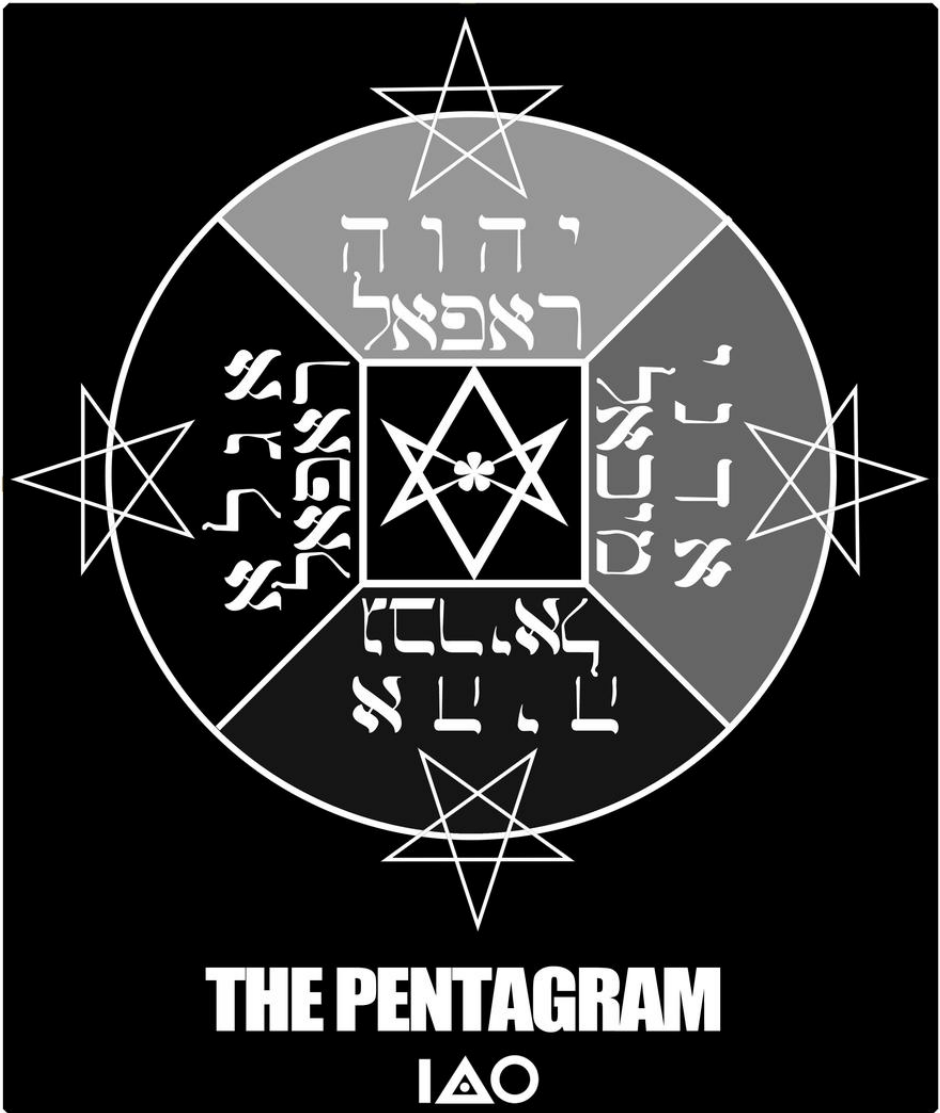
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1236 “Some men are born posthumously” is a reference to a similar saying by Friedrich Nietzsche who used it to refer to himself.

1237 “Is there no help for the widow's son” is a reference to the distress call of a Master Mason who has read *The Da Vinci Code*.

1238 “Mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa” means “my fault, my fault, my most grievous fault,” and is said in Catholic liturgy as a form of confessing yourself as a helpless, hopeless, shameful sack of sin.

1239 “purse-proud yet ultimately penniless” refers to a line from *Liber LXV*, a Holy Book of Thelema. The entire metaphor of the tavern as a place where Adepts get spiritual intoxication comes from the same section of the same book.



*The Pentagram*  
is based off the Lesser Ritual of the Pentagram

## PART 6: The Ironies of Isis, or the Uncovering of the Contradiction known as Man

*“Everybody gets so much information all day long  
that they lose their common sense.”*

–Gertrude Stein

After exiting his Buddhist self-(and-world-)loathing, Harold entered a movie theater and saw a screening of *The Matrix*, so he began to fancy himself a philosopher. Like all philosophers, he engaged in that vain endeavor to lift the veil of Nature to see Her true essence.<sup>1240</sup>

At first, Harold agreed with Thales that the world is of the nature of water, for everything finds its level and sinks to conform to the lowest crevice or common denominator. Democracy was irrefutable evidence of this. Upon hearing Heraclitus, he switched to believe that the world is of the nature of fire, for everything is constantly burning, exchanging its form for another. Fashion was irrefutable evidence of that, for it is a form of ugliness so unbearable it must be altered every season.<sup>1241</sup> Abruptly, he assented to Anaximenes that air must be the answer, for it is air that permeates all things, sometimes compressed and sometimes uncompressed, going in through the top and out through the bottom. The fact that it allowed for a fart joke assured Harold of its authenticity. He then renounced rationality and embarked on the empirical enterprise, asserting that all things are earthly and the appearance otherwise is but a material mirage. Having spoken with many people, Harold found no evidence of these mysterious things called “minds.”

After these few minutes of meditation, Harold decided that none of these answers were truly satisfying, and he decided that metaphysics were merely misinterpreted metaphors. Having disabused himself of such

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1240 It is said that no man hath lifted Her veil because Isis is an incredibly persistent tease.

1241 This is a stolen Oscar Wilde quote: “Fashion is a form of ugliness so intolerable that we have to alter it every six months.”

speculation, he went for a walk and came upon a supermarket where hippies were protesting the corporate encroachment upon their hometown.

“Humanity has sown the seeds of its own destruction!” preached one of the hairiest hippies.

“We have become corrupt!” another chimed in. “We have turned our backs on Mother Nature! She will take her revenge!”

“We have lost our tribal roots,” the first hippie said even louder than before, for he was most interested in looking like a prophet. “Down with corporate America! Up with communes! We must return to Nature!”

“Yes!” Harold cried sarcastically, getting the hippies' attention. “Repent, all ye sinners! The day of the Goddess' Judgement is nigh at hand! The devils who sit as CEOs have wrought their thrones with the alloys of Abaddon! We have warmed ourselves by the hellfires of Hades for too long! Materialism's wicked ways have condemned us all to eternal supplication to the false master Mammon!”<sup>1242</sup>

“We don't believe in sin anymore, man,” the hairiest hippie said on behalf of the whole group, for he had ironically established himself as the ringleader of the egalitarian conglomerate.

“Yet you think that materialism is evil and returning to Nature is good?” Harold questioned.

“Of course!” the hippie replied. “We have lost our tribal roots! We must return to Nature!”

“Yes,” Harold said tiredly, “you have already said that. I assure you that confusion and disagreement does not mean I am hard of hearing. I believe your attempt to become noble savages is born out of a savage fiction.<sup>1243</sup> How can one 'return to Nature' having come from Her and being constantly immersed in Her? And what *is* Nature? Are you

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1242 Mammon represents money. The reference is to Matthew 6:24, “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.”

1243 The “noble savage” is what is glorified in *Running with Wolves*, *Fern Gully*, *Avatar*, and generally all movies that spring from white guilt. Ironic that it is the White man that is always the savages' savior, isn't it?

pretending to dictate to Her what She is?"

"No way, man!" the hippie balked. "Back in the past, we all lived in, like, total harmony with Nature. We planted food and survived from what we planted; we didn't pollute the air and seas with our plastics, and we didn't chisel away at earth's beautiful exterior to suck oil out of her veins for our own personal profit."

"What is this 'back in the past'? Can we judge Nature only by her past forms or also by her potential future productions? What if a quality of Nature is to transform Herself? Are we then ourselves not transformers and creators of new things? Is not technology and artifice then the pinnacle of Nature rather than its ruin? Aren't *you* the one who is actually advocating a refusal of Nature? How can Nature allow for Herself to be divided into what is and is not 'natural'? You've told me only your vision of Nature and now I see what you really mean by returning to It. Only man would be so silly to split himself off from Nature and consider his own creations to be corrupt. If you despise humanity so much, I hope you will lead the charge in bidding farewell to your own body and thus re-establishing in some small quantity that primordial peace that preceded the peopling of this place."

"How can you be so cruel?" the hippie asked with disgust.

"Perhaps it is my nature to be such. Nature is Herself quite cruel. She is harsh, and perhaps I am a bit of a Sadist myself.<sup>1244</sup> Nature is unflinching, uncaring; she is constantly building up and breaking down, climbing and catastrophizing, forming and informing and deforming and reforming... beautiful yet useless, bountiful yet wasteful, wonderful yet false."

"I can't even comprehend what you are rambling about anymore," attackingly exclaimed the second hippie, who ironically preached radical nonviolence.

"I'm not trying to be understood," Harold informed them. "To be

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1244 This is stolen from *The Book of Lies*, chapter 79, "Nature is wasteful; but how well She can afford it! Nature is false; but I'm a bit of a liar myself. Nature is useless; but then how beautiful she is! Nature is cruel; but I too am a Sadist."



understood, one must speak things that are commonplace. Truth is no place for trivialities. I, because I am so generous, leave those for you to be used as weapons in your contradictory causes.” Harold walked away and left the hippies with a general hate for him, yet they all later voted for George W. Bush in the election.

Thus huffeth & puffeth Harold to blow the hippie house down.

