

Magic in East and West  
by Israel Regardie  
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When I was about seventeen years of age, a friend loaned me a copy of Major L. A. Waddell's *Lamaism*. In those days it impressed me tremendously, no doubt because of its massive size. In every sense it was a heavy tome, and tomes then suggested depth and weight of scholarship and insight. Naturally I knew nothing at that time about Magic, and beyond a few theosophical allusions next to nothing of Buddhism. So the greater part of the significance and wide erudition of the book must have passed me by completely, though it is a veritable storehouse of knowledge.

Then, out of the blue it appeared on my horizon again, again through the agency of a friend. In the light of the little knowledge and experience gained through the passage of several years, its contents excited me enormously -- and it was with the utmost interest that I reconsidered it. For me, one of the things that stood out most emphatically this time was the extraordinary similarity between -- even the fundamental unity of -- the highest and most basic magical conceptions of both East and West. Whether this is due, as many exponents of the Eastern wisdom would claim, to the direct importation of occult philosophy and practice from the Orient to Western civilisation, it is not my intention now to argue. Nonetheless, it is my considered belief that in Occidental countries there has definitely been a secret tradition on a practical level -- a tradition which for centuries has orally transmitted the finer part of this magical knowledge. In fact, so jealously reserved at all times was this tradition that by most people it was hardly suspected at all. Very few were the fortunate individuals who in any age were drawn as though by invisible currents of spiritual affinity to the concealed portals of its temples.

Occasionally a small portion of this closely concealed tradition wormed its way outwards into books. Some of these latter are those which were written by Iamblichus and the later Neoplatonists, and also by students such as Cornelius Agrippa, Pietro d'Abano, and Eliphaz Levi Zahed, etc. Its cruder elements found expression in the far-famed Clavicles, Grimoires and Goetias. Yet for the most part the true sequence of teaching, and the vast implications of its practical knowledge were, as above stated, maintained in strict privacy. The reason for this secrecy may have been the feeling that there are only a small number in any age, in any country, amongst any people, who are likely to appreciate or understand the deeper or sublimer aspects of Theurgy, the higher magic. It requires sympathy, much insight and a capacity for hard work, which needless to say few people possess. And there is, consequently, but little point scattering broadcast these pearls of bright wisdom which can only be misunderstood.

Indubitably this conclusion is corroborated by Waddell's *Lamaism*. In point of fact, a good deal of so-called esoteric magical knowledge is there contained -- though it is presented wholly without comprehension. Hence his statement of that particular aspect of Lamaism is vitiated and rendered practically worthless. And while I may agree with Waddell that some of the Lamaistic practices have little to do with historical Buddhism, his sneers as regards an esoteric Buddhism on the magical side of things are simply laughable, for his own book is a clear demonstration of precisely that one fact which he has perceived not at all.

His book, obviously, was intended primarily to be an objective account of the Buddhism indigenous to Tibet and as practised by its monks and hermits. Unfortunately, the prejudices and misunderstandings of the author are scarcely concealed. So that while indubitably he did pick up some of the crumbs dropped haphazard from the esoteric table of the Lamas, and recorded them probably as he found them, nevertheless he had not the necessary training,

knowledge or insight into the subject possessed undoubtedly by some of the higher initiated Lamas with whom he had conversed. The result was that he was unable to make anything of that information. In fact, his account of their practices sounds simply silly and absurd. Psychologically, he succeeds not in throwing ridicule on the Lamas but only upon himself.

Certain aspects of Theurgy or Western Magic have now been comparatively clearly set forth. Some early reviewers and critics were of the opinion that my former work *The Tree of Life* was as plain an elementary statement of its major traditional principles as had yet publicly been made. And Dion Fortune's book *The Mystical Qabalah*, a frank masterpiece, is likewise an incomparably fine rendition of the mystical philosophy that underlies the practice of Magic. I therefore suggest that by employing the theorems laid down in those two books, and applying them to the material in Waddell's *Lamaism*, we may arrive at an understanding of some otherwise obscure portions of Tibetan Magic.

It may be well, at first, to confess that a good part of the magical routine refers to a psychic plane, to certain levels of the Collective Unconscious, though by no means does that wholly condemn it as certain mystical schools feel inclined to do. Other branches concern such phenomenal accomplishments as rain-making, obtaining good crops, scaring away demons, and similar feats with which both Eastern and Occidental legend have familiarised us. Feats, moreover, which require a good deal of explaining away by the rationalist and mechanistic scientist. Finally, there is that unhappily large part which verges on witchcraft pure and simple. With this latter, I am at no time concerned. But I maintain, as a primal definition, that Magic whether of the Eastern or Western variety, is essentially a divine process -- Theurgy, a mode of spiritual culture or development. From the psychological viewpoint, it may be interpreted as a series of techniques having as their object the withdrawal of energy from objective and subjective objects so that, in the renewal of consciousness by a re-emergent libido, the jewel of a transformed life with new creative possibilities and with spontaneity may be found. It comprises various technical methods, some simple in nature, others highly complex and most difficult to perform, for purifying the personality, and into that cleansed organism freed of pathogenic strain invoking the higher Self.

