

Angels, Demons & Gods of the NEW MILLENNIUM



MUSINGS ON MODERN MAGICK
Lon Milo DuQuette

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Occultism frequently gives ample grounds for criticism to its detractors by making insupportable claims for vaguely defined powers, the whole compassed by nonsensical theory. As Israel Regardie did before him, DuQuette avoids this by writing from his own experience, with a healthy leavening of common sense and a refreshing sense of humor.

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MODERN MAGICK**

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*The gods of one age become
the devils of the age to follow.
The priests look forward to
the coming age and see only
the end of the world.*



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PREFACE

My introduction to occultism came in 1966 when my brother, Marc, loaned me three small books by Yogi Ramacharaka.¹ The first, *The Hindu Yogi Practical Water Cure*, introduced me to the unspeakable horrors that lie putrefying in my intestinal tract. I immediately turned vegetarian and embarked upon a frantic quest for a high colonic. The second, *Science of Breath*, taught me the fundamentals of pranayama, and the third, *Fourteen Lessons in Yogi Philosophy*, was (and still is) the finest introduction to oriental occultism ever written.

Several of these books were originally published at the turn of the century as correspondence courses. Each week subscribers received a new lesson in the mail and had seven days to meditate upon the material and embark upon the outlined practices. If the student applied himself or herself to the program, at the end of the monograph series they would find themselves with clean colons, clear lungs, and a healthy respect for the spiritual sciences of the East. Ramacharaka's writing style was smooth and down-to-earth. He never talked down to the reader. He seemed to be at all times very conscious of who was reading his material and managed to convey exotic concepts with candor and a complete lack of pretense.

¹ The entire Yogi Ramacharaka (William Walker Atkinson) series continues to be popular. Published by Yogi Publications, Chicago (some bearing publication dates as old as 1904) they can still be found in esoteric or new age bookstores.

Members of our little Oregon hippie commune were so impressed by the writings of Yogi Ramacharaka, and his painless teaching method, that we proudly dubbed ourselves the "Class of '04" (the name by which Ramacharaka addressed the recipients of the 1904 *Fourteen Lesson* series). To distinguish ourselves from our carnivorous neighbors, we even designed a red flag in the shape of an enema bag with the numbers '04 emblazoned on the side. Years later I would study the weekly monographs of several modern mystery schools (see chapter 5) and found that I still resonated positively to this teaching method.

With *Angels, Demons & Gods of the New Millennium* I have not presumed to copy Ramacharaka's unique style. I have, nevertheless, tried to make each chapter a self-contained entity — a stand-alone essay on one of seven topics I believe are critical to the understanding of modern magick.² This is not to say that I do not hope that the book will be read and digested as a unified opus, but it is my sincere hope that readers will take a little time to let the magick of each chapter prepare them for the chapter to follow.

² I believe this has, at least to a certain extent, been successful. Parts of several chapters have recently appeared in magazines and anthologies.

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Chapter I

CONFESSION

He shall everywhere proclaim openly his connection with the A.: A.: and speak of It and Its principles (even so little as he understandeth) for that mystery is the enemy of Truth.¹

¹ Aleister Crowley, from the Task of the Probationer, *Liber Collegii Sancti—Commentaries on the Holy Books and Other Papers* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1996), p. 42.

I

I AM A THELEMITE.² SINCE 1975 E.V., I HAVE BEEN actively involved with magical societies that embrace the Law of Thelema and the teachings of its prophet Aleister Crowley. In this book, however, I am not acting as a spokesperson for any association, nor should the material contained herein be considered indicative of the teaching methods or procedures of any organization. However, as this work focuses in part on the spiritual worldview of scientific illuminism developed by Crowley for the great magical order he called the A.:A.: it is incumbent upon me at the outset to make myself clear about my relationship (or lack of relationship) to this fraternity. For the reader who may be unfamiliar with the A.:A.: and its work I quote briefly from *The Magick of Thelema*.³

² From the Greek, *θελημα*-Will, a Thelemite is anyone who bases personal philosophy and conduct upon striving to discover and accomplish his or her true will. The term originated in *Liber AL vel Legis* (The Book of the Law), the primary Holy Book of Thelema dictated to Aleister Crowley in 1904 by a praeter human intelligence calling itself Aiwass. See *The Magick of Thelema* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993).

³ *Magick of Thelema*, chapter 11, pp. 216–217.

The A.:A.:⁴ was founded in 1907 by Crowley and George Cecil Jones. Based upon the classic Rosicrucian grade system of the Golden Dawn, the A.:A.: requires the Magician to actually achieve the states of consciousness and powers embodied in each of the ten Sephiroth (i.e., the Magician is only an Adeptus Minor when he or she has actually achieved the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel).

The A.:A.: is not a lodge system, and is entirely secret. It is a testing order, not a teaching order. The aspirant officially knows only one person in the Order—his or her superior. Each Magician is, for the most part, left alone to do the work as he or she sees fit. Ideally, contact with the superior is brief and infrequent, and can be characterized as being suggestive rather than instructive. Advancement to the next grade is simply a seal upon attainment.

Today there remain a number of individuals who had a formal A.:A.: relationship with Crowley, or one of several of Crowley's students. Some of these individuals have chosen to continue to take on students, who in turn have taken on students, etc., etc. As the nature of these relationships is secret, there is no way, short of affiliation, to gauge the quality of the magical work done.

⁴ It is commonly believed that A.: A.: stands for Argenteum Astrum (Silver Star). I have been informed in no uncertain terms that this is not the case.

As noted above, the A.:A.: would ideally operate through an unbroken chain of teachers, each of whom is one grade in advance of his or her student; the Probationer is supervised by a Neophyte who, in turn, is supervised by a Zelator, who is supervised by a Practicus, who is supervised by a Philosophus, who is supervised by a Dominus Liminis, who is the student of an Adeptus Minor, etc., all the way up to Ipsissimus, and all the way back to Aleister Crowley. For those whose faith in the efficacy and legitimacy of the A.: A.: hinges upon the existence of a group of adepts who make up such an unbroken chain, I must sadly report that I have discovered no evidence to suggest that it exists. To my knowledge, even the strongest A.:A.: pedigrees are built upon the mentorship of individuals who can/could exhibit only Probationer or Neophyte paperwork from Crowley, or who have various other breaks or irregularities in their chain. Knowing this is the case, the sincere seeker must decide whether or not this magical paper chase is really important to the work at hand.

The traditional mythos maintains that the A.:A.: has existed since the dawn of consciousness, and is both the catalyst and vehicle of the spiritual evolution of humanity. The great avatars and spiritual figures of the past, including Fu-Hsi, Lao-Tze, Gautama, Zerdusht, Pythagoras, Dionysus, Osiris, Apollon, Plotinus, Mohammed, and others are identified by Crowley as emissaries and representatives of the A.:A.:⁵ Even Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, who never (to my knowledge) had any signed A.:A.: paperwork acknowledging her as

⁵ More accurately, the Order of the S.: S.:, the highest three Grades of the A.:A.:. See Crowley's *The Heart of the Master*, pp. 102–115 (Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon, 1992). First published 1938 by Ordo Templi Orientis.

such, was considered by Crowley to be an $8^{\circ} = 3^{\square}$, a Master of the Temple in the A.:A.:. Keeping this in mind, isn't it a little naive to believe that such a powerful cosmic varsity squad could be limited to the activities of a handful of individuals who can display a document proving that they are *bona fide* students of a *bona fide* student of Aleister Crowley?

What then constitutes A.: A.: affiliation? We are all entitled to our opinions, but I am firm in my belief that no one should presume to answer that question for another. I am aware of (what I believe to be) formal and serious A.:A.: work being carried on today all over the world. I am also aware of the activities of so-called A.:A.: Lodges and individuals and organizations hinting they are the *doorway* to the A.:A.: Predictably, some of these groups are led by self-appointed "Chancellors" or other such hierophants who have convinced themselves that their level of spiritual omniscience is sufficiently exalted to enable them to evaluate precisely where an aspirant stands on the initiatory ladder. Interviews with members (and former members) of such groups often paint a picture of a leadership frightfully preoccupied with enforcing unquestioned obedience to the hierarchy. Conformity of thought (coupled with an emphasis upon degree snobbery and a testing program that demands standardized answers to standardized questions) effectively ensures that *most* students will never become sufficiently illuminated to discover what pompous and deluded asses are running the show. In my opinion, such activities do not represent the fundamental principals of the A.:A.:, and are unquestionably the antithesis of the Thelemic formulae.

But, it does not matter what my opinion is! Ironically, the nature of magick being what it is, *both* of the above categories are capable of turning out adepts, mo-

rons, or monsters. *Caveat emptor* is as true in the spiritual marketplace as it is on the used car lot. But even in cases of obvious misrepresentation it is not for me, you, or anyone else to judge whether or not the Great Work of the A.:A.: is being carried out. True contact with the Order takes place in the heart of the aspirant. If this link is genuine, then it does not matter if the flesh and blood contact is a saint or a scoundrel. In a way, this level of profound ambiguity places the post-Crowley A.:A.: on a most subtle and mystical plane—a place where no one (if they expect to be taken seriously) is in a position to challenge the legitimacy of anyone else's A.:A.: claims.

When I felt compelled to affiliate with the Order I had no idea if I would ever meet an authentic contact, so I simply typed out the Probationer's Oath⁶, read it aloud, and signed it. Then, like a good Martinist,⁷ I ceremonially burned it. It was the only way I knew to consign it to eternity—to a place where my signature could never be effaced. I was convinced that such a sincere oblation could not possibly go unnoticed by the Secret Chiefs.