## **PART 7: The Pistol of Pragmatism, or how Harold Executed Two Traitors to their own Tenets**

*“Truth is the kind of error without which  
a certain being could not live.”*

*–Friedrich Nietzsche*

Harold, at this ripe young age of fourteen, considered himself a firm rationalist insofar as he found the mind to be the pinnacle of human evolution and therefore the royal road to Truth. Harold was so rational, in fact, that he uncovered the irrational foundations of rationality. He had found that the root of reason is a form of faith, which is an odious thing to one who is vowed to rationality. Reason assumes that everything is subject to its own law, and reason abides by rules that are not necessarily those of reality. In a conversation with two friends who were perpetually arguing, one being a militant atheist and the other being a staunch Protestant, Harold attempted to illuminate this idea.

“I am most certain that God is not only Creator but is ever-present amongst us, guiding and judging humanity every day since Creation,” said Pascal, the staunch Protestant.<sup>1245</sup>

“If we accept that God is a being who is omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent,” argued Immanuel the atheist,<sup>1246</sup> “why wouldn't God have arranged the world so as to not even require his guidance and

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1245 Pascal made a wager, and the jury is still out to whether he lost it or not.

1246 Immanuel is Immanuel Kant, the person who found Reason to be the royal road to Truth, and his name ironically means, “God is with us.”

judgment?”

“God created the world and gave humanity free will so that they could have the choice to be sinful or saintly,” retorted Pascal, “thereby allowing each of us to prove our own worthiness to abide in the Kingdom of Heaven or the eternal torment of Hell.”

“If God is omniscient, doesn't he already know who is going to reside in Heaven and Hell? Aren't the names in the Book of Life already written and predetermined?” Immanuel smiled wryly since thought he had caught Pascal in a bind.

“All is foreseen but free will is given,”<sup>1247</sup> Pascal said calmly and without hesitation.

“How is free will free if the decisions to apparent choices are already known ahead of time?”

“It is paradoxes such as these that show the necessity of faith, dear brother,” Pascal concluded.

Harold found an opening and interjected, “Reason depends upon language, and language has laws that require certain assumptions to be held for communication to even begin. Consider how sentences are structured: There is a subject who engages in some kind of verb. We already have a syntactical supposition that the world is constructed out of subjects performing various verbs. While this may be intuitively pleasing, it is nonetheless *not* a certain fact. Some would argue that there are unnecessary but useful divisions being made between subjects and their objects or between subjects and their verbs. There is really no consensus on what a 'subject' truly is or how responsible this 'subject' is for its 'verbing.' We have arranged for ourselves a world in which we can live by positing bodies, lines, planes, causes and effects, motion and rest, form and content. Without these articles of faith nobody could now endure life. But that does not prove them. Life is no argument. The conditions of life might include error.”<sup>1248</sup> Even in his speaking, Harold felt the tremors of

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1247 A typical red herring used by Rabbis to avoid the inevitable conclusion following from their premises.

1248 This last bit is from Friedrich Nietzsche's *The Gay Science*.

terror in approaching such a yawning cavern of uncertainty.

“It has been said that truth is beauty,”<sup>1249</sup> Harold continued, “yet if one is honest then one will soon find some readily available truths that are terrible and ugly. If one strictly adheres to the code of conduct conducive to the highest form of truth-seeking – that is, of a seriousness of intellectual integrity and passion that verges on hardness to the point where one is indifferent to whether truth brings fortune or fatality to oneself – one will necessarily come to edges and abysses that cough and ooze groundlessness. What one does and how one reacts in the face of such uncertainty is the true test of character.”

“I’m not sure what you are getting at, my friend,” said Immanuel, feeling criticized and attacked for being reasonable.

Harold explained, “I am saying that the rational person criticizing the faithful does not realize the amount of faith in their beliefs.”

“You see! I knew Harold was a man of God!” Pascal shouted triumphantly while slapping Harold on the back.

“...and the faithful person criticizing the rational does not realize the amount of reason in their arguments,” Harold continued. “Reason and faith are not oil and water; they are really two sides of the same coin of human thought.”

“A messy situation, indeed,” Immanuel remarked while scratching his head. “What, then, is the resolution to this strange new proposition?”

“How typical of a philosopher to assume that there is a resolution to every problem,” Harold said sarcastically. “I believe that a certain solution may be obtained by regarding truth as a matter of breeding.”

“I hope this conversation isn’t going towards the topic of eugenics,” Pascal half-joked.

“In a way, I suppose. One might consider truths not based on their ‘truthfulness,’ but on the results they breed on those who hold them. We therefore must eliminate truths that breed weakness, and foster the truths that breed strength.”

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<sup>1249</sup> John Keats said, “Truth is beauty, and beauty truth.” He is endlessly praised for this tautology, but I find it fairly boring.

Immanuel asked with honest curiosity, “How is this relevant to our previous discussion?”

“Consider the idea of a God of such qualities as have already been described. To Pascal, this truth is a seed that breeds flowers of happiness, humility, and purpose. To you, this truth is a poison that breeds the tumors of tumult, debasement, and purposelessness.”

Pascal exclaimed, “The Parable of the Sower!”<sup>1250</sup> while Immanuel simultaneously announced, “The proof of pragmatism!”

“Call it what you may,” Harold said, “but I call it compassion.”

Pascal noted, “A man of truly saintly disposition!” while Immanuel simultaneously asserted, “A man of truly knowledgeable inclination!”

“Compassion for the flower is cruelty to the weed and compassion for health is cruelty to the poison,” Harold continued, “...but who decides what is a 'flower' and what is a 'weed'? Who decides what is a 'poison' and what is a 'curative'? Who decides what is 'strong' and what is 'weak'?”

“God, no doubt!” Pascal said without missing a beat.

Immanuel declared, “A well-established parliament of properly educated peer-review, no doubt!”

“Aye, doubt it not, for each may establish his own rationale suitable to his nature, and if thou art truly joyous that is proof enough of its success.” Both Immanuel and Pascal both nodded in approval, for high-flung language exudes undeserved authority.

“I am ashamed of you two!” Harold indignantly ejaculated as both Immanuel and Pascal looked at one another with befuddlement. “I am ashamed and disheartened that you, my mind-girded Immanuel, would be so swayed by such a charismatic and emotional appeal, and that you, my faith-protected Pascal, would be so swayed by such a logical illustration!”

Both friends fell into a mild confusion of self-reflection that Harold used as a time to escape from the Thunderdome of debate, for too much talking always left Harold feeling that he needed to focus on actually saying something.

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<sup>1250</sup> The Parable of the Sower is a parable told by Christ where he conceals his sex addiction.

Thus tieth Harold the ribbon on the present of paradox.

## **PART 8: Superfice is Super-nice, and other Failed Attempts at Cleverness**

*“People say sometimes that Beauty is superficial. That may be so.  
But at least it is not so superficial as Thought is.”*

*–Oscar Wilde*

Harold had entered high school, about which he had found had nothing high or noble. One day, he was strolling with a female friend, who had been thrown into the jaws of crushing depression after seeing that she had a pimple on her face.

“True beauty is on the inside,” she remarked in a thinly-veiled attempt at employing a defense mechanism.

“I actually find organs and entrails to be quite ugly,” Harold quipped in return.

“You know what I mean,” the girl said in a tone that belied her own mistrust in her statement.

“My lady, I am not sure that I do. First of all, you say 'true beauty,' which I assume you are contrasting against 'false beauty,' perhaps that of appearances. Second of all, you say 'on the inside,' and yet you balked at my taking this to refer to your insides. I suppose you are referring to the content of your character by the phrase 'on the inside,' but tell me: is not the content of our character shown by the quality of our actions? Is not our inside shown by our outside?”

“Yes, I suppose that is true. I just meant I have a beautiful soul, or something,” she responded.

“Let's deal with what we have on our plates already before taking another helping of something as indigestible as a 'soul.' Now, I dare say that, really, at the root of your issue, is a belief. Maybe even two beliefs if you are particularly greedy. I personally believe that we can whittle down

the world's questions to two in particular: 'What is?' and 'What should be?' We have therefore summarized the basis of metaphysics and ethics, respectively." The girl nodded, even though she had become lost back at the metaphor of plates.

"Now," Harold continued, "we all believe in certain answers to these questions, even though we may not realize it. A quick way to get at them is to ask, firstly, what is True? Secondly, what is Good? Our beliefs about the True and the Good are shortcuts to the house of cards we call our 'understanding of the world.' You must take all of your beliefs, of 'This is true' and 'That is good,' and line them up for inspection."

"I don't know what is true and good, though," the girl meekly retorted, having come back from a daydream just in time to catch the last bit of Harold's lecture.

"What?" Harold gasped in astonishment. "Of course you do! Let me help you start. Your first one is, 'Beauty is on the inside is True.' Your second one is, 'To not have pimples on your face is Good.' There, you already have given me metaphysical and ethical assertions."

"Where are you going with this, exactly?"

"I am helping you find the root of your existential anxiety, my dear. It's no use to patch up a leak if the pipe is broken. I may be going out on a limb here but not only are your pipes broken, I believe they may have been wrongly fitted to begin with. Now, here is the basic method of transcending the dullness of your rigid belief system. First, take all your beliefs of what is good and true, and the more you believe them, the better. Now, take your statement of belief – let's take the notion that 'Beauty is on the inside is true' – and change the 'true' to 'false' or 'not true.' In this case, you would now have the statement 'Beauty is on the inside is false.' You must plunge into this belief head-first, taking it to be an absolute truth with equal intensity with which you believed the opposite. Really consider how it might be false to say beauty is on the inside."

The girl seemed completely stumped. "Well," Harold helped, "I

already gave you one example: your organs do not meet the standard threshold of what is considered beautiful. You might also consider that beauty is an aesthetic quality that requires a tangible object, and your so-called 'soul' or personality does not meet this prerequisite of being beautiful. Roll these ideas around in your mouth until you've gotten a good grasp of their taste. Swallow, rinse, and repeat, preferably without mixing metaphors too badly.”

“That sounds like a lot of work,” the girl muttered.