With this in mind, then, a good many of the apparently unrelated items of Magic, some of its invocations and visualising practices, take on a new and added significance. They are important psychological steps whereby to repair, improve or elevate consciousness so that eventually it may prove a worthy vehicle of the Divine Light. A sentence or two written many years ago by William Quan Judge in his pamphlet *An Epitome of Theosophy* express so exactly the impression to be conveyed that it is convenient to quote:

"The real object to be kept in view is to so open up or make porous the lower nature that the spiritual nature may shine through it and become the guide and ruler. It is only 'cultivated' in the sense of having a vehicle prepared for its use, into which it may descend."

This conception is likewise the point of view of our magical system. The technical forms of Magic described in *The Golden Dawn*, such as Pentagram and other rituals, astral assumption of God-forms, evocations (though not necessarily to physical manifestation) of elemental and planetary spirits, skrying in the spirit-vision, and the invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel, are all performed with that single objective held ever before one. Theurgy and the exponents of the Eastern mysticisms are thus in complete accord on the fundamental theoretical principles.

To illustrate now what I mean by the complete misunderstanding which a purely objective account of magical practices is capable of achieving, it will be found interesting to consider but a few statements made by Waddell. First of all, let me quote from page 152 (2nd edition) of his work: "The purest Gelugpa Lama on awaking every morning, and before venturing outside his room, fortifies himself against assault by the demons by first of all assuming the spiritual guise of his fearful tutelary . . . Thus when the Lama emerges from his room . . . he

presents spiritually the appearance of the demon-king, and the smaller malignant demons, being deluded into the belief that the Lama is indeed their own vindictive king, they flee from his presence, leaving the Lama unharmed."

Surely this is a puerile interpretation. Though the fact itself of the assumption of the spiritual forms of tutelary deities is perfectly correct, the rationale he provides is infantile and stupid. So far as Western Theurgy is concerned, centuries of effort have shown that one of the most potent adjuncts to spiritual experience, as aiding the assimilation of the lower self into the all-inclusive psyche, is the astral assumption of the magical form of a divine Force or a God. By means of an exaltation of the mind and soul to its presence, whilst giving utterance to an invocation, it is conceded that there may be a descent of the Light into the heart of the devotee, accompanied *pari passu* by an ascent of the mind towards the ineffable splendour of the spirit.

So far as the reason for and explanation of this process is concerned, it may be well to state briefly that according to the magical hypothesis, the whole cosmos is permeated and vitalised by One omnipresent Life, which in itself is both immanent as well as transcendent. At the dawn of the manifestation of the universe from the thrice unknown darkness, there issue forth the Lives -- great gods and spiritual forces, Cosmocratores, who become the intelligent architects and builders of the manifold parts of the universe. From their own individual spiritual essence, other lesser hierarchies are begotten, and these in turn emanate or evolve from themselves still other groups. These are they which represent in the hidden depths of the psyche those primordial ideas which Jung speaks of as archetypal images ever present in the Collective Unconscious of the race. Thus it is that through the union of the human consciousness with the being of the gods in an ascending scale that the soul of man may gradually approach the final root and source of his being. In the Buddhist scheme this is "the essence of mind which is intrinsically pure", the Dharmakaya, the unconditioned divine body of truth. The intent to frighten malignant demons has no inclusion within the scope of this technique. Whether the later hypothesis is original with Major Waddell or not is difficult to surmise, though the thesis is common to all primitive peoples. Probably it was made by a Lama in a lighter vein to put an end to leading questions, though at the same time it is true that in moments of psychic danger, the assumption of a Godform is of enormous assistance. Not because the threatening elemental or demon for example, is fooled or frightened by the form, but because the operator, in opening himself to one phase of the divine spirit by the assumption of its symbolic form, does take upon himself or is empowered with the authority and dominion of that God.

It was in Egypt, so far as the western form of magic is concerned, that these cosmic forces received close attention and their qualities and attributes observed and recorded. Thus arose the conventionalised pictographs of their Gods which are profound in significance, while simple in the moving eloquence of their description. It is the Egyptian God-forms that are used in occidental magic, not those of Tibet or India. The technical use of these God-forms consists in the application of the powers of will and imagination -- as well as of sound and colour. A very profound paragraph may be found in *The Mahatma Letters*, where K. H. wrote to Alfred Percy Sinnett: "How could you make yourself understood -- command in fact those semi-intelligent forces, whose means of communicating with us are not through spoken words but through sounds and colours, in correlation between the vibrations of the two. For sound, light and colour are the main factors in forming these grades of intelligence . . ."

Though it is hardly politic to enter more deeply into this matter, the remarks of K. H. apply equally to other forces and powers than elemental. The astral form of colour and light assumed in the imagination creates a mould or a focus of a special kind into which, by technical modes of vibration and invocation, the force or spiritual power desired incarnates. By the clothing of one's own astral form with the ideal figure of the God, now vitalised by the

descent of the invoked force, it is held that man may be assumed or exalted into the very bosom of Godhead, and so gradually return, with the acquisition of his own humanity, to that unnameable mysterious Root wherefrom originally he came.