It was only a few months later when I discovered an individual who had once been a Probationer of a Probationer of Crowley and a one-time resident of his (in)famous Abbey of Thelema in Cefalu, Sicily. This charming woman was intelligent and extremely knowledgeable about the magick of Thelema, and had personally known

⁶ See footnote 3.

⁷ During one of the earliest initiation ceremonies of the Traditional Martinist Order, the officiating officer burns the Oath of Obligation immediately after the candidate has signed it.

many of the colorful characters, who, in the past, were stars of the magical firmament. I had no problem with the fact that she had never been officially recognized as a Neophyte (and therefore technically unqualified to take on a Probationer) and, as it seemed unlikely that I would ever find a more qualified link to the A.:A.:, I persuaded her to sign my Probationer's paperwork.

Inspired by the vision of being a link in such a rare and holy chain, I set to work with the zeal and seriousness of novice monk. I mapped out and religiously adhered to a strict regimen of daily practices which included pre-dawn rituals, yoga, meditation, pranayama, evening rituals, and devotions. These I recorded and commented upon in a formal diary which I periodically sent to my superior for comments. My wife and young son were very understanding (or at least tolerant) of Papa's new life style and strange robes.

One year after I privately signed and burned the Oath of a Probationer, I repeated the ceremony with the Oath of a Neophyte. A few months later I traveled to my superior's home, turned over my latest diary, and recited from memory the required chapter from *Liber LXV*. I recited the Task of a Neophyte, observed all the necessary formalities, then, as she did for my Probationer document, she uncereemoniously signed the Neophyte paperwork and we sat down to a quiet dinner. This document is the highest formal A.:A.: credential I possess.

I carried on with my disciplines under her supervision for nearly four more years, during which time financial difficulties and health problems presented painful distractions. Then, after a disagreement over the honesty and character of another student (in which I was given the "A.:A.: task" to meditate until I agreed with her on the subject), we silently and mutually sus-

pended our formal relationship. We still have a cordial friendship (I never fail to call her each year to remind her she has again forgotten my birthday) and both of us seem happy to keep it that way.

In reviewing my diaries and our letters, it is clear that perhaps we both were expecting too much from each other. At the time she was just as inexperienced as a magical instructor as I was as a magical student. When I think about it, she was the perfect teacher, for from her I learned the first and most important magical lesson—I must learn my lessons myself.

To this day, I continue my magical work and do not feel that my affiliation, responsibilities, or labors have been interrupted in any way. I have come to the realization that the A.:A.: is a profoundly greater order than I ever dreamed possible. I still believe that it is very important to seek out and find a flesh-and-blood personal magical mentor, and I urge anyone who is serious about the work to tenaciously pursue the quest. The psychological edge of knowing you are part of a serious and illustrious spiritual brotherhood is often the only momentum you will have to get you through the inevitable dark nights of the soul. It is well to keep in mind, however, that no individual, no matter how enlightened, can project power or illumination upon you. More often than not, you will learn your greatest lessons in spite of your teacher's efforts, and not because of them.

It will be easily discerned by all who believe they can judge such matters that I reside conspicuously low on the Tree of Life.⁸ It is of little relevance that I have spent the last thirty years in pursuit of spiritual enlight-

⁸ See chapters 2 and 3.

enment because for every hour I have meandered toward the light, I have squandered months running away from myself and the Great Work.

Why then does a person possessed of such dubious and delinquent credentials presume to write with the pretense of authority on such important subjects? The answer is simple, and I share it with you without pride or embarrassment. It is because somewhere along the magical trail, without me realizing exactly how, when, or why, I have gained (what I would have called in my spiritually militant youth) a modest measure of enlightened happiness. Furthermore, after reviewing my spiritual diaries, I have come to giddy realization that the litany of failures and the comedy of errors that chronicle my magical career represent as much of a success story as any I have ever encountered.

Of course you are free to pity me as a hopelessly deluded fool. After all, some believe that happiness is what you experience when you don't have a clue as to what your real situation is. But please don't let my Pollyannaish attitude discourage you. The simple truth underlying this sweet mystery is truly universal, and sooner or later, if you have taken even one step upon the magical path, you also will embrace this revelation like an old friend. Like it or not, dear magician, the litany of failures and the comedy of errors that will chronicle *your* magical career will be as much of a success story as any *you* will ever encounter.

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

Love is the law, love under will.

Chapter II

QABALAH— ZEN OF THE WEST *(Is this Kosher?)*

*The way that can be told
Is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
Is not the constant name.*

—Lao Tzu
Tao Te Ching¹

¹ Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*, translation by D.C. Lau (Baltimore, MD: Penguin Books, 1968), p. 57.

II

I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I AM AS WESTERN AS they come. I was born in Long Beach, California, in 1948, to parents of mixed European and Native American ancestry, nourished on white bread, meat and potatoes, and raised to manhood on the fertile plains of eastern Nebraska, where I was anesthetized by the ambiguous tenets of Methodism. I was in my late teens before I ever met a Jew, an atheist, or a person of color. I married my high-school sweetheart at age 18, just in time to “turn on, tune in, and drop out” to the sylvan glades of southern Oregon.

As did so many others of my generation, I found myself in unqualified rebellion against the institutions and philosophies that I believed to be both the source and the perpetuators of the world’s ills. I embraced political radicalism and vegetarianism with equal zeal, and casually discarded the faith of my fathers without debate, regret, or hesitation. With youthful abandon I wiped my slate clean, and naively challenged providence to ruthlessly suckle me upon pure truth.

It was inevitable that something would fill this spiritual void, and paradoxical as it may sound, my rejection of all things old and obsolete did not discourage me in the least from exploring all things *extremely* old and *extremely* obsolete. I was strongly attracted to Hinduism and Tibetan Buddhism with their scientific, anal-

retentive approach to self-illumination, but I was most taken with the profound simplicity of a little book of less than one hundred pages—Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*. This ageless classic of Chinese wisdom spoke to me of a nameless way of action by inaction, of being by not being, paradoxes of logic and behavior only achievable by one who has transcended all desires, ambitions, and ego. From the well of the *Tao Te Ching*, Confucius drank deep, clearly basing his marvelous commentaries on the *I Ching* on his interpretation of the text.

Up to a point Tao may be interpreted as "reason," or more accurately, the inscrutable components of thought which allow us to grasp the reality behind all we perceive. In a world of shifting illusionary forms, the singular reality is a certain "whatever-it-is" that obliges us to connect the menagerie of illusions which we mistakenly perceive as objective reality. The Tao is said to be unknowable because we cannot directly comprehend this "whatever-it-is," because the thinking process, itself, gets in the way.

Everything we think we know about *anything* results from our ability to observe its behavior through a series of consecutive movements. For this reason, the Tao is called the "way" and is said to reside in the motion, rather than that which is moved.

To apply the principles of the Tao to one's personal life is an extremely subtle task, and especially suited to the calm rationality and introspective temperament of the Oriental psyche. I apologize if this sounds patronizing. Human diversity should be celebrated, and no one's sensitivities should be bruised when I observe that the approaches to spiritual enlightenment that characterize the spiritual sciences of the East encourages the individual to turn inward to discover the true nature of Self and God. Conversely, the Western tradition encourages

the devotee to seek externally for the answers—in scripture, ritual, priestcrafts, and prayerful appeal to a God outside of one's self.

For many years I believed the Eastern approach to be superior, and I envisioned myself quietly gaining illumination while sitting by the koi pond, my legs locked in a flawless full lotus position, my eyes firmly fixed upon the ajna chakra in the center of my forehead, my shaved head gleaming in the leaf-filtered sunlight of my cool and tranquil Zen garden. The fact is I did spend a good deal of my time doing just that (well . . . I never got my Zen garden) and, while I did not reach nirvana or mahasamadhi, I was able to log several classic and recognizable meditative landmarks in my diary. Still, I felt as though I was somehow going against the grain . . . as if I were trying to run Eastern software on my Western hardware. I lamented the fact that there were not techniques and disciplines unique to the Western psyche . . . Western yoga or Western Zen.

I was unable to find a document comparable to the *Tao Te Ching*, and everything that advertised itself as Western mysticism seemed so encumbered with Christian self-hate and guilt that I stopped looking in that direction altogether. I did not, however, give up my quest for a Western way, and eventually my quaint and curious studies brought me into contact with the traditions of esoteric Freemasonry, the Knights Templar, Rosicrucianism, and ceremonial magick.

Here, nestled amid apocryphal doctrines and suppressed heresies, I discovered the fountainhead of a rich and colorful Western tradition that appeared to have gone virtually unnoticed and unacknowledged by mainstream historians and clergy. Here I found an ancient and fundamental fire burning at the center of the politics, sciences, and religions of the West in the same way

the Tao enkindles the flame of Eastern thought. This spiritual treasure is not a book, yet it is expressed in many writings. It is not a religion, yet it passionately reveres the Holy Scriptures of the Jews. It is not a philosophy, yet it has influenced Western Civilization's greatest minds—from Plato and Pythagoras to Kant and Spinoza. It is not astronomy, chemistry, or physics, but it is the godmother of all three. It is a "way"—a way of viewing the world, ourselves, and Deity; *and* a way that maps our return to Godhead. It is the Western Way. It is the Qabalah.

*. . . De tings dat yo li'ble
to read in de Bible . . .*

It ain't necessarily so.

*—Ira Gershwin
Porgy and Bess*

Whether we care to admit it or not, the mythical stories of the Bible are indelibly stamped upon the collective psyche of Western civilization. They provide the foundation of our laws, our morals, and the archetypes of our spiritual aspirations. They also run roughshod through our fears, our insecurities, even our nightmares. The volatile political environment of the Middle East, which, for the last half of the 20th-century, has threatened to embroil the entire world in armed conflict can be blamed, at least in part, upon the belligerents' belief that they are descended from one or another brother in a Bible story.