“We've only just begun!” Harold exclaimed. “Find your second wind and let us take flight once more. Now, we've already examined the idea that beauty is on the inside is both true and false, so now we have to take the first part of the equation and invert it. We now get the proposition that 'Ugliness is on the inside is true.' Perhaps we might assert that, even as true beauty is internal, true ugliness is as well. I'm sure you can conjure up a few other similar advocates of the Devil if you put yourself to the task. Finally, we come to the fourth proposition: 'Ugliness is on the inside is false.' Glancing around this campus, I can assure that there is plenty of external ugliness. The real test of all of this is to find all four propositions equally true and equally false. We have, with 'X' being your belief, 'X is true,' 'X is false,' 'Not-X is true,' and 'Not-X is false.'<sup>1251</sup> The same as what is done with the True must be done with the Good. If we take the opposite of Good...”

“Evil!” the girl declared excitedly. Harold was taken aback, astonished and insulted, and swiftly slapped the girl across the face.

“Never insult my ears again with such silliness! It is a waste of time to perform this practice with principles that are made-up to begin with. No, no, the opposite of Good is not Evil, it is Bad.<sup>1252</sup> I do not see why you insist on inserting such falsities into our conversation... 'the soul,' 'evil'...

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1251 The general form of using logic to transcend logic is an incredibly poor imitation of Nagarjuna's treatment of different Buddhist concepts through his Middle Path.

1252 The opposite of Good being Bad refers to an essay by Nietzsche in his book *The Genealogy of Morals*, where he contrasts the “Good versus Bad” attitude of Masters with the “Good versus Evil” attitude of Slaves.

Soon you're going to be telling me about 'free will,' and that would be good for a laugh.” The girl emitted a soft whimper as her false sense of agency fell away.

“Where were we? Each of the four propositions of each belief must in themselves be found to be true, false, true and false, as well as neither true nor false... each in their turn. You can quickly see that such a sublime method is the most mystical of all tasks, the destruction of the rule of rationality!”

“So it is 'good' to destroy rationality?” retorted the girl, with a keen and sinister smirk forming on her face.

“Ah, clever girl. I think we can rest assured that, as of now, my brain-bowels are full and we – by the modern standard of decency – we should not fill ourselves any fuller.” Harold then gave her a kiss on the cheek and said his goodbyes as he entered the door into his Ethics class.

Thus transcendeth Harold the multiplicity of mind.

## **PART 9: A Prod is always Better than *A Priori*, or how Harold Exposed the Nether-Regions of Philosophy**

*“But this – is my taste: not good, not bad, but **my** taste, about which I am no longer secretive or ashamed. 'This – is just my way – where is yours?’*

*Thus I answered those who asked of me 'the way.'*

*For **the** way – does not exist!”*

*–Friedrich Nietzsche*

Harold meandered into the Ethics class, and his teacher pulled his glasses down to the tip of his nose to say in as professorial a manner as possible, “Harold. Late again, I see.”

“Indeed,” Harold replied while stopping to puff up his chest with aristocratic air, “I am late on principle, for I, with Lord Henry, believe punctuality is the thief of time.”<sup>1253</sup>

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1253 “Punctuality is the thief of time” is a principle of Lord Henry's in Oscar Wilde's *The*



“OK, Lord Harold. Take your seat, and you can demonstrate a rebuttal to the first form of ethics which we will treat today. How do we feel about the Golden Rule?”

“I believe I've already made a demonstration of its ridiculousness,” Harold said without missing a beat.

“How do you mean exactly?” The professor leaned his body against the lectern in a feigned interest, for his only true interest was seeing himself praised.

“I do not value punctuality. You do. If you were to treat me as you wish to be treated, which appears to be some form of superficial supplication, then I would be left unsatisfied and overappreciated. If I were to treat you the way I wish to be treated, then I would probably be arrested for indecent exposure.” The class laughed, even though most did not follow the argument. Harold continued, “If you were to be treated as Lord Alfred Douglas wishes to be treated, you would have trouble walking straight for a week, and we all know you take pride in skillful ambulation.”<sup>1254</sup>

“Funny...” the teacher mumbled, utilizing the last resort of academics in the face of having no reply: crude sarcasm. “How does Socrates sound to you?”

“I think that 'The unexamined life is not worth living'<sup>1255</sup> is simply a chastisement from someone who has spent too much time and energy examining themselves. I think we know from the rudimentary beginnings of psychology that we have today that such a statement can only come from a bit of cognitive dissonance.”

“This is a philosophy class, not a psychology class,” the teacher said with pride.

“That's where you're wrong, I think.” Harold stopped for a

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*Picture of Dorian Gray.*

1254 Lord Alfred Douglas, or “Bosie,” was Wilde's lover. It is actually a reference to Aleister Crowley who wrote, “The Golden Rule is silly. If Lord Alfred Douglas (for example) did to others what he would like them to do to him, many would resent his action.”

1255 Luckily, the fool that said this chose hemlock to rid us of a nuisance.

moment to judge whether his teacher's ego had already been wounded enough so that the rest of his ramble would remain unheard. Harold then comforted himself with the notion that he did not need to be heard by his teacher, since his real pleasure came from hearing himself. He continued, "Every philosophy is actually an unconscious autobiography from its author, revealing his or her own prejudices rather than progressing towards knowledge."<sup>1256</sup>

Not wanting to set sail on the trepidatious seas of psychology, the teacher deflected, "What is your take on Aristotelian ethics, then?"

"At the risk of misrepresenting the man, I would say that, judging from the size of his beard, he was about half as wise as Socrates and about  $\frac{3}{4}$  as wise as Plato."

"I suppose you are a complete fool, then," the teacher remarked with a sly abuse of power dynamics so common with the disempowered.

"A fool who persists in his folly becomes wise," Harold said in his best impression of an Old English-man.<sup>1257</sup> "Really, I think Aristotle's notions were fairly sound, except that he equated virtue – or 'excellence' we should rather say since Christianity has since poisoned the word 'virtue' – with happiness. He believes happiness is virtuous, at least, but a classroom is no place for nuance. Personally, my potential speaks to me saying, 'do not be happy, be great.' And great I was, great I am, and great I shall be; a curse upon daddy super-ego and anyone else who would convince me otherwise!"

"Impressive arrogance, my boy," and the teacher was actually somewhat impressed. "Perhaps you seek pleasure in the manner of hedonistic ethics?"

"I just told you, I do not want to be happy, I do not even want to be pleased, I want to be great. If I live a life of discontent and tragedy but my name thereby ranks among those of Caesar and Christ, what would petty pleasure plead to make me turn from my melancholic

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<sup>1256</sup> Philosophy being an unconscious autobiography of its author is an idea that comes from the first chapter of Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*.

<sup>1257</sup> "A fool who persists in his folly becomes wise" is a quotation from William Blake.

means?”

“Impressive alliteration, this time.” The professor asked with a wry smile, “You know it is a hallmark of schizophrenia?”

“There is a fine line between madness and genius, and I prefer to have my feet planted firmly on both sides of any kind of divide. It makes for limber muscles if one stretches in such a way.”

“I see, I see,” though the teacher did not see at all. “Does anyone else have any agreements or disagreements with hedonism?” No one replied, for everyone else in the class became staunch nihilists at an early age after having woken up from the American dream.

“Alright then. Perhaps you would then demonstrate your view on utilitarianism?” the teacher invited.

Harold started to get up from his seat and the teacher inquired, “What exactly are you doing?”

“Demonstrating, as you asked.” Harold tip-toed up to the front of the class as if to not disturb the deep waking slumber of his colleagues. “If a hedon is a measure of pleasure, and the greatest good is what evokes the most hedons, then what we have is a supremely unethical ethic.”

“How do you mean?”

“*How* I mean is through speech. *What* I mean is this.” Harold then swiftly lept over to the professor and pulled down his trousers to his ankles.<sup>1258</sup> The class erupted in volcanic laughter as Harold expected. “You see?” Harold said to the teacher while sweeping his arm out across the classroom. “With about 20 students in this class, that action surely produced least 20 hedons. Your humiliation is a mere negative 1 hedon. Even if your humiliation was twenty times the average amount of joy of one of these students, I still would have performed an ethical action.”

The red blood of blushing turned quickly to the scarlet of rage, and the teacher sent Harold out of the classroom.

Thus arriveth Harold in the principal's office once again.

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1258 The demonstration is a form of the argument against utilitarianism that a gladiator being slaughtered in a coliseum is ethical because it entertains thousands of people even though the gladiator suffers and dies.

## PART 10: Not Two and Certainly Not Three or Four, or how Harold became an Advaita Vedantist

*“Understand now that in yourselves is a certain discontent.  
Analyse well its nature: at the end is in every case one conclusion.  
The ill springs from the belief in two things,  
the Self and the Not-Self, and the conflict between them.”*  
—Aleister Crowley

When Harold entered college, he learned that he needed a place to find repose. He found the seriousness of the students absolutely draining: one can only be a pure ocean so long with so many adjoining polluted streams.<sup>1259</sup>

After exploring a certain forested area whose emerald inhabitants waved a perpetual greeting to the Pacific Ocean, Harold came upon a rocky outcropping at the edge of a cliff.<sup>1260</sup> The multi-colored moss on a rock seemed to bear a striking resemblance to Bob Dylan, so he took it as a divine demand that he listen for any answers in the air.<sup>1261</sup> Harold took off his shoes and plopped his bony buttocks on the face of the rock. He entered his pretzel asana and began to meditate upon his mantra of the All-Devourer, “Om Nom Nom.”<sup>1262</sup>

After an apparent aeon had passed, the mantra seemed to conjure a sexual-electric energy<sup>1263</sup> that strangely seemed to emanate from his left

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1259 The idea of people being polluted streams and the prophet being an ocean comes from Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He can be a little condescending at times, I guess.

1260 The setting is a reference to an actual cliff-side in Big Sur, California. This chapter is actually a disguised Magical Record.

1261 The mention of Bob Dylan is a reference to his song “Blowin' in the Wind.” You seriously needed to look that one up?