Another instance of Waddell's lack of humour and insight occurs on page 322. In describing the training of the novice, it is said that the Lama adopts a "deep hoarse voice, acquired by training in order to convey the idea that it emanates from maturity and wisdom." It is not known to me whether any of my readers have witnessed any kind of a magical ceremony, or heard an invocation recited by a skilled practitioner -- though I should say few have. The tone always adopted is one which will yield the maximum of vibration. For many students a deep intoning, or a humming, is the one which vibrates the most. Therefore that is the ideal tone whereby to awaken from within the subtle magical forces required. It will have been noted too that the best invocations are always sonorous and intensely vibrant. The idea that the voice should suggest maturity and wisdom is merely silly.

This is another instance of Western contempt rather than a sympathetic attempt really to understand a foreign system. The Tibetan specimens of ritual given by Waddell contain an amusing number of Oms, Hums, Has, and Phats, but then Western conjurations contain equally amusing barbarous names of evocation. Yah, Agla, etc.

With this question of sound in magical conjurations I have dealt at some length elsewhere. Suffice to remark here that in *The Secret Doctrine* Madame Blavatsky suggests that the vibratory use of conjurations and sound generally have a profound significance. "Sound and rhythm," she observes, "are closely related to the four elements . . . Such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be." The whole subject of sound, and the employment of so-called barbarous names of evocation, requires thoroughly to be studied before one dare suggest an explanation accusing either Magi or Lamas merely of a pose of wisdom.

One notes with aroused attention too that the Tibetans have a form of what is called here in the Occident the Qabalistic Cross. On page 423 of his book, there is the following description: "Before commencing any devotional exercise, the higher Lamas perform or go through a manoeuvre bearing a close resemblance to 'crossing oneself' as practised by Christians. The Lama gently touches his forehead either with the finger or with the bell, uttering the mystic Om, then he touches the top of his chest, uttering Ah, then the epigastrium (pit of stomach) uttering Hum. And some Lamas add Sva-ha, while others complete the cross by touching the left shoulder, uttering Dam and then Yam. It is alleged that the object of these manipulations is to concentrate the parts of the Sattva, namely the body, speech, and mind upon the image or divinity which he is about to commune with."

Prior to commenting upon the above, it is imperative to indicate certain fundamental theories to be found in some books of the Qabalah. If the reader is familiar with Dr. William Wynn Westcott's splendid *Introduction to the Study of the Kaballah* or with Dion Fortune's more recent book *The Mystical Qabalah* he will have seen there a diagram attributing the Ten Sephiroth to the figure of a man. Above the head, forming a crown, is Keser which represents the divine spirit, and at the feet is Malkus, while to the right and left shoulders are attributed Gevurah and Gedulah, Mars and Jupiter, Power and Majesty.

In Qabalistic pneumatology, Keser is a correspondence of the Monad, the dynamic and essential self-hood of a man, the spirit which seeks experience through incarnation here on earth. That this Sephirah or potency is placed above the head rather than, say, within the brain or in the centre of the heart, is highly significant. It is the light of the Spirit which shines always into the darkness below. ("The spirit of man is the candle of the Lord." And again, "When his candle shined upon my head and by his light I walked through darkness.") This is an idea which has its parallels in other systems too. For example, in *The Epitome of Theosophy* we find Judge writing: "It is held that the real man, who is the higher self, being

the spark of the Divine, overshadows the visible being, which has the possibility of becoming united to that spark. Thus it is said that the higher Spirit is not in the man, but above him."

All mystical and magical procedure has as its object so to purify the lower self that this higher Self which normally only overshadows us and is seldom in full incarnation, may descend into a purified and consecrated vehicle. The theurgic tradition asserts that, by the proper performance of the Qabalistic Cross amongst other things this end may be accomplished. As a devotional exercise or meditation, it is used in collaboration with the formulation of certain lineal figures, the vibration of names of power, and followed by the invocation of the four great archangels. Its western form is as follows:

1. Touch the forehead, and say Atoh (Thou art)
2. Touch the breast, say Malkus (the Kingdom)
3. Touch the right shoulder, say ve-Gevurah (and the Power)
4. Touch the left shoulder, say ve-Gedulah (and the Glory)
5. Clasp the hands over the heart, say le-Olahm. Amen (for ever, Amen.)
6. Here follow suitable Pentagrams made facing the cardinal quarters, and the vibration of names of power.
7. Extend the arms in the form of a cross, saying:
8. Before me Raphael, Behind me Gabriel.
9. on my right hand Michael, on my left hand Auriel.
10. For before me flames the Pentagram.
11. And behind me shines the six-rayed Star.
12. Repeat 1-5, the Qabalistic Cross.

So far as this little ritual is concerned, one may describe its action as under several heads. It first invokes the power of the higher Self as a constant source of surveillance and guidance. It places the subsequent procedures under the divine aegis. Having then banished by the tracing of the appropriate pentagrams all non-essential beings from the four cardinal points with the aid of the four four-lettered names of God, it then calls the four Archangels -- the four concretized functions of the interior psychic world, and the dual pair of opposites -- to protect the sphere of magical operation, that is the circle of the Self. In closing, it once again invokes the higher Self, so that from the beginning to the end, the entire ceremony is under the guardianship of the spirit. The first section, comprising points one to five, identifies the higher Self of the operator with the highest aspects of the Sephirothic universe. In fact, it affirms the soul's essential identity with the collective consciousness of the whole of mankind.