In Sunday School, I was told that the books of the Bible were authored by God himself² through the medi-

² It never occurred to me or my fellow inmates to raise the question of God's gender.

umship of anonymous men whom he singled out and “possessed” to channel his words for later publication. A succession of miracles then ensured that the cosmic purity of these words would survive translation into all the major languages of the world.

Even as a child, I found this scenario impossible to believe. I figured Bible stories were like those sweet lies grown-ups tell children (like Santa Claus). I was sure, sooner or later, my elders would tell me the truth about God and the Bible, and reveal a greater and more mature reality behind the make-believe. As I grew older, it became painfully obvious that these people were oblivious to any greater truth, and that some of them actually believed this nonsense. The fact that my Bible-thumping role models repeatedly used the “Word of God” to justify war, child abuse, anti-Semitism, racial segregation, and a litany of other foul bigotries eventually compelled me to reject the God of Abraham and eye all things biblical with bitter cynicism. I saw what Bible abuse can do to people and did not care to add my name to the Lamb’s Book of Life, especially if it meant spending eternity with those dolts.

Understandably, it was with a great deal of skepticism that I approached the study of the Qabalah—a spiritual discipline supposedly based upon the “Holy Scriptures.” But approach it I did, perhaps because I was haunted by a childish dream that there might be a hidden wisdom buried in these crude and violent stories of desert bullies, lecherous goat herders, and murderous kings.

At first I was very annoyed to learn that (like my well-intended but semi-conscious Sunday School teachers) Qabalistic *tradition* holds that certain biblical texts are the result of divine inspiration, and that every word, every letter was constructed and positioned by illumi-

nated sages (or by God, Himself) in an attempt to communicate ineffable secrets to future spiritual investigators. However, as I delved deeper into the primitive texts³ I discovered what appeared to be elements of Egyptian, Persian, Vedic, Neo-Platonic, and even Gnostic cosmology, expressed as though they were scholarly elucidations of Bible verses. These commentaries espoused radical spiritual doctrines that could hardly be interpreted as orthodox Judaism. Heresy has always been a serious matter for pious Jews, but still there it was—right in front of me—a quasi-monotheistic rendition of the greatest mystical hits of the pagan world. Apparently as long as the “Holy Scriptures” were used as the springboard for discussion, the founding fathers of Hebrew mysticism were free to soar to wondrous (and technically heretical) heights.

When members of the Yoruba tribe of west-central Africa were brought as slaves to the new world, they continued to worship the great pantheon of spiritual beings of their homeland. However, for their own safety they disguised their Orishás as saints and divine personages of Roman Catholicism. The result is visible today as Brazilian Candomble and other popular sects. Likewise, during the years the doctrines and disciplines of the Qabalah were forming, the Jews were also slaves, held captive in the city-states positioned at the crossroads of world commerce and ideas. Instead of veiling their religion in the images of their captors as the Yorubas would do centuries later, it appears the Hebrew mystics did just the opposite. They embraced many of the new ideas and concepts of

³ Most notably, *The Bahir*, translated by Aryeh Kaplan (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1989), *Sefer Yetzirah*, translated by Aryeh Kaplan (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1990) and *The Zohar*, translated by M. Simon and H. Sperling (New York: Bennet, 1959).

their masters and then masked them in the terminology and images of traditional Judaism.

Qabalistic thought is profoundly different from that of rabbinical Judaism. Most striking is the doctrine that the God of exoteric bible stories (the possessive and vengeful poster-child for abusive fathers) isn't really the Supreme Being after all. That honor goes to an inscrutable preexistent negative totality called *Ain Soph*—a great Zero, out of which emanates the One and subsequently the many. This concept parallels the creation scenario of Vedic and Buddhist cosmology (not to mention the “big bang” of modern physics).

Although there are some who would disagree with me, I believe that the Qabalah's relationship to the Bible and Judaism is essentially no more sectarian than the riddles of a Zen master's koan. It is completely irrelevant whether or not one believes there is any intrinsic holiness in the Holy Scriptures. Truth is Truth—and if Truth is universal enough to deserve its capital “T,” then it can be found everywhere and in everything. If I believe that a student of Zen can gain enlightenment by meditating upon essence of horse manure until the Buddha nature reveals itself therein, then I will have to concede that a student of Qabalah can reach illumination by dissecting and analyzing words and phrases of the Bible. Both achieve the same end, but by radically different techniques.

The Eastern mystic stills the body and mind, systematically stripping away the illusionary veils of sensations, desires, and ego until something snaps—the mind is transcended, profound *emptiness* is achieved, and suddenly the distinction between the perceiver and the perceived disappears.

Conversely, the Qabalist bombards the mind, drawing parallels and correspondences between absolutely

everything and absolutely everything else, until there is no *anything else* left. Eventually something snaps—the mind is transcended, profound *fullness* is achieved, and suddenly the distinction between the perceiver and the perceived disappears.

In his masterpiece, *Liber Aleph: The Book of Wisdom and Folly*,⁴ Aleister Crowley describes the goal of this mental yoga as he addresses his “Magical Son.”

Do thou study most constantly, my Son, in the Art of the Holy Qabalah. Know that herein the Relations between Numbers, though they be mighty in Power and Prodigious of Knowledge, are but lesser Things. For the Work is to reduce all other Conceptions to these of Number, because thus thou will lay bare the very Structure of thy Mind, whose rule is Necessity rather than Prejudice. Not until the Universe is thus laid naked before thee canst thou truly anatomize it. The Tendencies of thy Mind lie deeper far than any Thought, for they are the Conditions and the Laws of Thought; and it is these that thou must bring to Naught.

In order to “reduce all conceptions to those of number and lay bare the very structure” of the mind, Qabalists utilize a number of techniques, including the employment of a divine numerology, known as *Gematria*, a shorthand system known as *Notariqon*, and the cryptographic exercises of *Temura*. In the space permitted I will try to describe the basic principles of these techniques.

⁴ Aleister Crowley, *Liber Aleph vel CXI: The Book of Wisdom or Folly*, Equinox Volume III Number VI (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1991), p. 2.

But, before we start our examination of these operations, I think it is appropriate to say a few words about a relatively modern Qabalistic device, the *Tree of Life*. I say “modern,” because the Tree, as it is constructed today, did not appear until 1652, when Athanasius Kircher published the diagram in his *Oedipus Ægyptiacus*. However, the components of the Tree are among the most ancient principles of Qabalistic doctrine.

THE TREE OF LIFE

The *Tree of Life* (figure 1) is a linear schematic of ten emanations and twenty-two paths upon which the universal mechanics of energy and consciousness are projected. In one respect, it is a very unsatisfactory diagram, for it attempts to dimensionalize the transdimensional. It has been called the diagram of the anatomy of God, and if we are indeed created in the image of God then that means that it also reveals the spiritual anatomy of each of us. Students of Kundalini Yoga agree, and point out that the seven chakras or spiritual centers in the human body can be projected quite comfortably upon the Tree of Life.

All ten Sephiroth, or emanations, of the Tree are really only aspects or facets of the top (first) Sephirah, Kether, which represents the totality of existence—the supreme monad. But even the concept of ONE is a blemish upon the sublime perfection of the preexistent ZERO.⁵ If ONE is to exist and become conscious of its oneness, it must reflect itself (like a yogi in meditation

⁵ The preexistent negativity is expressed as Ain (Nothing), Ain Soph (Without Limit), and Ain Soph Aur (the Limitless Light).

who reaches to the core of being and exclaims “that’s what I am!”). The mere act of reflection creates TWO:

$\begin{smallmatrix} 1 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 2 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix}$. (ONE is now conscious of itself *and* its reflection.)

The knowledge that there is a *difference* between ONE and TWO instantly creates a third condition: $\begin{smallmatrix} 1 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 2 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 3 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 4 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix}$.

This “trinity” by itself is still an abstraction, and exists only in potentiality. Nevertheless, a primal pattern has been established by the process of ONE becoming THREE. This archetypal germ sets into motion a chain-reaction that animates the entire creation scenario—the process of consciousness/light/spirit descending into matter.

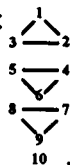
The phenomenal universe manifests through a process of degeneration in the next seven Sephiroth. The trinity unit FOUR-FIVE-SIX is created by the re-

flection of the ONE-TWO-THREE unit: $\begin{smallmatrix} 1 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 2 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 3 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 4 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix}$, and the

same process that created THREE from ONE-TWO cre-

ates the third trinity unit of SEVEN-EIGHT-NINE: $\begin{smallmatrix} 1 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 2 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 3 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 4 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 5 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 6 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 7 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 8 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 9 \\ \diagdown \end{smallmatrix} \begin{smallmatrix} 10 \\ \diagup \end{smallmatrix}$

TEN, the world of matter, is rock bottom, and dangles from the Tree of Life like an afterthought of creation:



The Great Work of the initiate/magician is to reverse this process and systematically climb the Tree of Life, overcoming imbalances and imperfections in his or her own being, thereby achieving progressively exalted states of consciousness. The entire journey is a

series of ordeals, but two of the crises are most significant. The first comes when the candidate reaches the Sixth Sephirah, Tiphereth, and achieves Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel.⁶ The second is most terrible, and represents the single-most profound moment of our incarnations. It is faced only when the initiate has achieved a level of consciousness so high that in order to proceed further it requires the abandonment of all the old machinery of self identity and perception. It means quite literally the annihilation⁷ of everything that the individual has heretofore believed to be the components of personality and self.