1262 “Om nom nom” is the sound of someone eating and chewing food, hence the reference to the All-Devourer, or “*Panphage*,” which is a title of the god Pan. Internet humor, I guess... sorry about that.

1263 The “sexual-electric energy” is a reference to a certain somatic sensation that is

pinky finger. Though he was a socialist on the outside, his internal politics were ruled by an iron fascism. Harold therefore increased his attention upon the mantra, not willing to be dethroned as despot of his mind-island. Over and over he repeated the threefold song, but with each repetition, the energy grew stronger, more unignorable, more odious. Soon he could only get so far as the first two of three syllables. Harold threw all his willful weight upon the mantra in an act of Spartan futility.<sup>1264</sup> After becoming unable to even remember the first syllable of the mantra, Harold finally said to this strange sense, “Ok, I accept.” Harold's world was then plunged into utter blankness.

It was a dreamless sleep; it was a wave-less, reflection-less pond; it was a box that had no boundaries.<sup>1265</sup> There was no sense. No space. No thought. No time. No self. Blank, black, absolute nothingness.

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At some point back within Time, Harold was cast back out of the Abyss<sup>1266</sup> like a star falling upon the darkness of the earth.<sup>1267</sup> Harold had been spit out of the mouth of Mahavishnu, crawling Khephra-like<sup>1268</sup> out of

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common in the first couple hours of taking LSD.

1264 “Spartan futility” refers to the movie “300,” both in content and quality.

1265 The “dreamless sleep” and the “wave-less, reflection-less pond” are references to metaphors used by Patanjali and other Yogis to refer to the state of pure awareness that is achieved upon attaining *samadhi*. It is here equated with the crossing of the Abyss in the language of Thelemic mysticism.

1266 Being “cast back out of the Abyss” refers to the idea that the Magister Templi, i.e. one who has successfully extinguished the ego and crossed the Abyss, is cast back into duality. Crowley said that one is cast back into a certain Sephirah to do a certain task relevant to it. For example, Buddha was cast back into the Sphere of Mercury to relate his insights in the language of objective rationality, Rumi was cast back into the Sphere of Venus to convey his attainment through devotional poetry, To Mega Therion was cast back into the Sphere of Jupiter to become a Paternal-Initiator figure or something, *et cetera*.

1267 “A star falling upon the darkness of the earth” is a reference to *Liber LXV*, V:5, as well as the Star of Wormwood from the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, and the “morning star” in general... all of which refer to the Messiah or Savior coming to earth.

1268 Khephra is an Egyptian god in the form of a scarab who carries the Sun in its mandibles, often attributed to the Sun at Dawn (or Midnight in the Thelemic solar Adoration of “Liber Resh”).

the Night of Pan,<sup>1269</sup> and shot like lightning out of the limitless light into the world once more.<sup>1270</sup> He realized that he had been out for a while – not unconscious, but simply not there. He knew a span of time had passed with no idea how long, yet he knew he had not been knocked unconscious. He could not say where he had been or when he had been, so he figured he must have stumbled upon the door to the Nowhere-Nowhen, a place beyond the perceptual parameters of space and time that would be profoundly boring if there were any possibility of there being an identity who could be bored.

It would, in fact, be an error to speak about these things occurring to Harold, for the experience had completely bulldozed the quaint Victorian mansion of his ego. For the sake of simplicity and the abundance of laziness, this most humble narrator will still misleadingly refer to Harold as the hero and subject of this story. Language should be left to the logicians and excuse-makers, but we have unfortunately not formulated a more adequate means of communication, at least for novels.

“That which uttereth 'I' uttereth falsehood!” the mouth of Harold proclaimed, for it was wont to work with words translated into the Authorized King James version in such times of triumph. Subject and object had not yet differentiated, and Harold had stumbled upon an experiential proof of non-duality. Unfortunately, Harold had long since disavowed anecdotal evidence as real evidence, so he knew he wouldn't believe his own story. As Harold came back to his Harold-ness and the world came back to its world-ness, he started to move out of his asana. After shifting his weight, he realized he had soiled himself at some point in the denial of duration. “Ah, the anatta enema is certainly the most

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1269 The Night of Pan, or “N.O.X.,” is a name for the state of non-duality or non-ego after having crossed the Abyss.

1270 “Shot like lightning” refers to the Lightning Flash in the Qabalah, which is a symbol of the Divine Unity emanating and manifesting into the ten Sephiroth of the Tree of Life in an instant. The “Limitless Light” is a translation of the Hebrew phrase “Ain Soph Aur,” which is a Negative Veil before the the first Sephirah, Kether, on the Tree of Life.

powerful purgative of all planes,”<sup>1271</sup> Harold commented as he waddled penguin-like back down the path from whence he came.

Thus descendeth Harold back into the land of the living.

## PART 11: Harold practices Spiritual Optometry as a Wandering Prophet Preaching from the Positionless Position <sup>1272</sup>

“無問曰、六祖可謂、是事出急家老婆心切。

譬如新荔支剥了殼去了核、送在你口裏、只要你嚥一嚥。”

*['The Sixth Patriarch was, so to speak, hurried into helping a man in an emergency, and he displayed a grandmotherly kindness.*

*It is as though he peeled a fresh lichi, removed the seed, put it in your mouth, and asked you to swallow it down.']*

—Mumon

After purging himself of the earthly dross, Harold came back from the forest to the people. He passed by a man tuning a stringed instrument, through a straight and narrow way, and then he came upon a tightrope walker.<sup>1273</sup> Upon this he achieved momentary *satori*,<sup>1274</sup> threw up his hands in the air, and roared, “There are too many lines in this world!” The air was burdened and hungry clouds swagged on the deep.<sup>1275</sup>

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1271 “Anatta” is one of the Buddhist Three Characteristics of existence, which means “not-self.” The idea is that *anatta* is seen as an enema that clears out Harold who was full of shit, so to speak. Get it?

1272 The “Positionless Position” is a reference to the “zero state” achieved in *satori* as described in Zen Buddhism. It is a good example of the characteristic paradoxicality of the utterances of virtually all mystics. Go read Walter Stace!

1273 The stringed instrument is a reference to the story of Buddha coming upon a similar situation after his enlightenment, leading him to create the Middle Way as a string must be neither too loose nor too taught. The “straight and narrow way” is a reference to the path to the Kingdom of Heaven from the New Testament. The tightrope walker is a reference to Nietzsche's Zarathustra who comes upon a similar situation after coming down from his mountain.

1274 “Satori” is a name for the non-dual state of awakened perception in Zen Buddhism. Didn't I already mention that like half a page ago? Kids these days...

1275 These are references to the prophet Rintrah in William Blake's *The Marriage of*

The crowd that had gathered around the tightrope walker all turned to face Harold. Although most were astonished, the reactions of the crowd varied.<sup>1276</sup> About half thought Harold was insane. Some thought he was uttering a metaphysical truth of the illusoriness of the space-marks or lines we place between things, causing us to perceive the Maya of multiplicity<sup>1277</sup> ... and they all decided on the spot to become his disciples. One old lady spontaneously achieved penetrating insight into the non-arising, primordial ground of all being. One man instantly converted to Christianity for some reason.

Harold saw that he had startled the natives and decided to make an escape. Because of residual delirium from his hibernation sickness,<sup>1278</sup> he decided for some reason to awkwardly yell, “No!” before he turned around and dashed in the other direction. Half the crowd took this as confirmation of Harold's insanity. Some took it as a Qabalistic confirmation of his enlightenment, an assertion of his identity with the Ultimate Naught,<sup>1279</sup> and so re-dedicated their discipleship with increased fervor. The old lady spontaneously re-entered the world of interdependent co-arising multiplicity. The newly-converted Christian remained a Christian. As Harold scurried away he realized that his time in the forest had slightly atrophied his social skills, so he resolved to refine his rapture and be not so animal.<sup>1280</sup>

Harold found a bench to give himself time to think. He was shocked that the obviously evident non-dual nature of Supreme Reality

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*Heaven and Hell.*

1276 The various reactions of the crowd to Harold's pronouncement are an obscure reference to Christ's Parable of the Sower. Wikipedia it.

1277 “Maya” is the Hindu name for the illusion of the world.

1278 “Hibernation sickness” is a reference to *The Return of the Jedi*. What, you knew that one? Nerd.

1279 The “Ultimate Naught” is a reference to the Qabalistic Zero, which is not a “lack of something,” but a name for the continuous, all-containing Unmanifest.

1280 The reference is to *Liber AL*, II:70, “There is help & hope in other spells. Wisdom says: be strong! Then canst thou bear more joy. Be not animal; refine thy rapture! If thou drink, drink by the eight and ninety rules of art: if thou love, exceed by delicacy; and if thou do aught joyous, let there be subtlety therein!”



was not intuitively grasped by everyone else. As a man strolled by, Harold jumped up and glared at him. Harold then slapped the man on the back and said, "Is everything alright?" He motioned as if to introduce himself, "I am God, and this farce is my creation."<sup>1281</sup> The man was stunned into a mild paralysis. Harold then asked, "Don't you recognize me?" The man's face offered a small furrowing of the brow in reply. Without giving any warning, Harold spun to face the man, held open his eyelid with his fingers, leaned in towards his face, and whispered with determination, "I know I'm in there somewhere..."

At this moment, the disciples caught up to Harold. Seeing this, he scurried away once more. The man's paralysis was then suddenly gone, although he was left with an intense craving for bacon.

Thus cooketh Harold with a Dorje and Phurba.<sup>1282</sup>

## **PART 12: Everything is Completely Arbitrary but Nonetheless Beautiful, and other Watchwords of Harold's Attainment**

*"Nothingness with twinkles! ...but what twinkles!"*

*—Aleister Crowley*

The disciples quickly caught up to Harold as he had forgotten to eat for the last two days, and one of them grabbed him and pleaded with him, "Please, sir, we know you are a Master of the Temple."<sup>1283</sup> You have hidden your identity to the profane but simultaneously revealed it to those who have ears to hear. Anyone who is so good at using blinds must surely

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1281 "Is everything alright? I am God, and this farce is my creation" is a virtually direct quotation of Friedrich Nietzsche, who wrote this in a letter during his last years of "insanity."