If one attempted a further analysis, the Hebrew Word Atoh, meaning "Thou", would refer to the divine white brilliance, the higher Self overshadowing each man. By drawing down the Light to the pit of the stomach -- which symbolically represents the feet, since to bend down to the feet would make an awkward gesture -- the vertical shaft of a cross of Light is established in the imagination. The horizontal shaft is affirmed by touching both the shoulders, and vibrating words which state that the qualities of the higher self include both power and majesty, severity and loving-kindness. Equilibrium is the especial characteristic of the cross as a particular symbol, and the tracing of the Qabalistic Cross within the aura affirms the descent of the spirit and its equilibrium within consciousness or within the magical sphere. This meaning is further emphasised by the gesture of clasping the hands over the Tiphareth centre, the heart place of harmony and balance, and saying le-Olahm, Amen, forever. The Sanskrit word Sattva implies purity and rhythm and harmony, and of the three Gunas or qualities refers to Spirit. Similarly in the Western equivalent of this schema, Alchemy, the three qualities are correspondences of the three major Alchemical principles, Salt, Sulphur and Mercury. Of these the Universal Mercury is an attribution of Keser -- that holy angel who is the divine guardian and Watcher, overshadowing the soul of man, ever awaiting an ordered approach so that its vehicle may be lifted up to its own glory. There is here, then, a very great

resemblance between the Tibetan devotional exercise and that which is enjoined as one of the most important practices of the Qabalistic Magic of the Occidental tradition.

In that section of the book where Waddell describes the Lamaistic celebration of the Eucharist, another important parallelism is to be found. It describes how the priest or lama who conducts the ceremony is obliged to have purified himself during the greater part of the preceding twenty four hours by ceremonial bathing, and by having uplifted his mind through continual repetition of mantras or invocations. The actual description of the inner or magical aspect of the ritual, while not particularly well stated, is given for what it is worth: "Everything being ready and the congregation assembled, the priest, ceremonially pure by the ascetic rites above noted, and dressed in robe and mantle, abstracts from the great image of the Buddha Amitayus part of the divine essence of that deity, by placing the vajra of his rdor jehi t'ag upon the nectar vase which the image of Amitayus holds in his lamp, and applying the other end to his own bosom, over his heart. Thus, through the string, as by a telegraph wire passes the divine spirit, and the Lama must mentally conceive that his heart is in actual union with that of the god Amitayus and that, for the time being, he is himself that god."

After this meditation, the rice-offerings and the fluid in a special vase are consecrated by very "fierce" invocations and cymbal music. Then the consecrated food and water is partaken of by the assembly. From the theurgic viewpoint the rationale of the Eucharist is quite simple. There may be innumerable types of Eucharist, all having different ends in view. A substance is chosen having a special affinity according to the doctrine of sympathies for a particular kind of spiritual force or god and ceremonially consecrated. Thus a wheaten wafer is of the substance of the Corn-goddess, attributed either to the powers of Venus, or to the element of Earth, presided over by Ceres or Persephone. Penetrative oils would be specially referred to the element of Fire, the tutelary deity of which is Horus. Olives would be sacred to the force represented by the astrological sign Aquarius, the element Air, and the goddess Hathor. And wine is referred to Dionysius and the solar gods generally, Osiris, Ra, etc.

By an elaborate table of correspondences it is possible to select any substance to be the physical basis for the manifestation of a spiritual idea. The consecration, ceremonially, of the material basis by means of an invocation of the divine force accomplishes what is vulgarly called the miracle of transubstantiation. To use more preferable magical terminology, the substance is transformed from a dead inert body into a living organism, a talisman in short. The consecration charges it and gives it a soul, as it were.

At this juncture, I must register my emphatic disagreement with those writers on science and Magic who impressed unduly or in the wrong way by modern psychology, explain the effect of a talisman as due entirely to suggestion. This is sheer nonsense. And I can only assume that whoever makes this sort of argument is without the least experience of this type of magical work. It is this kind of experience which comprises or should comprise the first part of one's early practical work in the technical side of Magic. And lack of experience in even this elementary aspect of technical virtuosity vitiates every opinion on other forms.

We are confronted here by the same problem that arose over a century ago in another sphere. The early great magnetisers after Mesmer -- great names like de Puysegur, Deleuze, du Potet and Lafontaine -- claimed that by means of will and imagination they were able to open themselves to an influx from without and then to transmit from their own organisms a species of vital power or animal magnetism. This force pervading all space they claimed could be used therapeutically. Later on, when attempting to appropriate the trance phenomena and healing methods inaugurated by the mesmerists, physicians of the orthodox school eliminated the theory of an actual transmissible force and in its stead employed the theory of suggestion. Beginning with Braid and continuing through a line of very fine investigators, a duplication of magnetic phenomena was achieved purely by psychological means without recourse to any hypothesis of animal magnetism.