On the Tree of Life this crisis comes when the candidate's initiatory career finds him or her ready to move from the level of consciousness represented by the Fourth Sephirah (the highest point of the "actual") to the inscrutable emptiness of the Third Sephirah of the Supernal Triad (the world of the "ideal"). There is no path leading from FOUR to THREE. An abyss of indefinable mystery yawns before the candidate, who must rely solely upon the immense gravitational pull of THREE and his or her own initiatory momentum to hurl him or her through the looking-glass of the Abyss.

No one whose point of perception is below the Abyss is equipped to understand the nature of reality above the Abyss. It is said that below the Abyss, division is the result of contradiction—while above the Abyss contradiction is unity.

There are many other ways the Tree of Life is utilized to illustrate the divisions of the Qabalistic uni-

⁶ See chapter III, "The Emerald Tablet of Hermes and the Invocation of the Holy Guardian Angel."

⁷ "He will see annihilation where the perfected one finds immortality," *The Buddha*.

verse, but let us now turn our attention to some of the techniques and exercises that have traditionally been used to induce the exalted states of consciousness whereby the mind of God can be tapped.

GEMATRIA

By tradition, the twenty-two Hebrew letters form a sacred alphabet by which God created all things (*God said “pig P-I-G” and there was pig . . . but don’t touch*). This alphabet and sacred language God purportedly then gave to the angels, and the angels gave it to Adam. All things in heaven and earth are expressions of these divine letter/numbers and vice versa. If we could examine any object under a magick microscope we would see them in infinite combinations and ratios as the fundamental components. Likewise, if we could back up and view the totality of the cosmos with a telescope with a magical wide-angle lens, these same letters would circumscribe all functions of matter, energy, and consciousness.

Each letter has a specific definition, and can be interpreted in a number of ways—mundane or abstract. Moreover, each letter is a number, and embodies the mathematical “truth” inherent in that number. As these living letters are combined to form words, the words assume a numerical life of their own, and can be interpreted by examining the relationship with their component letters/numbers. Also, words and phrases that equal the same number mutually define⁸ each other. Everything in the universe is thus connected to

⁸ These co-definitions are seldom obvious (*i.e.*, the word אהבה [“love”] and the word אהב [“hated”] both add to 13). This is not prob-

Table 1. Numerical Values and Traditional Meanings of Hebrew Letters.

Hebrew Letter	Letter Name	English Equivalent	Numerical Value	Meaning	Sepher Yetzirah Attribute
א	Aleph	A	1	Ox, Clan, Learn, Teach	Air
ב	Beth	B	2	House, Family, Temple, Container	Mercury
ג	Gimel	G	3	Camel, Bearer of Burden	Moon
ד	Daleth	D	4	Door, Page	Venus
ה	Hé	H (E)	5	Window, Vista	Aries
ו	Vav	V (U)	6	Nail, Hook, Peg Fastener, Adhesive	Taurus
ז	Zain	Z	7	Sword, Weapon, Equip, Arm	Gemini
ח	Cheth	Ch	8	Fence, Field, Enclosure	Cancer
ט	Teth	T	9	Serpent, Worm	Leo
י	Yod	U (I or J)	10	Hand	Virgo
כ ך (final)	Kaph	K	20 500 (final)	Fist, Palm (hand), Spoon, Cave, Vault	Jupiter
ל	Lamed	L	30	Ox goad, Study, Learning, Defined	Libra
מ ם (final)	Mem	M	40 600 (final)	Water	Water
נ ן (final)	Nun	N	50 700 (final)	Fish	Scorpio
ס	Samech	S	60	Prop, Support, Lean	Sagittarius
ע	Ayin	0 (A'a or Ng)	70	Eye, Ring, Spring	Capricorn
פ ף (final)	Pé	P (F)	80 800 (final)	Mouth, Speech, Command, Opening	Mars
צ ץ (final)	Tzaddi	Tz (X)	90 900 (final)	Fish-hook, Penetrating Object, Barb	Aquarius
ק	Qoof	Q	100	Back of Head, Ear	Pisces
ר	Resh	R	200	Head, Face, Top, Primary, Beginning	Sol
ש	Shin	Sh	300	Tooth, Tusk, Pointed edge	Fire
ת	Tav	Th	400	Cross, Mark, Seal, Signature	Saturn/Earth

everything else by means of an endless chain of self-referential correspondences.

The twenty-two letters are divided into three categories: Three *Mother* letters (Aleph, Mem, Shin) representing respectively the three primal Elements—Air, Water, Fire; Seven *Double* letters⁹ (Beth, Gimel, Daleth, Kaph, Pé, Resh, Tav) representing respectively the seven ancient Planets—Mercury, Luna, Venus, Jupiter, Mars, Sol, Saturn; and twelve *Simple* letters (Hé, Vav, Zain, Cheth, Teth, Yod, Lamed, Nun, Samech, Ayin, Tzaddi, Qoof) representing, respectively, the twelve Signs of the Zodiac—Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, Pisces.

Table 1, on page 26, outlines the numerical value and traditional meanings associated with each of the 22 Hebrew letters.

To see how the system works, let us briefly examine a simple Hebrew word and discover just a few of its qualities by means of Gematria. Do not be too quick to dismiss these musings as aimless flights of mental masturbation. Remember, our goal is to connect everything in the universe to everything else. Not even puns are off limits. No avenue of exploration is too *dumb* (DM?) to consider.

The Hebrew word for “blood” is דם¹⁰ (DM—Daleth-Mem). D = “door”; M = “water.” Keeping in mind the fact that blood is primarily made up of the

lematic for the Qabalist. Like the student of Zen who solves the puzzle of the Zen master’s koan, the Qabalist eventually resolves all seeming contradictions by transcending the limitations of the logical mind.

⁹ So called because each double letter can be pronounced in two distinct ways.

¹⁰ Hebrew is written from right to left.

same components as sea water it is not surprising that we find the letter M in the Hebrew word for blood. D (Daleth) means “door” and when we combine the two ideas of door and water, we open a *flood gate* of things to meditate upon. Water is the *door* to all life on this planet. Without water, life, as we know it, would never have developed. Without water, life cannot be sustained. Mammals, before we cross the *threshold* of life, float in a sea of *water* and feed upon our mother’s *blood*. From the male perspective the source of life is also a water door—the meatus of the penis through which the living *water* of male fertility spurts and passes through to the female *gate* of life. It is no coincidence that semen is often referred to as “blood” in alchemy, magick, and Qabalah.

Because the concepts of mother and father have developed so easily from our meditation of DM/blood, let us dissect these Hebrew words to see if we can discover collateral meanings.

The Hebrew word for “mother” is מֵם (AM-Aleph-Mem). A = “ox.” At the time of the formation of the Hebrew alphabet, the ox that pulled the furrowing plow was the supreme agricultural symbol of fertility and life-sustaining power. The letter A (Aleph) is the letter of breath, and the only vowel in the Hebrew alphabet. Spelled in full [ALP] it enumerates to 111, the ultimate Qabalistic expression of unity; M = “water.” AM could be interpreted as *the water of the creative energy of life*. In reference to blood, we might interpret this to be the fluid component, plasma.

The Hebrew word for “father” is אב (AB- Aleph-Beth). A = “ox” (see above); B = “house.” We might interpret the combination of these letters to mean: *the dwelling place, or container of the creative energy of*

life. This could indicate the corpuscle components of blood or even DNA.

Combined, the words for mother and father (AM & AB) equal 44—and so does DM, the word for blood! 44 is a very interesting number for blood, and we would be poor Qabalists indeed if we didn't continue to examine the correspondences and investigate this number. Other Hebrew words adding to 44 include AGM, a pool, sorrow; GVLH, a prisoner, captivity; LHT, a flame; and the words for the zodiac signs of Aquarius (the water-bearer) and Aries (the ram whose blood¹¹ replaced that of humans as an acceptable sacrifice to God). We could draw endless connections just with these words alone, but let us look at the number 44 itself to see what might reveal itself.

Prime numbers have special significance in Gematria because they are invulnerable to division. The prime component of 44 is 11, and so, naturally, Qabalists would first examine 44 expressed as 4×11 . The Hebrew word for "a hollow, vein" is BB (4) and the word for "circulatory movement" is ChG (11).¹² Not bad, eh?

If we introduce the letter of breath, A, to DM we get ADM (Adam): *And the Lord God . . . breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.* ADM adds to 45, the source of all the numbers [$45 = 0 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8 + 9$]. Adam is also the character who God allowed to *name* all the living creatures (*i.e.*, give them their letter/number identities). Do you think he spoke Hebrew?

¹¹ See Abraham's sacrifice, Genesis: chapter 22.

¹² Even if we use Mem final (600) in our calculations, we still arrive at the Hebrew words for "red" and "vein."

NOTARIQON

There are two main ways the technique of Notariqon can be applied to the Qabalistic examination of words and phrases. The first method is to take the letters of the subject word as representing the initials of a full sentence. Perhaps the most famous example is BRASHITH, the first word of Genesis, commonly translated "In the beginning." **B-R-A-Sh-I-Th** can be expanded to say—**BRASHITH RAH ALHIM SHIQBLV IshRAL ThVRH**: *In the beginning Elohim saw that Israel would accept the law.*

The shortcomings of this exercise are obvious, for while the above sentence may have profound meaning to a Qabalist who is an orthodox Jew, the Christian Qabalist might prefer Prosper Rugere's interpretation—**BBVA RBN ASHR SHMV IshVo ThOBVDV**: *When the Master shall come Whose name is Jesus ye shall worship.* Then again, the diabolist might argue that **B-R-A-Sh-I-Th** really means—**BRASHITH RAH ASHMDAI SHIQBLV IshRAL ThChLVM**: *In the beginning Asmodai (the demon king) saw that Israel would accept hallucinations.*

In the early days of my formal magical training, my teacher, in an attempt to ascertain my skills in Notariqon, challenged me to squeeze pearls of wisdom from the letters of my own name. The following was my brash attempt at profundity: "**LON MILO DUQUETTE**" is not really a name at all. It is the initials of three famous Rosicrucian axioms of perfection:

**"LOVE OF NUIT MANIFESTS INFINITELY.
LIFE OBSCURES DEATH'S UNANSWERED QUESTIONS.
UNKNOWN EGYPTIAN TOOK TWO ENEMAS."**

I thought two out of three wasn't bad, but my teacher was not amused.