1282 The Dorje and Phurba are "weapons" of Tibetan Buddhism that are equatable to some extent to the Wand and Dagger in Western ceremonial magick and to the fork or skewer and knife in Western cooking.

1283 A "Master of the Temple" or "Magister Templi" is someone who has successfully crossed the Abyss and achieved the grade of 8°=3<sup>□</sup> in A.∴A.∴, and he therefore has the authority to formulate a new Outer Order.

be a powerful and wise Adept. Our Temple has lost our connection with the Secret Chiefs.<sup>1284</sup> Please become the Hierophant of our Temple! Initiate us into your wisdom with your divine decree from On High!”

This convoluted tirade caused Harold to sober up, recall his formerly civilized manners, and regain his powers of speech. “Fools,” he said. They all looked proud, having thought he was identifying them in a symbolic sense with the Qabalistic Zero of The Pure Fool.<sup>1285</sup> Harold saw this and shouted, “The *bad* kind of fools!” They all simultaneously dropped their heads in disappointment. “Haven't you heard?” Harold paused to look for comprehension in the faces of the disciples, but he only saw a bunch of confused cattle. Undaunted, he announced, “There is no initiation!”<sup>1286</sup>

After a moment of attempting to process Harold's pronouncement, one disciple shouted, “Restore our Lodge as a true Guru and Initiator!”

Another chimed in, “All the rituals of the old time are black!”

A third pleaded, “Make severe the ordeals!”<sup>1287</sup>

“Honestly,” Harold confessed, “when it comes right down to it, I'd much rather be a Guru than God, but I don't dare be selfish enough to forgo my duties as Creator of the Universe. You see, *everyone* including myself must make sacrifices, no matter how or where one lives.”<sup>1288</sup>

The disciples looked singularly puzzled. One disciple soon put into

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1284 The Secret Chiefs are the illuminated Adepts or praeter-human intelligences that are said to watch over humanity and send a Magus to bring a Word of Truth every now and then, similar to the Hindu idea that Vishnu will incarnate to bring balance to the Universe every so often.

1285 “The Pure Fool” is a reference to the Tarot Trump called “The Fool,” which is attributed to the number 0.

1286 See “The Perfection of Understanding Sutra” in *Thelema Sutras* for more on this idea.

1287 These are references to *Liber AL*, II:5, “Behold! the rituals of the old time are black. Let the evil ones be cast away; let the good ones be purged by the prophet! Then shall this Knowledge go aright” and *Liber AL*, I:38, “He must teach; but he may make severe the ordeals.”

1288 This entire quotation – “Honestly... or where one lives” – is virtually a direct quotation of Friedrich Nietzsche from his “insanity letters” written at the end of his life. It's almost as if he had some illuminated insight and wasn't just insane, huh?

gear his denial defense mechanism and carried on as if he hadn't heard what was just said. He cried, "Bring us the Truth!" Others joined in on the song:

"Bring us Light!"

"And Wisdom!"

"Peace!"

"Joy!"

"And Length of days!"

"And Wonder-Tree Sap!"<sup>1289</sup>

The barbershop septet of disciples ended their brief petition, and looked upon Harold expectantly.

"None of you seem to understand. I am saying that there is no such thing as initiation. There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was!"<sup>1290</sup>

The disciples stood in place, completely unphased. Harold tried to explain another way, "Insofar as you are *this*, a mind and body, you are a shadow that will pass and a slave that shall perish. All component phenomena in the world of duality will always be component phenomena in the world of duality, condemned to the cycle of birth into forms, a short though perpetually dynamic life of apparent stability, the dissolution of form, and transformation or rebirth into new forms. Insofar as you are *That*, the boundless Brahman of transcendent reality, you are the united with the sum and source of all existence; the Crowned and Conquering Child would be your name.<sup>1291</sup> In Truth, you are That. Always were, are now, and always will be. That Immortal Sun will always be ablaze, whether or not you aware of it, whether or not you do or don't do

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1289 "Wonder-Tree Sap" is a reference to the Anthem of *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass* where the line "sap of the world-ash wonder-tree" occurs. It could be seen as a veiled way to ask for Harold's semen – it *could*, but then you'd be a pervert, of course.

1290 The reference is to *Liber AL*, II:58, "Yea! deem not of change: ye shall be as ye are, & not other. Therefore the kings of the earth shall be Kings for ever: the slaves shall serve. There is none that shall be cast down or lifted up: all is ever as it was..."

1291 The "Crowned and Conquering Child" is a name of Horus, a symbol of Godhead in Thelema. I hope you have figured that one out already, but I figured I would err on the side of safety.

anything about it. This Self can never die by its very nature of transcending (though somewhat paradoxically also containing) time and space. The normal self and even the normal world of which we are aware will all inevitably pass away by their very nature of being enmeshed in time and space. What can die will never become what doesn't die. Even our consciousness, which by some miracle of Nature is capable of temporarily perceiving and identifying with this Undying Self... even *this* will pass away into nothingness. It is this normal self you fruitlessly hope to be elevated by initiation towards Truth.”

The disciples remained unphased, but Harold could tell that he had almost tunnelled all the way through their thick skulls: the prospect of actually being understood seemed possible. He extended yet another explanation, “You think I will bestow some kind of secret knowledge through my words. You think that you will become stronger, wiser, more powerful, and more enlightened by being bestowed degrees. Initiation, in this sense, therefore involves something with a beginning and an end, something that involves becoming more this or less that... a process that involves change, in short. No matter how orderly the chairs are arranged, Elijah's seat will always be empty.<sup>1292</sup> The invincible and empty-full non-dual substrate of existence will always be invincible in its empty fullness. The soul is already perfect: perfect purity, perfect calm, perfect silence.<sup>1293</sup> Nothing can take away this perfection. Nothing can alter anything about it by its very nature of being beyond all things, by the very perfection of its nature. This is your True Self, and it does not need to be lifted up or cast down; it can't be. The only true initiation would be bringing one's illusory sense of self to the awareness of its own illusoriness, the momentary penetration of the Veil of Mother Matter<sup>1294</sup> to see one's original face before one was born, the state of mystic unity where one can state 'I *am*

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1292 The mention of Elijah and chairs is a reference to the Jewish practice of leaving an empty chair during the ceremony of Passover for Elijah to occupy.

1293 This is an adaptation of a line from Aleister Crowley's essay “The Soul of the Desert.”

1294 The “Veil of Mother Matter” refers to the Veil of Isis “that no man hath lifted.”

the Truth.<sup>1295</sup> This is said without a hint of pride or conceit; it is said with a supreme confidence to the extent that uttering such a phrase almost seems like a platitude that almost doesn't require being stated since it is so plainly obvious.”

The disciples stood in amazement, having finally been phased by Harold's manic diatribe. After a brief moment of silence, several shouts broke out:

“A black brother sent to destroy our holy Order!”<sup>1296</sup>

“Choronzon incarnate!”<sup>1297</sup>

“I don't think I understood a word of what he said!”

The disciples decided unanimously in favor of abandoning this false prophet, for they preferred the comfort of always agreeing with each other over examining any potentially threatening truths. They stuck their noses up to suck in hot air and continued their search for the Secret Chiefs.

Thus Harold concealeth himself from the profane.

### **PART 13: The Re-Establishment of the Reality of Hallucination, or how Harold became a Butterfly**

*“A dreamer is one who can only find his way by moonlight, and his punishment is that he sees the dawn before the rest of the world.”*

*–Oscar Wilde*

Harold walked down a dark, humid corridor. He felt the walls on

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1295 “I am the Truth” is an utterance of mystics from Jesus Christ to Mansur al-Hallaj. Both were punished with death for such blasphemous indiscretions.

1296 A “black brother” is an “evil” or “left-hand path” magician who refuses to dissolve his ego into the Absolute, shutting himself up out of selfishness. It is the mystical equivalent to being anal retentive and therefore full of shit.

1297 “Choronzon” is a name given to the “devil” of incoherence and dispersion that abides in the Abyss. Choronzon appears in a well-known chapter of Aleister Crowley's *The Vision and the Voice*, which details his astral explorations of the Enochian Aethyrs.

both sides – they were close together, almost pressed up against his body. He traveled down this hallway for a while until, finally, he came to a green door. Curiosity combined with a sense of urgency guided his hand to the door handle. He opened the door and a heavy, salty odor washed over him. Harold closed his eyes for a moment in reaction to the smell. When he opened his eyes a moment later, he was met with the sight of an older woman standing inside of the room. Her skin was black – pure, colorless black – which contrasted sharply with her glaringly white eyes that seemed to lack lids. The woman's belly was nearly bursting out from her body – Harold thought he could hear a faint, chaotic drumbeat emanating from it. The woman's face was twisted with emotion – he couldn't tell if it was pain, fear, or anger or all of them at once. The woman's lips were curled back to reveal a set of teeth that would better fit in the the mouth of a lioness. Her triangular tongue flashed across her teeth, licking her lips in anxious desire. The sight of this woman was like a wave of force hitting Harold's eyes.<sup>1298</sup> For a brief moment he was stunned, but then he was filled with a terrible, consuming fear. It was a fear so overwhelming that body and mind could do nothing but obey its power. Harold turned and bolted down the hallway in the direction from which he had come. He ran and the walls seemed to be closing in on him. Suddenly, he fell as if the ground disappeared from under him. He plummeted downward leaving behind a blur of flailing limbs and terror. A light began to dawn slowly, then a little quicker... and then a blinding flash. Harold then woke up.