But because phenomena can be produced by one method does not necessarily imply that its duplication by another is false. It may well be that similar feats can be accomplished by quite separate techniques based upon differing hypotheses -- each valid in its own sphere and each capable of explaining one set of facts. In any event, the reality of animal magnetism, or the transmission of what in the East has been termed prana, vitality, has never been disproved. On the contrary, it is a simple matter to prove it quite adequately. Let any normal healthy person suspend his fingers over the arm of a second person, imagining and willing that his prana courses out from his fingers in long filmy streamers of energy. If the second person sits quite still and cultivates an objectivity of feeling and waiting, he will soon sense either a cold draught on that arm or a tingling in his own finger tips which proceeds from the influx of prana. This is an experience quite apart from suggestion, for it may be attempted with those who have no idea of the fundamental principles involved and who, therefore, are not directly susceptible to suggestion on this score. Spontaneously, and without prompting, they will observe the fact that a tangible transmission of vitality has been effected. It should be possible to test it by some very delicate instrument.

Moreover, in a dark room, these streamers issuing from the fingers can be readily seen if the hand is held in front of a black cloth. Furthermore, one's ability to generate this power is capable of culture. I have elaborated this theme from the point of view of autotherapy in *The Art of True Healing*. And it is also my suggestion that the interested reader consult Dr. Bernard Hollander's work *Hypnotism and Self-Hypnotism* where the problems of suggestion and animal magnetism are discussed at some length in connection with experimental work -- and that most intelligently.

Briefly, let me say that suggestion does not invalidate in the least the fact of animal magnetism, nor the effect of a charged talisman. For, as I have intimated, we are confronted by the same problem that years earlier had arisen as to whether the trance and therapeutic phenomena of mesmerism were indeed due to suggestion or to a surcharge of vitality. If power can be passed to an individual as I contend it can, why not to some specific substance which is particularly appropriate in its nature to receiving a charge? Tradition has always asserted that metals, gems and precious stones, vellum and parchment make good material bases for talismans. If the vitality of the operator be augmented by simple meditation exercises such as have been described in *The Art of True Healing*, or by the straightforward magical methods of invocation and visualization of God-forms, then a very powerful charge is imparted to the material basis of the talisman.

Of itself, however, the talisman is nothing. It only becomes efficacious when properly consecrated and vitalised. Thus the Eucharistic substance is worthless as such until it has been duly consecrated by an appropriate magical ceremony, and transmuted into the vehicle of an appropriate type of force. The mode of consecration is of course, another matter, not to be described here inasmuch as it is a lengthy and technical business. One of the important parts of such a ceremony for the consecration of a talisman or a Eucharistic substance, is the assumption of the God-form astrally. When the operator has determined the nature of the divine force he is desirous to invoke, and having selected the material substance congruous in nature to that force, he must endeavour during his ceremony of consecration so to exalt the spirit within him that he actually becomes identified, in one way or another, with the consciousness of that particular force or deity. The more thorough and complete is this dynamic union, the more automatic and simple does the mere subsequent charging of the telemata become. In the case of the Eucharist the idea, however, is not only spiritual identification with the deity as a preliminary to the ascent to the unknown universal God, but the alchemical transmutation of the lower vehicles into a glorified body.

While the higher consciousness of the Magus may certainly be dissolved in ecstasy, it becomes imperative to create a magical link between that divine consciousness and his

physical body and emotions. Therefore, the ceremonial magnetising of a material substance, be it a wafer or wine or herb, impregnates it with that same divine force. Its consumption assumes that transmuting force into the very being and fibre of the Magus, to carry out the work of transformation. As the pseudonymous Therion once wrote: "The magician becomes filled with God, fed upon God, intoxicated with God. Little by little his body will become purified by the internal lustration of God; day by day his mortal frame, shedding its earthly elements, will become in very truth the Temple of the Holy Ghost. Day by day matter is replaced by Spirit, the human by the divine, ultimately the change will be complete; God manifest in flesh will be his name."

It requires some little magical experience fully to appreciate this, but this simplified explanation will I think throw more light on the actual nature of the ceremony than does the description of Waddell. I do not wish to discuss in more than a few words the validity of a Eucharistic ceremony celebrated other than by the operator himself. Bearing in mind that a properly performed Eucharistic ceremony results in the production of a talisman, it becomes clear that this kind of operation is principally of benefit to him who performs it. It seems to my way of thinking a useless rite to partake of the Eucharist en bloc. The Buddha is supposed to have remarked that no ceremonies are of the least avail in obtaining salvation or redemption. To me, it seems not that he attacked the magical tradition in these words, but rather wholesale ceremonies in which the audience plays no active part at all. There is no willed stimulation of their own spiritual principles -- it is a passive vicarious participation in the labours of other people. Magic, with Buddhism, agrees with Madame Blavatsky's dictum that "the pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man save those won by his own ego through personal effort and merit . . ."

There is one final topic I should like to refer to at some length before leaving this comparative study. In so doing it is necessary to leave Waddell for the moment to refer to the writings of two other Tibetan scholars, Madame Alexandra David Neel and Dr. Walter Y. Evans Wentz. Both of these scholars have written with sympathy and understanding on Tibetan religion and magical practices. The subject to be considered is a Tibetan mystery play in relation to Western magical ritual.