The second method of Notariqon is just the opposite of the above. Instead of expanding from the letters of a word, the first letters (and/or finals) of words of a sentence or phrase are gathered to form words. Ceremonial magicians will think immediately of **ARARIThA**, a Notariqon-created word formed from the initials of the sentence **AChD RASh; AChDVThV RASh IChVD-VThV; ThMVRThV AChD**: *One is His Beginning; One is His Individuality; His Permutation is One.*

Applied to my name, Lon Milo DuQuette would be reduced to **LMD** and dissected and examined for meaning. In this case **LMD** is the spelling of the twelfth Hebrew letter, Lamed. It enumerates to 74 and means "ox goad" and has expanded meanings relating to learning and teaching. The prime of 74 is 37, a very important number in the Qabalah for it is the number of **JChIDH**, Jechidah, the highest principle of the human soul (the Atma of Hindu philosophy) and the "germ" prime for the three digit master numbers:

$37 = 111 \div 3$	$37 = 444 \div 12$	$37 = 777 \div 21$
$37 = 222 \div 6$	$37 = 555 \div 15$	$37 = 888 \div 24$
$37 = 333 \div 9$	$37 = 666 \div 18$	$37 = 999 \div 27$

TEMURA

Temura cryptographically substitutes one letter with another. There are literally thousands of ways this method can be applied, and it appears that Qabalists have tried all of them. One popular method entails fold-

ing the alphabet upon itself, forming two rows of eleven letters thusly:

K	I	T	Ch	Z	V	H	D	G	B	A
L	M	N	S	O	P	Tz	Q	R	Sh	Th

A letter from the top row is simply substituted for the letter directly beneath it and vice-versa. This version of Temura is called AThBSh (after the first four letters in the code). DM (blood) would now be spelled QI (the root of "to vomit" . . . *oops!*) which enumerates to 101 as do the Hebrew words for "Storehouse," "Kingdom," and "Virgin Princess."

By replacing the first letter in the lower row and shifting the remaining letters to the right new combinations¹³ are formed. In the following example "L" has been taken from the far left position of the lower row and placed in the far right position. This version of Temura would be designated ALBTh.

K	I	T	Ch	Z	V	H	D	G	B	A
M	N	S	O	P	Tz	Q	R	Sh	Th	L

DM (blood) is now RK. In Hebrew it means "soft," "timid," "delicate," but in English (I told you puns would not be off limits) it is the phonetic spelling of the word "ark." Whether we are referring to Noah's Ark, or the Ark of the Covenant, no symbol for life-transporting, life-sustaining blood, can be more profound.

¹³ Even though more can be constructed, the standard has been set with three sets of 22 tables known as the *Combinations of Tziruph*.

Table 2. Qabalah of the Nine Chambers.

A 1	I,J,Y 10	Q 100	B 2	K 20	R 200	G 3	L 30	Sh 300
D 4	M 40	Th 400	H 5	N 50	K final 500	V, W, U 6	S 60	M final 600
Z 7	O 70	N final 700	Ch 8	P 80	P final 800	T 9	Tz 90	Tz final 900

In Hebrew RK adds to 220 the same as the words BChIR, "the Elect," and GBIRH "a rich lady"; also the sum of the letters that make up the phrase, "Ye shall cleave unto Jehovah."

When we use the above chart to examine the word BRAShITH ("in the beginning") we get the letters ThDThBMA. To my knowledge, there is no such word in Hebrew, but if we examine each letter (Th = a seal, D = Door, Th = a seal, B = House, M = Water, A = Creative energy) and use a little Qabalistic imagination we might come up with a poetic description of pre-big bang cosmology: *In the beginning the source of the creative energy of life was sealed in a house whose door was locked on both sides.*

The most popular¹⁴ method of Temura has the romantic title of "Qabalah of the Nine Chambers," Table 2, above. It is based on the decimal scale, and links all letters representing single digit numbers, with their

¹⁴ The Qabalah of the Nine Chambers becomes an indispensable tool for the ceremonial magician who wishes to create spirit sigils (magical signatures) drawn from magical number squares.

double and triple digit relatives, *i.e.*, A (1) can be substituted for Y (10) or Q (100).

Using the Qabalah of the Nine Chambers, both letters of DM (blood) are found in the same chamber. The only letter of substitution is Th, "a mark," "signature," "seal," and with this signature (sealed in blood?), we come to a poetic end to our brief excursion into Temura.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

As I mentioned earlier, Qabalists maintain that all things in heaven and earth are expressions of the divine letter/numbers and vice versa. Consequently *everything* is an energy-filled component of an immeasurably vast divine being and every *word* or name reveals the formula by which that component discharges its office. The greater the component's responsibility in the grand scheme of things, the more profound and powerful its number/letter/name.

It follows that the most potent and significant words would be the name(s) of the deity itself. God is referred to by many names in the Bible. When translated into English, these variations are given vague appellations such as "God," "Lord," "Lord God," "Almighty God," and a number of other ambiguous titles which succeed quite effectively in annihilating any spiritual meaning a would-be mystic might glean from the word.

For instance, the "God" who *created the heavens and the earth* in Genesis I, 1, is "Elohim," a masculine plural of the feminine word Eloah. A more accurate translation of the above verse would be: *In the begin-*

ning the Gods and Goddesses created the heaven and the earth.

I certainly would have appreciated knowing that tidbit of information back in Methodist Youth Fellowship, when the youth leader was guileless enough to teach a room full of adolescents that God was male and He created all things by means of “his male power.” “If God is everywhere . . .” came my predictable retort, “. . . where could he stick his male power?”

The supreme Qabalistic name of God is the ineffable four-letter word, יהוה (Yod, He, Vav, He) pronounced Jehovah by the profane, and referred to in Qabalistic literature as the “Tetragrammaton.” All creation from the highest heaven to the lowest hell is a projection issuing from this deity. The individual letters of the Tetragrammaton represent the four most fundamental aspects of creation. All matter, energy, and consciousness can be categorized under these four headings. This fourfold division is depicted as four descending worlds—Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah—through which the will of the deity is transmitted down to the material plane via a Byzantine chain of command and a hierarchy of divine names, archangels, angels, and spirits.

If it tickles your sense of wonder to think of this celestial pecking order as objective beings with halos and feathers who live their lives and discharge their duties like heavenly stock brokers, that is perfectly fine. In fact, this is precisely the attitude of the ceremonial magician who plies his or her craft by transforming subjective abstractions into objective realities. Nevertheless, when we talk about divine names, or angels, or archangels, we are really talking about an ordered hierarchy of natural energies and forces.

For example, we could say the law of gravity is a great *Archangel*, whose dominion throughout the cos-

mos is unimaginably universal. The Archangel "Gravity" rules a host of *Angels*¹⁵ residing in the next lower world who can only function within the strict discipline of the "Law of Gravity" and who are responsible for more specific gravitational duties. Some Angels might cause stars in galaxies to revolve around a central point, or be responsible for the unique behavior of black holes. Under the jurisdiction of each Angel, and residing in the lowest of the four Qabalistic worlds, are the countless *Intelligences* and *Spirits*.¹⁶ These are the cosmic detail men of the phenomenal universe who execute the most specific jobs, from ocean tides and falling apples, to determining the winner of a Soapbox Derby.

The fundamental theory underlying traditional Qabalistic magick maintains that if you can identify and petition the correct aspect of Deity (Divine name in Atziluth), you can then make appeal to the correct Archangel (in Briah), to direct the correct Angel (in Yetzirah) to allow you to order the correct Spirit (in Assiah) to do your bidding. This cosmic name dropping may seem rather primitive and superstitious, but it is an excellent way to train our minds to constantly be aware of a greater reality behind all we perceive.

¹⁵ Angels under the rulership of the Archangel Gravity might have names like "Attract," "Pull," or "Tug."

¹⁶ Spirits and Intelligences under the rulership of Angels "Attract," "Pull," or "Tug" might have names like "Drop," "Fall," "Tumble," "Sag," "Droop," "Slip," "Slide," "Decay," "Descend," "Succumb," "Decline," "Regress," "Swag," "Dip," "Incline," "Settle," "Sink," "Plunge," or "Plummet."

’ The highest world, Atziluth, is the Archetypal world where the male and female¹⁷ aspects of deity are still united in pure bliss. The three worlds below Atziluth are the fruit of this union.

⌈ The next world is Briah, the Creative world, the world of the Archangels, where the various aspects of the creative will begin to organize into agencies with broad powers and responsibilities.

⌋ The next level is Yetzirah, the Formative world, the world of the Angel Hosts. Here the general orders of the Archangels above are drawn up in specific detail for eventual manifestation in

⌈ Assiah, the world of matter, the phenomenal universe, world of the planetary intelligences, spirits of the Elements and human beings.