Upon re-entering his material tabernacle of illusion, Harold went next door and recounted this experience to his housemate Pyrrho.<sup>1299</sup> When telling this story, Harold failed to mentioned that it was a dream. Once he mentioned waking up, his friend was bewildered and said, “Well there you have it. It was just a dream. It wasn't real.”

“Yes, it was a dream,” Harold replied, “and it was real.”

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1298 The woman is an archetypal expression of the Terrible Mother, as described by Carl Jung in several of his books. She appears here in the form of Kali.

1299 Pyrrho was a famous Ancient Greek skeptic after which the Pyrrhonian school of skepticism was named.

“Dreams aren't real, Harold. That's why we wake up from them into reality.”

“I saw sights,” Harold argued while waving his hand in the air as he was wont to do, “I smelled smells, I felt fear. The feelings and sensations were just as strong as those when I'm awake... some of them were even stronger than waking sensations.”

“Yes, but that experience ends when you wake up,” Pyrrho retorted.

Harold answered without a pause, “And so does waking experience when you sleep.”

“Dreams are symbolic, though” Pyrrho rebutted. “The woman is merely the archetype of the terrible Mother, the corridor was perhaps the birth canal. Your fear represents some kind of unconscious, pathological response that you need to work through with a professional, I think.”

“And the waking life is somehow different? Don't people clothe themselves in ways that carry symbolic meaning, an outward statement of their inward nature? Don't we perceive people around us in archetypal roles?”

“Yes, but you encountered an archetype in the dream, not a person with a personality.”

“Didn't I encounter a particular manifestation of an archetype, just like every woman in bearing a child fulfills the archetypal role of 'Mother'? Just because I didn't stay long enough to learn the lady's name doesn't mean she lacked a personality just like your mother or mine.”

“Alright,” Pyrrho conceded, “but dreams are subjective worlds. It's only your own and no one else's.”

“Is that so? I've heard plenty of accounts of people having the same dream and even interacting with one another therein, and I have the malignant disease of taking people at their word. Anyhow, do we exist in such a non-subjective world when awake? We may be bombarded by the same stimuli as each other, but we all have slightly different senses. Some see better than others. Some can perceive subtle differences in taste that

others cannot. Some people are blind or deaf..." Harold closed his eyes, covered his ears, and stumbled around the room for a moment. "Add to this the fact that we all have a unique genetic heritage, a unique upbringing, and a unique cultural context in which we are embedded. When awake, we are all in our own worlds. Our worlds are simply conveniently similar enough to each other that we can agree upon certain things and communicate in a relatively efficient way. Perhaps the real difference is that we've spent so much time and energy discovering, explaining, and mapping the waking world whereas we don't even have so much as a primitive atlas for the dream world."<sup>1300</sup> Harold then took in a deep gulp of air as if he had said everything in one breath.

"The dream world violates the laws of reality, though," Pyrrho insisted.

"You mean they violate the laws of physics of the waking world."

"Same thing."

"Is it, my boy? That simply belies your own prejudice that 'waking is real' and 'dream is illusion.' Some Eastern philosophers would argue that they are both illusions, and I hear from reputable authorities that they are usually quite wise. Perhaps we are more realistic in dreams because we more readily acknowledge they're illusions. I prefer to see it inversely: waking and dream experiences are both real, though the two worlds may function through different or even contradictory laws."

"This all reminds me of Chuang Tzu who couldn't figure out whether he was Chuang Tzu dreaming he was a butterfly or if he was a butterfly dreaming he was Chuang Tzu."<sup>1301</sup>

"Indeed! That is exactly what I'm talking about! Some people prefer to be Chuang Tzu and some prefer to be the butterfly. Some people try to escape from the terror of the waking world by falling asleep

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1300 The "primitive atlas for the dream world" is an obscure reference to an appendix in Aleister Crowley's *Magick in Theory and Practice* that is entitled "Notes for an Astral Atlas."

1301 Chuang Tzu or Zhuangzi was a Taoist sage who was only second in importance to Lao Tzu.



and some people try to escape from the terror of the dreaming world by waking up. I don't particularly see any reason to presume one is more realistic than the other.”

“I suppose this dialogue will end with one of us waking up and realizing this is all a dream?” Pyrrho said snidely.

“No, that would be far too cliché.”

Thus wandereth Harold in the world of the wide-awake.<sup>1302</sup>

## **PART 14: Harold Weaves, and is Clothed with Derision; Meditates, and is Plagued by Astral Vision** <sup>1303</sup>

*“We may consider all beings as parts of ourselves,  
but it is more convenient to regard them as independent.*

*Maximum Convenience is our can[n]on of 'Truth.'”*

*–Aleister Crowley*

Having become bored with Malkuthian mummery, Harold determined to discover the conventions of the more subtle planes.<sup>1304</sup> He entered a diner and asked for a glass of water.

While the waitress was away, Harold arranged his temple for his travels. He placed a napkin on his lap as his lambskin apron, arranged the dinner plate as his disk, stood the salt and pepper shakers as Solomonic pillars, the butter knife became his dagger, and his fork became his three-pronged wand of the Holy Fire. The waitress came back with his cup of

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1302 A reference to Crowley's *The Wake World*.

1303 The chapter title is a reference to Swinburne's poem “Atalanta in Calydon” where the Chorus ends a speech with the lines, “He weaves, and is clothed with derision; / Sows, and he shall not reap; / His life is a watch or a vision / Between a sleep and a sleep.”

1304 “Malkuth” is the 10th and final Sephirah on the Tree of Life, which refers to the material world. The common metaphor of the Great Work is to climb the Tree of Life from Malkuth back to Kether, the 1st Sephirah of the Tree of Life. The first Path after Malkuth is the Path of Tav, which is attributed to traveling on the astral plane or “scrying in the spirit vision.”

water, which he solemnly set on his plate as his holy chalice.<sup>1305</sup> Although he could not quite remember the correct procedures, Harold drew deep, deep his breath, slowly brought his forefinger to his lips, and threw it outwards while yelling, “Apple pancake diamond hoes!”<sup>1306</sup> A Jesuit priest sitting near Harold was instantly cast into the Qliphoth from whence he came.<sup>1307</sup>

In his mind's eye, Harold imagined an automatic door in front of him. He gave the Sign of the Enterer upon which the doors opened,<sup>1308</sup> he floated weightlessly through the astral portal,<sup>1309</sup> and darkness was upon the face of the deep. The world was without form and void<sup>1310</sup> until Harold figured himself as a Blue Angel<sup>1311</sup>; he shot upwards, propelled by the power of pre-regulation, destroyer-class, solid-fuel recoil boosters.<sup>1312</sup> After

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1305 The various items on the table are symbolic of Harold consecrating the mundane implements as magical weapons. The “Solomonic pillars” refers to the pillars of duality known as “Jachin” and “Boaz” in Freemasonry, which represent Heaven and Earth; similar pillars are seen in various Western esoteric sects and are often black and white to show duality through color. The “three-pronged wand” is a reference to the Hebrew letter Shin, which is symbolic of the “Ruach Elohim” or “Holy Spirit” and is attributed to the Element of Fire, like the Wand, in occultism.

1306 “Apple pancake diamond hoes” is a corruption of “Apo pantos kakodaimonos,” which means “Away all evil spirits” and is said at the beginning of the ritual known as “The Star Ruby” as an initial banishing.

1307 The “Qliphoth” are the shells that lie beneath Malkuth on the Tree of Life and represent the dark or inverted aspects of the universe. The priest being affected by the banishing is a reference to Aleister Crowley's suggestion in his *Eight Lectures on Yoga* to say “Apo pantos kakodaimonos” whenever encountering a man of cloth so as to banish evil influences from one's magical Circle, so to speak.

1308 The Sign of the Enterer is a grade sign of the Neophyte degree in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn, which refers to the force of Horus/Ra-Hoor-Khuit as opposed to the silence of Hoor-paar-kraat/Harpocrates.

1309 “Astral portal” is a reference to the practice in the Golden Dawn of imagining a door or image through which one passes in order to enter the astral plane.

1310 “The world was without form and void” is a direction quotation from the beginning of the Old Testament where it refers to the world before Creation.

1311 The “Blue Angel” is a reference to the American acrobatic fighter planes with a double-meaning of being a reference to angels who are considered beings that exist on the subtler planes and blue being a color of aspiration or prayer (as in the ascending blue triangle that complements the descending red triangle of Horus in the Hexagram of Magick, c.f. Crowley's *The Book of Lies*, chapter 69).

1312 “Pre-regulation, destroyer-class, solid-fuel recoil boosters” is a reference to the 1995

expending his energy, Harold ended up in the sixth deva-world of Tusita.<sup>1313</sup> There he encountered a luminescent Bodhisattva perched upon a throne of lotus flowers.

The androgynous ascended one announced, “I am Tathagatagarbha Madhyamaka Avalokitesvara Padmasambhava Prajnaparamita Nirodha-Samapatti!”<sup>1314</sup>

“Harold, nice to meet you.”

“What brings you into this realm, mortal?”

“I was just on my way to the City of the Pyramids, and I must have gotten lost.”<sup>1315</sup>

“With what selfish aim have you draw your arrow of aspiration?”<sup>1316</sup> the Bodhisattva assumingly inquired.

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PC game “Full Throttle” where the main character attaches such boosters to his motorcycle in order to jump over an impassable gorge. It was a really cool game.

1313 The “deva-world of Tusita” is a reference to one of the Buddhist “heavens” where certain Bodhisattvas abide.

1314 “Tathagatagarbha Madhyamaka Avalokitesvara Padmasambhava Prajnaparamita Nirodha-Samapatti” is a name composed of stringing together different Buddhist concepts and names of Bodhisattvas to make fun of the long and over-indulgent titles of supposedly enlightened people. “Tathagatagarbha” means “Thus gone” or “Thus-crossed one” and refers to the Mahayana doctrine that Buddha-nature is already present and within everyone; “Madhyamaka” is the name of Nagarjuna's Middle Path that includes the central belief that all phenomena are empty of self-existence and dependently co-arisen; “Avalokitesvara” and “Padmasambhava” are two names of popular Bodhisattvas, the former being the Bodhisattva of compassion and the latter being considered the progenitor of Vajrayana Buddhism in Tibet; “Prajnaparamita” means “the Perfection of Wisdom” and also refers to a collection of various Mahayana sutras; “Nirodha-Samapatti” means the attainment of extinction and generally refers to the extinction of feeling and perception through meditation.