"Chöd" is a kind of mystery drama, and the magician or yogi is the sole actor therein. Dr. Evans Wentz, in his masterly introduction to the translation of the play or ritual in Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines explains that "The Chöd" Rite is, first of all, a mystic drama, performed by a single human actor, assisted by numerous spiritual beings, visualised, or imagined, as being present in response to his magic invocation. Its stage setting is in some wild awe-inspiring locality, often in the midst of the snowy fastnesses of the Tibetan Himalayas, twelve to fifteen or more thousand feet above sea-level. Commonly by preference it is in a place where corpses are chopped to bits and given to the wolves and vultures. In the lower altitudes of Bhutan and Sikkim, a densely wooded jungle solitude may be chosen; but in countries wherein corpses are cremated, such as Nepal and India, a cremation ground is favoured. Cemeteries or localities believed to be haunted by malignant and demoniacal spirits are always suitable.

"Long probationary periods of careful preparation under a master of Chöd are required before the novice is deemed fit or is allowed to perform the psychically dangerous rite . . . At the outset, the celebrant of the Chöd Rite is directed to visualise himself as being the Goddess of the All-Fulfilling (or All-Performing) Wisdom by whose occult will he is mystically empowered; and then, as he sounds the thigh-bone trumpet, invoking the gurus and the different orders of spiritual beings, he begins the ritual dance, with mind and energy entirely devoted to the one supreme end of realising, as the Mahayana teaches, that Nirvana and the Sangsara are, in reality, an inseparable unity.



"Stanzas three to seven inclusive suggest the profound symbolism underlying the ritual; and this symbolism, as will be seen, is dependent upon the Five Directions, the corresponding Five "Continents" of the lamaic cosmography with their geometrical shapes, the Five Passions (hatred, pride, lust, jealousy, stupidity) which the yogin triumphantly treads under foot in the form of demons, and the Five Wisdoms, the antidotes to the Five Passions . . . In the ninth stanza comes the dramatic spearing of the elements of Self with the spears of the Five Orders of Dakinis. As the Mystery proceeds, and the yogin prepares for the mystic sacrifice of his own fleshly form, there is revealed the real significance of the Chöd or 'cutting off'."

Thus the Chöd as explained by Evans Wentz is seen as a highly intricate magical ceremony in which the lama, identifying himself with a Goddess through the visualised assumption of her astral or ideal form, invokes what we in the West would call angels, spirits and elementals to attend upon his ceremony. These he deliberately invites to enter his own sphere. No longer does he act, as in other specialised forms of invocation, by selecting one particular force only and attempting forcibly to keep all others out from his sphere of consciousness. Now he makes a vacuum as it were; he opens himself completely, and wholly receptive permits whatever influences will to permeate him through and through, and partake of his nature. In one sense, he sacrifices his being to them. His mind, his emotions and feelings, and the organs and limbs of his physical body, and the minute cells and lives composing them, are all handed over to the invaders for consumption, if so they wish. "For ages, in the course of renewed births I have borrowed from countless living beings -- at the cost of their welfare and life -- food, clothing, all kinds of services to sustain my body, to keep it joyful in comfort and to defend it against death. Today, I pay my debt, offering for destruction this body which I have held so dear. I give my flesh to the hungry, my blood to the thirsty, my skin to clothe those who are naked, my bones as fuel to those who suffer from cold. I give my happiness to the unhappy ones. I give my breath to bring back the dying to life."

It is briefly, a very idealised form of personal sacrifice in which the whole individuality is opened up, hypothetically, to whatever desires to possess it. As a magical operation it must rank very high in technical virtuosity, and for him who is sufficiently endowed with the magical gifts to perform it a most effectual ritual so far as results are concerned.

The final stage of the drama is ably described by Mme. David Neel in this passage: "Now he must imagine that he has become a heap of charred human bones that emerges from a lake of black mud -- the mud of misery, of moral defilement, and of harmful deeds to which he has co-operated during the course of numberless lives, whose origin is lost in the night of time. He must realise that the very idea of sacrifice is but an illusion, an offshoot of blind, groundless pride. In fact, he has nothing to give away, because he is nothing. These useless bones, symbolising the destruction of his phantom "I", may sink into the muddy lake, it will not matter. That silent renunciation of the ascetic who realizes that he holds nothing that he can renounce, and who utterly relinquishes the elation springing from the idea of sacrifice, closes the rite."

In attempting a comparison between this Chöd Rite and European magical rituals, we are at the outset confronted not by the problem of inferiority of conception or technical skill, as many have heretofore thought, but by a vast difference of metaphysical outlook. That is to say, there is a markedly enunciated opposition both of philosophic and pragmatic aim. In common with all schools and sects of Buddhism, the Mahayana is directly antagonistic to the ego idea. The whole of its philosophy and ethical code is directly concerned with the elimination of the "I" thinking. It holds that this is purely a fantasy bred of childish ignorance, very much as the mediaeval notion that the sun circumnambulated the earth was the result of imperfect knowledge. Therefore the whole of its religious and philosophic scheme is directed towards uprooting this fantasy from the thinking of its disciples. This is the Anatta doctrine,

and its importance to Buddhism is grounded in the belief that from this fantasy spring all sorrow and unhappiness.