A material object (such as a chair), manifests in Assiah, but has its nonmaterial blueprint (the image of a specific chair) in Yetzirah, and a universally organized conception (the theories of “sitting” and “chair”) in Briah, and a supreme abstract model (the idea of “at rest”) in Atziluth. If this scenario sounds familiar, it is because Plato, who is said to have studied the wisdom of the ancient Hebrews, postulated these archetypal worlds in his ninth book of *The Republic*.

Predictably there are hundreds of ways Qabalists have dissected and itemized the inhabitants of the various worlds. The most familiar has for its model the Tree of Life. Each of the four Qabalistic worlds is pictured as its own Tree of Life and when all four are superimposed upon each other, as in Figure 2 (page 38), we can see exactly who is the boss in the fourfold hierarchy of each of the ten subdivisions of the Tree.

¹⁷ The Shekhinah.

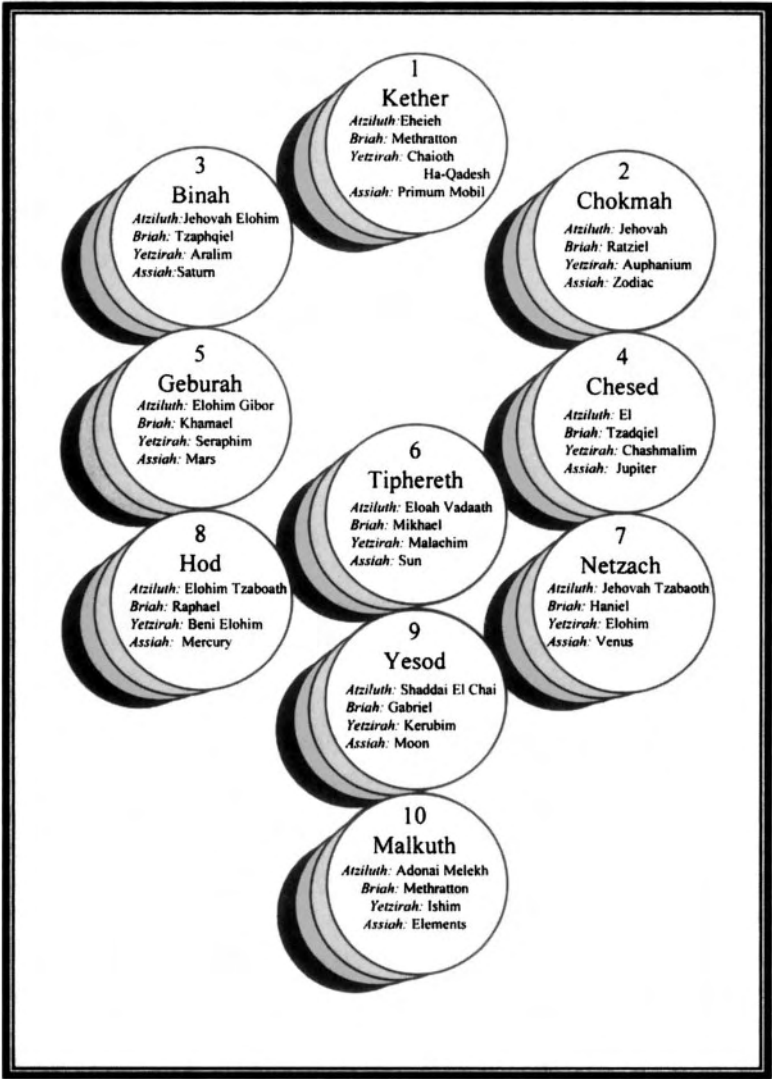


Figure 2. The Fourfold Tree of Life.

SHEM HA-MEPHORASH

One of the most impressive displays of a Qabalistic gymnastics is an elaborate dissection of the Tetragrammaton called Shem-ha-Mephorash, the “divided name.” Based upon the four letters of the Great Name, it is one of the finest examples of how Qabalists develop new ways of viewing the dynamics of the universe and identify the spiritual agencies who run the machinery.

After exhausting all the tricks of Gematria, Notarikon, and Temura to harvest spiritual enlightenment from the Great Name, it occurred to some bright Qabalist to arrange the four letters in the form of a Pythagorean tetractys and add the sum of the letters.

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 & \text{י} & = 10 \\
 & \text{ה} \quad \text{י} & = 15 \\
 & \text{ו} \quad \text{ה} \quad \text{י} & = 21 \\
 \text{ה} \quad \text{ו} \quad \text{ה} \quad \text{י} & = 26 \\
 10 + 15 + 21 + 26 & = 72.
 \end{array}$$

It was decided that seventy-two is a primary expression of יהוה and the key to an expanded (divided) name of God.

Now, there are seventy-two quinarities (groups of five degrees) in the zodiac, and each of those periods of five degrees represents approximately five days of the year. It followed that each part of יהוה’s divided name governed specific days of the year. This was an exciting

prospect, for it promised the opportunity to more closely examine deity by translating the eternal and inscrutable aspects of creation into the familiar time-space language of the Earth's yearly cycle. The next quest was to find the seventy-two names forming the Great Name.

Turning to the Holy Scriptures, it was discovered that three consecutive verses (19, 20, 21) of chapter 14 of *Exodus* each contained exactly seventy-two letters. All that needed to be done was to Qabalistically play with these three verses until they yielded the 72 Holy Names.

It should be pointed out that these three verses are among the most significant and memorable of the entire Bible. Not only did they make Charlton Heston an immortal icon of American cinema, they narrate the story of a massive display of the Hebrew God's power manifested on earth.

Verse 19:

ויסע מלאך האלהים החלך לפני מחנה ישראל וילך מאחריהם ויסע
עמוד הענן מפניהם ויעמד מאחריהם :

And the angel of God, who went before the camp of Israel, moved and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud moved from before them and stood behind them.¹⁸

¹⁸ English translation from *The Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*, translated from Aramaic by George M. Lamsa (Philadelphia, PA: A.J. Holman Company, 1967), p. 82. Exodus 14:19-21 appears in the text that follows.

Verse 20:

ויבא בין מחנה מצרים ובין מחנה ישראל ויהי הענן והחשך ויאר את-הלילה ולא קרב זה אל-זה כל-הלילה:

And it came between the army of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was cloudy and dark all the night, but it gave light all the night to the children of Israel, so that they could not draw near one to another all the night.

Verse 21:

ויש משה את-ידו על-הים ויולך ידו את-הים ברוח קדים עזה כל-הלילה וישם את-הים לחרבה ויבקעו-מים:

And Moses lifted up his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Table 3 (between pages 20–21) illustrates how these three verses are manipulated to reveal the seventy-two Names of God. Verse 19 is written normally (from right to left). Verse 20 is then placed directly beneath verse 19 (written from left to right). Finally, verse 21 is placed directly beneath verse 20 (written from right to left).¹⁹ The seventy-two three-lettered names of God are now revealed in the seventy-two columns formed by this arrangement. Starting from the far right and reading down we have the names VHV, ILI, SIT, OLM, etc.

¹⁹ This technique is called boustrophedon.

ANGELS AND DEMONS

Naturally, in order to serve as a conduit and execute the will of each of the three-lettered names of God, there must be an angel to transmit the specific energy inherent in each of those aspects of deity. The names of the seventy-two Angels of the Shem ha-Mephorash are determined by simply adding one of two angelic suffixes to the end of the three-lettered names of God; IH to indicate an angel of mercy, or AL to indicate an angel of judgment. The angel of VHV is VHVIH (commonly rendered Vehuiah); ILI's angel is ILIAL (Ieliel), etc. Table 3 (between pages 20–21) details this process and shows the degrees of the zodiac and small cards of the Tarot ruled by the God Names and the Angels of the Shem ha-Mephorash.

Also shown on Table 3 are the seventy-two Demons of the Goetia. These infernal spirits, while not directly associated by tradition with the Angels of the Shem ha-Mephorash, are nevertheless associated in pairs²⁰ to the 36 decans of the zodiac. Many modern practitioners of Goetic magick see this relationship as significant, and operate quite successfully under the assumption that the Angels of the Shem ha-Mephorash serve as the divine governors of their infernal counterparts. This logic is not without merit for the hierarchical rulership of the Goetic spirits has always been ambiguous and open to broad speculation. I will talk more about the Goetia in chapter VII.

²⁰ One spirit for the day, one spirit for the night.

A PERSON COULD GO CRAZY!

*Truly there is no end to this wondrous science; and when the skeptic sneers, "With all these methods one ought to be able to make everything out of nothing," the Qabalist smiles back the sublime retort, "With these methods One did make everything out of nothing."*²¹

Working with the Qabalah is not a means to an end but a means to a *means*. As recondite as one's Qabalistic discoveries in *Gematria*, *Notariqon*, and *Temura* might be they can be just as easily dismantled and refuted by employing the exact same techniques and logic. Moreover, just when you think you have succeeded in comprehending the sublime perfection of it all, your universe is unraveled with an alternate theory, a more ancient tradition, or a more logical mode of calculation.

Why, then, should we voluntarily enmesh ourselves in these exercises in mental futility? Is it to overload the mind until it gives up and forces us to embrace a higher level of consciousness? My wife, Constance²² (who hates the Qabalah), says if that is the case her mind is ready to give up right now.

In his attempt to answer this question, the heretical Qabalist, Rabbi Lon Ben Clifford quotes the venerable Taoist sage, Mi-Lo who wrote at the beginning of this chapter:

²¹ Aleister Crowley, "The Temple of Solomon the King," *The Equinox* Vol. I, No. 5 (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), p. 95.

²² Saint Constance of the Well, Our Lady of Perpetual Motion.

Everything we think we know about anything results from our ability to observe its behavior through a series of consecutive movements. For this reason the Tao is called the "Way" and is said to reside in the motion, rather than that which is moved.