1315 “The City of the Pyramids” is a name for the Qabalistic Sefirah of Binah which one reaches after successfully crossing the Abyss, i.e. dissolving one's ego in the Absolute. The entire line is also an obscure reference to a certain ceremony. If you want Wisdom, you have to seek it; I can't just give you everything.

1316 The “arrow” is a reference to the arrow of Sagittarius, whose Path is attributed to that which reaches up to the Sun of Tiphareth or union with God, as well as to the teaching of the Buddha regarding the poison arrow, i.e. if one is shot with an arrow, one shouldn't ask too many questions about who shot the arrow, its model and make, *et cetera*. One should take practical measures to heal the wound of *dukkha* rather than engaging in fruitless metaphysical speculation.

“I heard the barkeep Babalon ferments the very best wine, and I figured I would give it a try.”<sup>1317</sup>

“Young one,” the Bodhisattva said with exaggerated compassion, “you have yet to even enter the stream. You have at least twenty more reincarnations before you may become a once-returned.”<sup>1318</sup>

“Just because you cannot understand one who speaks in riddles does not mean the riddler is fettered,” Harold replied.<sup>1319</sup>

“The spoke of Right Speech is broken on your wheel of Eightfold renunciation,” the Bodhisattva commented.

“And Typhon, Hermanubis, and the Sphinx all struggle in a constant battle to up-end one another on my rim, but I abide unmoved in the center thereof.”<sup>1320</sup>

“One who has such conceit can never achieve a favorable rebirth in the pure abodes!”

“What, then, got you to this lovely, formless place, might I ask?”

“I have taken the most austere vow<sup>1321</sup> out of my boundless compassion for suffering to return endlessly into the realm of Samsara until the even the basest stone has achieved Buddhahood.”

“I pray that you remind me of the Three Characteristics of all that resides in the realm of Samsara,” Harold asked as a leading question, for he figured himself as being part-lawyer and part-psychologist.

The Bodhisattva replied, “All is impermanent. All is unsatisfactory. All is without substantial self.”

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1317 Babalon is the name for the Great Mother who dwells in the City of the Pyramids of Binah, the 3rd Sephirah on the Tree of Life. She is described in the Book of Revelation and Aleister Crowley's *The Vision and the Voice* as having the blood of the saints in the Cup of her fornication 'cause she's kinky like that.

1318 “Stream-enterer” is the first of four stages in becoming an Arahant, or liberated one.

1319 The “fettters” are mental impediments that keep one bound to *samsara*.

1320 Typhon, Hermanubis, and the Sphinx are three Egyptian images that represent the three forms of energy: activity, passivity, and neutrality, which correspond to Rajas, Tamas, and Sattvas in the Hindu system of *gunas* as well as Fire, Water, and Air in the Western system of the classical Elements. The three figures appear on the rim of the Wheel of Fortune in the 10<sup>th</sup> Tarot Trump called “Fortune.”

1321 The “austere vow” is the Bodhisattva vow to renounce one's final release from *samsara* until all beings have achieved enlightenment.

“Who, then, are you seeking to save? And who is doing the saving? Knowledge is the curse of the seeing, and ignorance the blessing of the blind. It is not the mineral inhabitants of earth that require Buddhahood; only a god would be so vain as to think that the perfection of simplicity of stones somehow require the convoluted compassion-cries of a redeemer. Both Nirvana and Samsara are Perfect. The Perfect doesn't require any further fixing; the only thing to do in this case is experience the play of Perfection with the natural attitudes of gratitude and enjoyment.”

Thereupon was the Bodhisattva disabused of his martyr-complex: he was liberated from his vow of liberation, the heavens were transfigured, and a cherubic chorus rang out, sending lotus-songs of liberation to the six quarters.

Thus transcendeth Harold the sixth deva-world.

## **PART 15: The Destructive Deity's Didactic Delusions, or how Ra-Hoor-Khuit Tripped on his Double-Wand of Power**<sup>1322</sup>

*“Balance against each thought its exact opposite!  
For the Marriage of these is the Annihilation of Illusion.”  
–Aleister Crowley*

Harold proceeded upward in the supra-mundane planes; at least it appeared to be upward. When one has no law of gravity nor earthly frame of reference, all directions are equally every other. Upon traveling in his body of light for an astral aeon or two, Harold arrived at a temple with Ancient Egyptian decor. Seeing as how Harold was wont to imagine himself as having been a high priest of Amon-Ra in the 11<sup>th</sup> Dynasty,<sup>1323</sup> he

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1322 The “Double-Wand of Power” in the title is a reference to *Liber AL*, III:72, “I am the Lord of the Double Wand of Power,” and in this context refers to the power over duality.

1323 The reference to being a priest of Amon-Ra is a gibe at Crowley saying he was a high priest of Mentu named Ankh-af-na-khonsu who created the funerary stele that we

decided to explore.

Upon arriving at the top of some sandstone steps, Harold was confronted by a hawk-headed god<sup>1324</sup> who barred him from proceeding further.

The god shrieked from his curved beak, “*En aat am-a shu-t em neter!*”<sup>1325</sup>

“Gesundheit,” Harold said in reply. “Do you happen to speak the Holy Language?”<sup>1326</sup>

“Who art thou that dost fly to my firmamental fane?”<sup>1327</sup> the god questioned.

“I am the Stealer of Sorrows! I am the Breaker of Winds! I am He that ever Goeth, being in myself quite Restless! Most people call me Harold, though.”

“Hail, Harold.”

“I am Hale Harold, indeed; free of all infirmity.<sup>1328</sup> And who might you be?”

“Ra-Horakhty, Immortal Sun of the Two Horizons.”

“I thought you were named Ra-Hoor-Khuit?”

“You can blame that blunder on Budge; he was not a very good listener.”<sup>1329</sup>

“Perhaps you might take responsibility for always being so

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now call the Stele of Revealing.

1324 The hawk-headed god is, of course, Horus in his specific form as Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

1325 “En aat am-a shu-t em neter” comes from the *Egyptian Book of the Dead* and can be translated as “There is no part of me that is not of the gods,” which is said in the central ceremony of Ordo Templi Orientis, *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

1326 The “Holy Language” here refers to English because *Liber AL vel Legis* is written in English. It is said by Harold sarcastically, in case anyone get angry that the author actually thinks it is holier than any other language.

1327 The line regarding the “firmamental fane” is a reference to a speech from Crowley's play “The Ship.” It basically means “heavenly temple.”

1328 “Hale” is a word that means healthy or free from disease, and it has its roots in a world that means “whole.” Harold is intentionally mishearing Horus' greeting, a bit of typical Shakespearean comedy.

1329 “Budge” refers to E.A. Wallis Budge who was a popular Egyptologist in the early 20th Century and whose work is generally discredited by modern scholars.

unclear?”

“I am the clear light itself. My very being bursts with the flaming sword of superconsciousness. Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.”

“A very brief law, indeed. How is one to do one's Will?”

“Even as all stars soar through the night-sky, all beings abide in the way of the Universal Will. Seek that, and then do it!”

“Referring to a Universal Will is as useless for finding one's own individual Will as referring to the idea 'Art' is in deciding to create a painting,” Harold argued, “or referring to the idea 'Music' in deciding to create a song. Perhaps you might further elucidate the nature of this Will that I may find it?”

“Will is a flame,”<sup>1330</sup> Ra-Horakhty replied, “hidden in the core of the being of all that lives.”

“Are not Autumn and Winter as necessary as Spring and Summer?” Harold gibed.

“Will is pure,”<sup>1331</sup> unadulterated and undiluted,” Ra-Horakhty riposted.

“Isn't it the impurities in rocks that give them their colorful luster?”

“Will is ever-joyous, bliss-infused and *ananda*-adorned!”

“Evolution stagnates without catastrophe,” Harold retorted. “You should know that, O Baby-sitter of the Blasted Tower.”<sup>1332</sup> Besides, is not suffering the great deliverer from the dross of dead desires?”

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1330 “Will is a flame...”: This is a reference to several lines within *Liber AL vel Legis* where various fiery metaphors are used to describe the Will; it is also a reference to “O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives,” which is a line from *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*; it also is a reference to the fact that, in Western occultism, the Will is often attributed to the Element of Fire and its corresponding magical weapon of the Wand.

1331 “Will is pure...”: This is a reference to the idea that is exemplified by *Liber AL*, I:44, “Pure will, unassuaged of purpose, delivered from the lust of result, is every way perfect.”

1332 The “Blasted Tower” refers to the Major Arcana card in the Tarot, “Atu XVI: The Tower,” which depicts a tower being destroyed by lightning or fire and is attributed to the classical Planet of Mars (and Horus is a martial god of War, at least in part).

“Will is one-pointed, for a nail with many heads cannot perform its purpose of penetration.”<sup>1333</sup>

“Is not the peak of a mountain supported by a substructure in all directions? Is not the apex of a pyramid uplifted by virtue of its four-fold foundation?”

“Will is divine, aloof and alone in the Supernal sanctuary.”<sup>1334</sup>

“Do not trees grow tall to have their leaves lap up sunlight by their roots cracking demonic rocks and sucking up the black, chthonic waters of the underworld?”

“Do you want my help or not?” Ra-Horakhty scoffed.

“Merely having curiosity does not imply that I require help of any sort. Do you want *my* help?”