European Magic, on the other hand, owes its fundamental doctrines to the Qabalah. Whilst having much in common with the broad outlines of Buddhism, the metaphysics of the Qabalah are essentially egocentric in a typically European way. Nevertheless, the terms of its philosophy are so general that they may be interpreted freely from a variety of angles. Whilst decrying the ills and limitations that accompany the false ego sense, it emphasises not so much the destruction of the ego as, with true Western practicality, its purification and integration. It is a very useful instrument when it has been taught the needful lesson that it is not identical with the Self, but only one particular instrument, one small phase of activity comprised within the larger sphere of the total individual. Hence, the practical theurgy that arises as a superstructure from the basic theoretical Qabalah must also be affected by such a viewpoint. Instead of seeking to remove the ego as such, it seeks to extend the limited borders of its horizon, to enlarge its scope of activity, to improve its vision and its spiritual capacity. In a word so to enhance its psychological worth that in taking cognisance of the universal Self permeating all things, it may become identified with that Self. Here, then, is a fundamental distinction in the point of view envisaged.

Just as the "Chöd" has its roots in the primitive Bon animism of pre-Buddhistic Tibet, having been very clearly re-shaped by the Mahayanists, so the Western Ritual I propose to consider here also has a very crude origin. It dates possibly to the centuries immediately preceding our own Christian era. "The Bornless Ritual", which is the name it has come to be known by, may be found in its elementary form in *Fragments of a Graeco-Egyptian Work upon Magic*, published in 1852 for the Cambridge Antiquarian Society by Charles Wycliffe Goodwin, M.A. The ritual has since undergone considerable transformation. From a simple primitive prayer to ward off evil, in the hands of skillful theurgists trained in the Western tradition of the Golden Dawn, it has been evolved into a highly complex but most effectual and inspiring work. The Ritual, as such, now consists of a lengthy proem, five elemental invocations, and an eloquent peroration. Sandwiched between them is a Eucharistic ceremony.

In the prologue, the operator identifies himself with Osiris by means of the visualised assumption of the Egyptian God-form. That is to say, he formulates about him the form of Osiris. His imagination must be pictorially keen and vivid enough to visualise even the smallest details of dress and ornamentation in clear and bright colour and form. As a result of this effort, if he is successful, no longer is the ceremony conducted by a mere human being. On the contrary, the invocations and commands issue forth from the very mouth of God-head. Osiris in magical symbolism is human consciousness itself, when finally it has been purified, exalted, and integrated -- the human ego as it stands in a balanced position between heaven and earth, reconciling and uniting both. In a Golden Dawn initiation ritual, one officer, whilst assuming the astral mask of the God, defines its nature by affirming: "I am Osiris, the Soul in twin aspect, united to the higher by purification, perfected by suffering, glorified through trial. I have come where the great Gods are, through the Power of the Mighty Name."

The lama, when performing the Chöd Rite, likewise imagines himself to be one of the dakinis, The Goddess of the All-Fulfilling Wisdom. She, so runs the interpretation of Madame Alexandra David Neel, represents esoterically the higher will of the lama. The concepts of both rituals actually are very similar.

But here the resemblance, superficial indeed, ends. For in the Chöd ritual the lama or hermit, invoking the various orders of demons and spirits, identifies them with his own vices and so sacrifices himself. He sees his ego comprised of hatred or wrath, pride, lust, jealousy and stupidity, and throws these qualities to the invading spirits and demons for consumption. He visualises his body as a corpse being dismembered by the wrathful goddess, and its organs

also being preyed upon by a host of malignant entities. In a few words, a species of dissociation is intentionally induced.

Now in the Western system, the various orders of elementals are also invoked from their stations during this Bornless Ritual. But they are commanded to flow through the Magus with a view, not to preying upon him and thus destroying him, but to purify him. The intent is totally different. At each station or cardinal quarter, the appropriate tutelary deity is invoked by means of the formulation of the astral form and the proper lineal figures. In the East, as a result of the vibration of the appropriate barbarous names of evocation that "have a power ineffable in the sacred rites", and by enunciating the Words of Power, the Sylphs rush through his sphere of sensation like a gentle zephyr blowing the foul dust of pride before them. The Salamanders, raging from the South, consume with a burning fire the jealousy and hatred within him. Lust and passion become purified by the Undines invoked from the West, as though the Magus were immersed in purest water from which he issues spotless and consecrated. Whilst the Gnomes, coming from the North, cleanse him from sloth and stupidity, exactly as muddy and impure water is cleansed by being filtered through sand. The operator, all the while, is conscious of the injunction à propos the elementals given in one of his initiations. Or rather, the injunction has become a part of his unconscious outlook upon life. "Be thou, therefore, prompt and active as the Sylphs, but avoid frivolity and caprice. Be energetic and strong as the Salamanders but avoid irritability and ferocity. Be flexible and attentive to images like the Undines, but avoid idleness and changeability. Be laborious and patient like the Gnomes, but avoid grossness and avarice. So shalt thou gradually develop the powers of thy soul, and fit thyself to command the spirits of the elements."