The perpetual chain reaction of thought that Qabalistic exercises induce can eventually transform the diligent student from mere observer of this movement to passenger on the divine movement itself.

ש ל ו ם

Chapter III

THE EMERALD TABLE
OF HERMES AND THE
INVOCATION OF THE
HOLY GUARDIAN ANGEL

*O Thou Lord of Harmony! Master of the Right Will, Thou who hast brought unto us the divine seeds of self-knowledge—we, the humble Servants of the children of Thy voice, we call on Thee to lead us out of our Ignorance! We call thee, O Thrice Holy!*¹

¹ Invocation from the Rite of Mercury, the Rites of Eleusis, *The Equinox Vol. I. No. 6* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), p. 98.

III

CERTAINLY ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT events to impact the modern study of Hermeticism was the English translation in 1888 of *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*.² Unlike other grimoires supposedly written by King Solomon, Moses, or various prophets and patriarchs, authorship of the *Sacred Magic* is attributed to a bonafide historical personage with rather impressive credentials. Abraham the Jew (1362–1460), a German Jew, was perhaps the most famous alchemist/magician of his day. He certainly was among the wealthiest. A pious Qabalist of great renown, he nevertheless was not above displaying his magical and alchemical prowess for the amusement of the rich and powerful. In his heyday, he delighted and astonished the likes of King Henry VI of England, Popes John XXIII,³ Benedict XIII, Gregory XII, Emperor Con-

² *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin, the Mage as Delivered by Abraham the Jew Unto His Son Lamech, a Grimoire of the Fifteenth Century*. (London: Watkins, 1900), Reprinted (NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1975). Most recent edition: Wellingborough, UK: Aquarian Press, 1983. Found in the Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal in Paris and translated into English by Golden Dawn adept S. L. MacGregor Mathers, the original manuscript indicates it was first written down in Hebrew in 1458 and translated into French in the late 17th century.

³ The 20th-century Pope of the same name and number was the second pontiff to choose the name John XXIII—go figure!

stantine Palaeologos of Greece, Emperor Sigismund of Germany, and the Duke Leopold of Saxony.

An insatiable seeker of wisdom, Abraham traveled extensively in search of ever more profound secrets of nature and the divine. In Egypt he was told of a desert hermit, a powerful mage known as Abra-Melin, who held the keys to a supreme magical secret. Abraham sought out, and found, this great wizard, and was allowed to live and study for a time with the old man. After exhorting his new student to lead an austere and pious life, Abra-Melin cautiously turned over two small books which outlined the sacred magic. Abraham the Jew claimed that the magical powers he obtained from the mastery of the magic of Abra-Melin protected him for the rest of his life, and were the source of his success, fame, and great riches. Shortly before his death, he bequeathed to his two sons the greatest treasures of his long and colorful life. To his eldest son, Joseph, he transmitted the secrets of the Holy Qabalah; to his youngest son, Lamech, he bestowed the *Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*.

As quaint as the above story may be, *The Book of the Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage* might have remained just another footnote among the voluminous aggregation of occult literature of that period if not for one bombshell of a postulation that serves as the cornerstone of the Abra-Melin operation—a concept that catapults the work far above its contemporary grimoires and makes the *Sacred Magic* a spiritual science equivalent to the highest yogic practices of the East.

Abra-Melin reveals that each of us is linked to a spiritual being whom he calls the Holy Guardian Angel. Until we have become spiritually wedded to this being, we are not fully equipped as human beings to rule the denizens of our lower nature or advance spiritually. The

primary focus of the Abra-Melin operation is union ("Knowledge and Conversation") with one's Holy Guardian Angel. Until this is accomplished, it is useless to even attempt to manipulate the circumstances of life, because we are as yet spiritually unprepared to adequately comprehend the nature of our true will, let alone competent to exercise that will upon the cosmos. After Knowledge and Conversation is achieved, the Angel becomes the magician's counsellor, and directs, from a position of supreme wisdom, all subsequent magical activities.

This is a striking philosophical departure from the ceremonial magic practices that were popular among the contemporaries of Abraham the Jew. Solomonic magic texts⁴ (so called because they were supposedly derived from the magical writings of King Solomon) place the magician in the position of whining to an all-powerful (yet inexplicably gullible) God to temporarily be allowed to address the spirits with borrowed divine authority—literally attempting to bluff the infernal minions into believing they are being conjured by a new Moses, or Elijah, or Solomon. The technique is not dissimilar to that of a spoiled rich boy coercing his powerful father into allowing him to beat the butler.

This is not to say that such magical practices are ineffectual; on the contrary, they can achieve seemingly astounding results and phenomena.⁵ All magical activity, whether guided by the perfect wisdom of the Holy

⁴ Among the most popular Solomonic texts were the five books of the Lemegeton, particularly the first book, *Goetia*. See chapter VII, *Demons Are Our Friends*.

⁵ *Ibid.*

Guardian Angel or by the most unworthy motives of an unenlightened villain, sets into motion a chain reaction of unseen effects that seek, and eventually find, a medium in which to discharge the energy of the working. If the magician's spiritual sight is clear, then the momentum of the entire universe impels the energy to find its perfect mark, and the object of the operation is accomplished. However, if the magician is deluded as to any aspect of the circumstances surrounding the working, then the energy generated by the ceremony will seek out the path of least resistance and eventually miscarry as a malignant tumor in the fertile soil of the magician's own delusions. Unless one is divinely inspired by the Holy Guardian Angel, he or she will continue to operate in the dark, motivated by ill-considered desires and guided by defective powers of perception.

While the term "Holy Guardian Angel" used in this capacity appears to have originated with the *Sacred Magic of Abra-Melin the Mage*, the concept of a personal divine entity is unquestionably much older. Zoroaster⁶ writes of the Agathosdaimon, a personal guardian spirit who must be contacted before any theurgic ceremony is initiated. These spiritual guides were called Iunges, ferrymen, and together with the Synoches and Teletarcae comprised the primary hierarchy of Chaldean archangels.⁷ The Platonic philosophers taught that between humanity and the gods there exists an intermediate class of spiritual beings called Daemonos. Each individual is assigned a personal daemon and it is the daemon, not the gods, who directly hears and an-

⁶ See *The Chaldean Oracles of Zoroaster*, trans. Ruth Majereik (London and New York: Brill, 1989).

⁷ See *The Magick of Thelema* by Lon Milo DuQuette (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993), p. 92.

swers the prayers of our race. Socrates called his daemon "genius."

Spirit guides, who from prehistoric times have shepherded the shamanic visions of every culture on Earth, serve to demonstrate that Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is a fundamental and universal spiritual experience. Jesus said, "[N]o man cometh unto the Father but by me." Krishna told Arjuna, "Only by single-minded devotion I may in this form be known and seen in reality, and also entered into." Everywhere we look within the sacred writings and spiritual practices of the world's religions we find the basic theme of a personal relationship with a spiritual being who is the representative of, or the conduit to, a supreme (and perhaps *impersonal*) deity. So ingrained is this basic truth upon the collective unconscious of the race that we find it embedded deeply in our myths and fairy tales. It takes no stretch of the imagination to see the H.G.A. as the prince who awakens with a kiss (Knowledge and Conversation) the sleeping beauty (the unenlightened soul), and takes her to the palace of his father the king (God), where the new couple will eventually become king and queen themselves (supreme enlightenment and reabsorption into godhead).

Angel by definition means "messenger," and students of the Western Tradition will recognize the concept of such a divine intermediary as decidedly Mercurial in nature. Hermes/Mercury is the messenger of the gods and psychopomp of the dead. Avatars of the world's great religions all have presented themselves as guides, shepherds, and messengers of divine truth. The fact that the gods need a messenger reveals that direct communication with and between the gods (vibratory frequencies, levels of consciousness, degrees of awareness, Qabalistic

worlds, stages of existence, evolutionary steps, facets of being, etc.) is not a good idea. Remember the fatal consequences when Zeus' mortal lover, Semele, demanded to see him without his insulated pajamas. Jehovah didn't appear to the Virgin Mary to announce she had his bun in her oven—the archangel Gabriel did. Zeus didn't go to the underworld to tell his brother Hades to give Persephone time off for good behavior—he sent Hermes to deliver the bad news and lead the lady back. Thoth was forever jotting down notes and messages, and frequently interceded in the family squabbles of the gods of Egypt. In the *Mahabharata*, Krishna delivered so many messages back and forth between the Kurus and the Panchalas that he probably reached Brahma Loka on frequent-flyer mileage alone!

It is unfortunate that the religions of the masses have presumed to ignore this central and universal theme, and have mistaken their messengers for the message, worshipping, as it were, the advertisement rather than the product itself. Perhaps it is impossible to develop a religion for the masses around such a personal and intimate experience. Yet, if we allow ourselves the freedom of an open mind, we can witness the Holy Guardian Angel dancing on the street corner in the unbridled bliss of the Hare Krishna devotee, and hear its song in the Muslim's poignant call to worship. I have watched in awe as a babushka-hooded Polish grandmother opened her toothless mouth to receive the consecrated host at mass, her eyes fixed in ecstasy upon an unseen wonder, as she dissolved in the body of her Holy Guardian Angel, whom she saw as Christ. Like the Buddhist monk who sees the pure Buddha nature in a steaming pile of dog excrement, there will always be those individuals who will seize the pure core-truth of their religion no matter how idiotic the superfluous trappings

of their particular creed may be. It is a sad irony that with few exceptions the “great” religions of the West insist on short-circuiting the spiritual wiring of their adherents by demanding that they accept an exclusive and crystalized image of the Holy Guardian Angel.