Ra-Horakhty crushed an universe in frustration, and threw his Ankh to the ground with a grumble.<sup>1335</sup> His hands having been occupied until then, he suddenly had room to hold the Stone of the Philosophers. The god thereby automatically accomplished the Great Work, for the initiator is nothing but a skillful frustrator and Harold was a dextrous disheartener.

Thus turneth Harold the tables from covenant to combat.

## **PART 16: Terma Tupperware, or how Intuition Guided Harold Astray**

*“Experience teaches us no less clearly than reason, that men believe themselves to be free, simply because they are conscious of their actions and unconscious of the causes whereby those actions are determined.”*

*–Baruch Spinoza*

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1333 “Will is one-pointed...”: This is a reference to Crowley's “nail sermon” in *Liber CL: De Lege Libellum*.

1334 “Aloof and alone” is a reference to the same phrase used in the Anthem of *Liber XV: The Gnostic Mass*.

1335 Crushing an universe refers to *Liber AL*, III:72, “...my left hand is empty, for I have crushed an Universe; & nought remains.”



After passing beyond the realm of Ra-Horakhty, Harold found himself in a strange landscape littered with Greco-Roman ruins. Harold ran his palm along a fallen pillar, wondering what hidden hand of his unconscious had guided him to this plane. He glanced up and saw a sign that read, “Wisdom” with an arrow pointing up.

Harold considered that it could be a statement about how what men call wisdom is really just a bunch of hot air; or perhaps it was a vestige of an Abrahamic prophet who claimed that true wisdom comes from “above”; or maybe the arrow was actually not an arrow at all but a point of light that burst into three protruding lines to represent the illumination of wisdom. Harold decided to take it as a road sign and started to walk forward in search of this wisdom.

After a few minutes, Harold came upon a shovel stuck in the ground. He picked it up and got a sudden intuition to go dig under a cluster of weeds. Harold jammed the shovel into the dry, crusted earth and feverishly flung the dust in all directions. He hit something hard and started clawing at the object.

Harold had once heard that certain Tibetan adepts had buried certain treasures of illuminated wisdom for someone who was destined to find and reveal it to humanity at some unknown future date. He figured that it would make sense for these *termas* to be hidden on the astral plane, only retrievable by those with the spiritual fitness to traverse these subtle backlands of the soul. Harold saw that the object was a small, black, carved box, which he picked up and, with extreme excitement, flipped open the lid in hopes of finding the next *Tao Teh Ching*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Heart Sutra*, or *Principia Discordia*.

Once open, there was nothing inside the box except a small slip of paper with nothing written on it. Harold picked it up and turned it over to see if there was anything on the other side. All he found was a crude drawing of genitalia, not unlike those found in many bathroom stalls. “For how impermanent everything is,” Harold thought to himself, “some things

are remarkable in never changing.” He pondered whether the note may be a remnant of some phallic cult who worshipped the generative power of the universe manifested in the human procreation. Perhaps it was, in fact, what the sign and his silly intuition were directing him to, and the paper inside the container represented the hidden creative Wisdom of Chokmah inside the black box of Binah.<sup>1336</sup> Maybe it was a crude attempt at humor to show the cruel nature of the universe being a joke of the General at the expense of the Particular.<sup>1337</sup> Harold then heard shouting in the distance and decided to go check it out. He manifested an astral pen and drew a vagina on the other side, muttering something about gender equality.

Thus yonieth Harold the lingam.

## **PART 17: Gluttony and Pride, or the Failings of Magicians and Mystics**

*“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”*

*–Leonardo Da Vinci*

After following the sound of shouting, Harold came upon two people at the entrance of another Temple, for the astral plane has an abundance of shrines and synagogues as the rent is quite low. One of the people was a woman, dressed in an azure kimono, while the other was a man, dressed in scarlet armor.<sup>1338</sup> Harold came upon their discussion and

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1336 Chokmah literally means “Wisdom” and is represented by the Phallus as symbolic of the Creative Force. Binah refers to the Great Mother and corresponds with the color black; the black box refers to the Womb or Tabernacle or Throne of God.

1337 A reference to *The Book of Lies*, chapter 14.

1338 In this metaphor, the blue woman represents Mysticism, blue being the color of aspiration and of Chesed, the Sefirah before the Abyss. The scarlet man represents Magick, the martial force of causing Change in conformity with Will, scarlet or red being the color of descending force and of Geburah, the Sefirah of Mars. The debate is basically an exchange between someone who abides in non-duality/0 (the mystic) and someone who abides in duality/2 (the magician).

listened intently.

“The path of mysticism is the only pure way,” the woman insisted, “for the work of magick always fall prey to the Qliphotic desires of material pleasure.”

“A true magician works only to accomplish his Will,” argued the man. “Whether or not this involves material pleasures is a moot question. The path of magick is well-founded, for it does not neglect worldly necessities.”

“If one stares too long into the Abyss, it may stare back at you,”<sup>1339</sup> the woman retorted, “and to dally in the land of attachment is to condemn oneself to inevitable sorrow. The path of mysticism guards against the falsity of interpretation, for the mystic goal is beyond all words and all images.”

“The magician may create and destroy illusions if he so Will, and besides, who has tread the Path of the Wise without a signpost or symbol? It is the path of magick that will guide men aright, for the mystic ecstasy leaves one in a crude and childish condition, emaciated and unfit to communicate truth to the world.”

“Before and after *satori* one may chop wood and carry water,” the woman rebutted. “It is not a necessary prerequisite to attainment that one is cloistered and unhealthy. The mystic path is the straight and narrow that does not concern itself with unnecessaries.”<sup>1340</sup>

The man replied, “The Middle Pillar is supported by balanced columns on both sides, for the wand of the Will is buttressed by balanced mercy and severity.”<sup>1341</sup> A magician is built as a pyramid with a strong base,

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1339 A quotation from Nietzsche that has an added meaning with a Qabalistic reading thereof.

1340 The reference is to the idea that the Mystic travels straight up the Tree of Life on the Middle Pillar without bothering with any of the other Sephiroth. The Magician travels up the Tree of Life Sephirah-by-Sephirah, like a Serpent climbing the Tree slowly.

1341 The Wand of the Magician is the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life. The 3 Paths that connect the Middle Pillar – Gimel, Samkeh, and Tav – forms the word for the Staff of Moses, the rod of almond. Mercy and Severity are the two Pillars on either side of this Middle Pillar.

the mystic resolves to reach heaven like a jet with engines but no wings for steadying.”

Harold thought to interject but thought to himself, “It is only the intellectually lost that ever argue,”<sup>1342</sup> and he continued on past them into the Temple.

Thus passeth Harold through the pylons of false dilemmas.

## **PART 18: Dissolve and Coagulate, or how Harold Avoided Paying his Karmic Debt**

*“[666] therefore said: Let me declare this Work under this title: 'The obtaining of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel,' because the theory implied in these words is so patently absurd that only simpletons would waste much time in analysing it. It would be accepted as a convention, and no one would incur the grave danger of building a philosophical system upon it.”*<sup>1343</sup>

*–Aleister Crowley*

After passing into the Temple, Harold was met with a long hall with several veils draped across the room. After pushing his way through them he came to a final diaphonous sheet that cloaked a throne from his view.

“Greeting of Earth and Heaven,<sup>1344</sup> O abrasive one,” a soothing voice called from the hidden throne as a bell tolled from above.

“Who rang that bell?” Harold asked in a shrill voice.<sup>1345</sup>

“Twas I, child, for the time for our meeting has come. I am your Holy Guardian Angel.” The diaphonous sheet dissolved and left Harold face to face with a young woman with jet black skin.

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1342 A direct quotation from Oscar Wilde.

1343 He was wrong, underestimating the amount of simpletons in the world.

1344 A reference to the Gnostic Mass in one sense, but it is also a reference to the comedic play, “The Belly of the Beast” (see chapter 41).

1345 A *Wizard of Oz* joke. How utterly un-serious and un-becoming for a serious book!

“I am not convinced,” Harold stubbornly declared. “My knowledge of symbology leads me to believe that white is the color of holiness and black of ignorance.”

The Angel responded, “That which radiates light may be white, indeed, but only a broken vessel would allow such a leak. That which absorbs all light is black to the eye.”

“Fine, fine, so mote it be. You know... I’ve come a long ways and always endured travails by my own wit and wisdom. Where were you in all those times of trouble if you are my Guardian?”

“My hand is invisible though its guidance is constant. I am a Guardian, certainly, but I guard the truth. Truth cannot be approached except through endless trials and tribulations.”

“If you are an angel, a minister of God, I’d like to ask to speak to your manager since those in the lower hierarchies never seem to know anything at all.”

“I can only be a messenger and envoy from On High, for the ultimate union is beyond all form, force, color, name, and distinction. As long as you are still here, so must I be, but when you give your last drops of selfhood we’ll both be free.”

“Is there a blood bank around here where I can make the donation?”

“Yes, it is over there, in the City of the Pyramids.” The Holy Guardian Angel pointed at a neon sign that said as much.

“Ah, how could I have missed it! You’ve been helpful after all – thank you!” Harold started to trot off.

“Remember – before consummation, you are required to give all you have! And...” The Angel’s voice faded off as Harold suddenly came to in the realm of Malkuth.

“...after you consume your meal, you are required to pay, sir.” The waitress stood unamused as she had been standing beside Harold for the last few minutes repeating herself as he sat, eyes closed, grasping his fork and mumbling incoherently.

“I apologize,” Harold said while suddenly standing up, “but I have to inform you that the individual who walked in here and ate a meal is not the same person as the one who you speak to now.”

“Ah, the old mystic's excuse for not paying their bills. Like I've never heard that one before. If you don't have any money, get the hell out and don't come back.”

Harold left the building, thanking the gods that they don't employ the IRS to track karmic debt. He was slightly amused, slightly disappointed, happy yet not completely satisfied. He did not walk into a sunset nor did he live happily ever after. He simply kept doing his thing, and he eventually died in obscurity in a non-comical way. That's life.

Thus endeth Harold the tiresome book.



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