The elemental invocations over -- very difficult work, to do which requires at least seventy or eighty minutes of intense magical concentration -- the operator, being convinced of the presence of the invoked force and the salutary effect of their respective purifications upon him, begins the second stage of his work by invoking the fifth element, the alchemical quintessence, Akasa or the Ether, in both its negative and positive aspects. The effect of these two invocations is to equilibrate the elementals already commanded to the scene of operations. Also, it tends to provide an etheric mould or astral vacuum into which the higher spiritual forces may descend to make contact with the Unconscious psyche of the operator. At this juncture it is customary to celebrate the mystic repast which again seems the reverse in intention of the Chöd banquet. At least, the reversal is only apparent. The Magus celebrates the Eucharist of the four elements, after reciting powerfully the Enochian invocation of the mystical Tablet of Union beginning "Sonuf vaorsagi goho lada balta -- "I reign over you, saith the God of Justice . . ." The perfume of the rose on the altar, the low fire of the lighted lamp, the bread and salt, and the wine are thus powerfully charged with the divine force. So that as he partakes of the elements, the influx of the spirit elevates not only his own ego but all the innumerable cells and lives which comprise his own lower vehicles of manifestation. And more too, for it affects all the spiritual beings, angels, elementals, and spirits who, in answer to invocation, now pervade his astral sphere. Thus he accomplishes that which the tenets of all mystical religion enjoin, the elevation of all the inferior lives as man himself evolves. This he does, in this case, by the agency of the magical invocations and the Eucharist, so that not only does he himself become blessed by the impact of the divine spirit, but so do all the other beings present partake with him of the glory. There is no withholding of blessing. For here, as in the Chöd Rite, there is no retention of power from any being.

At the opening of the ceremony, all forces and all beings whatsoever are carefully banished by the appropriate banishing rituals so as to leave a clean and holy space for the celebration of the ceremony. But into this consecrated sphere all the orders of elementals, comprised within the five-fold division of things, are called. And it is this mighty host who, having purified the sphere of the magus by having consumed the undesirable elements within him, are

consecrated and blessed by the Eucharist and the descent of the refulgent Light. The whole operation is sealed by the peroration:

"I am He! The Bornless Spirit, having sight in the feet! Strong and the Immortal Fire! I am He the Truth! I am He who hate that evil should be wrought in the world! I am He that lighteneth and thundereth! I am He from whom is the shower of the life of earth! I am He whose mouth ever flameth! I am He, the Begetter and Manifester unto the Light! I am He, the Grace of the World! 'The Hearth girt with a Serpent' is my Name."

It coincides with the re-formulation of the god-form of Osiris. And with each clause of the final hymn, the magician makes the effort in imagination to realise that they answer to the divine qualities and characteristics of the God, whose Light is even now descending upon him. The end result is illumination and ecstasy, a transporting of the consciousness of the magus to an identity with the consciousness of all that lives, an ineffable union with the Light, the One Life that permeates all space and time. It will be conceded I hope that the Western conceptions of Magic are in no way inferior, as so many unfortunately have come in the past several years to believe, to those prevalent in Tibet and the East. It is only that the philosophic forms are somewhat different. And this difference has its root in varying psychological needs -- and these at no time are irreconcilable.

Here then I must content myself with these comparisons between various points of magical interest common to both East and West. My desire to compare them sprang originally from a perusal of Major Waddell's really erudite book -- where the reader may find other items of great and absorbing interest. But I do feel that unless he has the magical key to these practices and various ceremonies which the Lamas perform, he is apt to be bored and left without a proper understanding of them. With all due respect to the Eastern wisdom for which assuredly I have a great and profound reverence, it is my belief that in this instance a study of Theurgy as developed by Western genius is more capable than aught else of throwing an illuminating ray on the true nature of spiritual development by means of the path of Magic. There are many paths to the one goal of the Beatific Vision. Of these paths, meditation is one. Probably in its development of meditation and the purely introspective processes of Yoga, the East is far in advance of the West. Certainly there is no better text-book on that subject than the Patanjali Yoga Aphorisms, And I appreciate the fact that Blavatsky brought Theosophy from the East. But Theurgy has climbed to sun-illuminated heights in the Western Schools. Our hidden sanctuaries of initiation, where Magic has long been successfully employed, but all too rigidly suppressed from the notice of the outer world, have a finer, nobler and more spiritual interpretation than any to be found in Eastern systems.

For myself, I can only say that experience demonstrates that Theurgy makes no confusion in its statement of ideals. It introduces no superstitious chaos concerning the fear of demons, etc., which is only too apparent in the Tibetan scheme, judging from Waddell's book. Every magical effort of the Lamas is described as being due to fear or hatred of evil spirits, though I do not doubt but that many lamas have a finer understanding of their system than this. Theurgy nurtures the ideal that its technique is a means of furthering one's spiritual development so that thereby one may consummate the true objects of incarnation. Not selfishly, but that one may be the better able thereafter to help and participate in the ordered progress of mankind to that perfect day when the glory of this world passes, and the Sun of Wisdom shall have arisen to shine over the splendid sea.