The Holy Guardian Angel is *more than* the projected image of our perfected self, or the voice of our conscience; it is *more than* the innocent, inherent knowledge between right and wrong; it is *more than* the divine ear that hears us when we look to heaven and pray. “Oh God—if you just get me out of this, I’ll never do anything so stupid again!” But what that *more than* is, is difficult to discuss. Abra-Melin doesn’t even spend much time trying. “Get your Angel and have him explain” seems to be the thrust of his advice, and in the final analysis is probably the wisest counsel. Nevertheless, since Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is of such supreme importance to the spiritual career of the aspirant, it might be helpful to see how the concept might be more clearly illustrated. To do this, I will briefly review basic Qabalistic principles as they relate to the fundamental document of Hermeticism, *The Emerald Tablet of Hermes*.⁸

⁸ By tradition, the first revelation of God to man, the *Emerald Tablet* (*Tabula Smaragdina*) of *Hermes Trismigistus* was said to be two thousand years old at the time of Christ. Reportedly cast in liquid emerald by alchemical means, its raised letters outlined in thirteen short sentences the universal operation of the cosmos. Authorities may debate the historic veracity of the legend, but the document stands as the consummate distillation of Hermetic thought, outlining not only the process of the transmutation of base metals but also the regeneration and liberation of the human soul. The versions used for the purpose of this essay are those of Manly P. Hall, *Lost Keys of Freemasonry* (Richmond, VA: Macoy, 1968), and General Albert Pike, *Morals and Dogma* (Charleston A.:M.:).

The
Secret Work
Chiram Telat Mechasot
(Chiram, the Universal Agent,
one in Essence, but three in aspect)

α

It is true and no lie, certain, and to be depended upon, that the superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior with the superior, to effect that one truly wonderful work.

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. I

It is written in Genesis I, 27: *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* The Sephir Dtzenioutha⁹ tells us that: *before there was equilibrium, countenance beheld not countenance. . . . The Vast Countenance is hidden and concealed; The Lesser Countenance is manifested, and is not manifested. When he is manifested, he is symbolized by the letters of ה ו ה י.*¹⁰

The Vast Countenance is the *macrocosm*, the big world, abode of deity and to some extent deity, itself. The Lesser Countenance is the *microcosm*, the little world, the emanations and expressions of deity. Upon the lowest end of the *microcosmic* scale is found the

⁹ See *The Kabbalah Unveiled* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1983) p. 43.

¹⁰ See chapter II. יהוה Yod-Hé-Vav-Hé (Hebrew is written from right to left) the ineffable name of God. Pronounced Jehovah by the profane, its true pronunciation was a carefully guarded secret of the Levite priests.

material universe and human beings. After balance was achieved early in the creation scenario, these two Countenances, the superior and the inferior, beheld or reflected each other. The two Qabalistic texts quoted above confirm The Emerald Tablet's opening statement and reveal a universe of repeating patterns. Like the keyboard of a piano, the notes that make up the worlds above us have their counterpart in our lower octave. *The superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior with the superior. . . . As above, so below.*

There are numerous ways the Qabalistic texts attempt to illustrate the relationship of the macrocosm and microcosm; some defining the microcosm as all nine emanations (Sephiroth) below Kether (the first Sephirah, "Crown") of the Tree of Life¹¹; some viewing the tenth Sephirah, Malkuth ("Kingdom") as the microcosm and the next six Sephiroth above Malkuth as the macrocosmic world. It is a curious characteristic of Qabalistic thought that both of the above definitions (and a wide assortment of others) can be considered simultaneously true. Keeping the first statement of The Emerald Tablet in mind, we could even venture to say that every plane of existence is a macrocosm in relation to the plane beneath it, and a microcosm in relation to the plane above it. For the purpose of this little essay I will use the terms as they are most commonly applied to modern ceremonial magick:

¹¹ See figure 1, page 22. To the modern student, the Tree of Life is the most recognizable diagram of the Qabalah. It illustrates how the infinite ONE emanated life and the universe by projecting its divine light through ten progressively dense "worlds" (Sephiroth), the lowest of which is our material universe. The ten Sephiroth are joined by twenty-two paths which transmit the divine influence between the Sephiroth and are the means by which the Qabalistic mystic can ascend the Tree to achieve union with the ONE.

Microcosm: characterized by the magical formula of the four elements (fire, water, air, and earth) ruled, vivified, bound together, and separated by the quintessential element—spirit. The number five is a particularly suitable glyph of the microcosm, for it expresses the magical formula which sustains the elemental world. In the Holy Hebrew alphabet the number five is expressed by the letter ה Hé.

Macrocosm: characterized by the planetary formula and the number six. It is graphically illustrated as the Sun surrounded by the six planets recognized by the ancients. These heavenly wanderers which travel across the belt of the Zodiac represent a higher order than that of the elemental world and were seen by the ancients as living components of the body of God. The Hebrew letter enumerating six is ו Vau.

Man/Woman is the highest expression of the microcosm, and God is the highest expression of the macrocosm. To bring the microcosmic-five into perfect alignment with the macrocosmic-six is the Great Work accomplished and the spiritual goal of all seekers of enlightenment. But how do we go about uniting the five and the six? Let us start by examining the second statement from The Emerald Tablet.

β

As all things owe their existence to the will of the Only One, so all things owe their origin to One Only Thing, the most hidden, by the arrangement of the Only God.

—Tabula Smaragdina, v.II

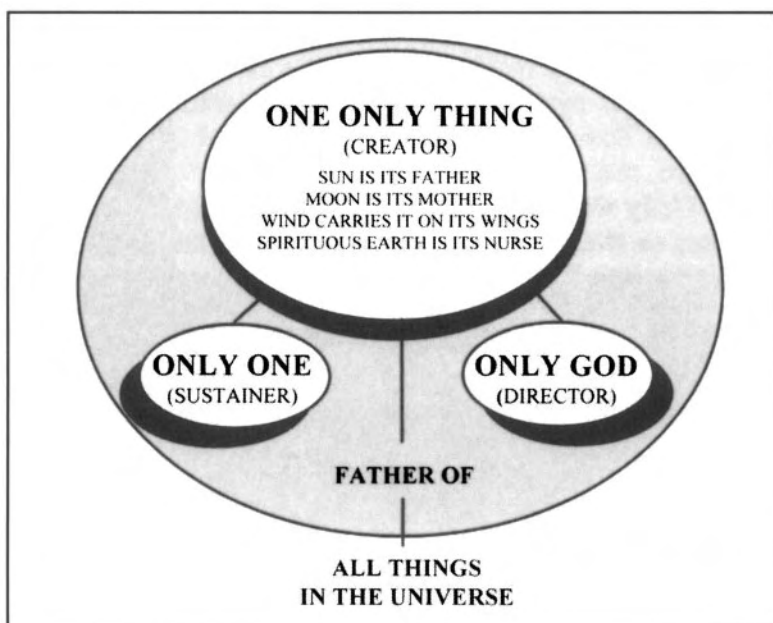


Figure 3. The threefold deity of The Emerald Tablet of Hermes.

The above statement may at first appear to be a somewhat redundant description of the powers of deity. But really we are reading about three facets of deity—*one in Essence, but three in aspect* (see figure 3 above).

- 1) **“Only One”** to whose will all things owe their *existence*;
- 2) **“One Only Thing, the most hidden”** to whom all things owe their *origin*; and
- 3) **“Only God”** who appears to have arranged the whole show.

“One Only Thing, the most hidden” is the creator, a hidden and unknowable “thing.” Its supreme mystery is the secret of how it came forth from negative existence.

It contains all things, great and small. To see it, know it, even think about it, is as impossible as trying to see the back of your own head by turning around. In the Qabalah, the first Sephirah, Kether, is called "Temira De-Authiqin, the Concealed of the Concealed."

"**Only One**" is the sustainer; the *To On* of the Greeks, or the *Tao* of Lao Tzu. If "One Only Thing" is the power generator, "Only One" is the electricity itself.

"**Only God**" is the organizer and director of all that "One Only Thing" creates and "Only One" sustains. It is the grand architect of the universe, and the only aspect of the Universal Agent designated "God" by The Emerald Tablet.

Because the superior agrees with the inferior, and the inferior with the superior, this thrice great agency is at work in each of us as surely as it is in the dynamics of subatomic particles and the outermost galaxies. Apprehension of this great scheme, and the perfect realization of our place in it, is the very definition of enlightenment. The sages of India, Tibet, and elsewhere have minutely cataloged the progressive stages of consciousness leading to this supreme attainment.

The Qabalah also dissects the mechanism of creation and expresses the process in the ineffable name of God, $\aleph \iota \aleph \dot{\iota}$. Yod ' the great Father, is positioned on the Tree of Life with its tip in Kether and its tail in Chokmah (the second Sephirah), representing the first reflection/extension of the One. This act of reflection starts a chain reaction of cosmic events by which god-head creates the universe from out of itself. Hé \aleph the great Mother, resides in the third Sephirah, Binah. She receives the infinitely extending Yod, increasing Her capacity to *enfold* in exact proportion to His capacity to *unfold*. Father-Yod and Mother-Hé are co-equal infinities and define the supernal triad of Kether-Chokmah-Binah

which, though abstract and unmanifest, establishes the primordial patterns that will shape the characteristics of the lower Sephiroth which follow. See figure 4, page 60.

The union of Yod and Hé results in the formation of two archetypal offspring; a Son who is represented by the letter Vau ם in the divine name, and a Daughter who manifests as the final letter Hé ך. When projected upon the Tree of Life the Son-Vau is focused upon the 6th Sephirah, Tiphareth, but encompasses Sephiroth 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9—the area of the Tree of Life most generally designated the macrocosm. The Daughter-Hé-final is positioned at the 10th and lowest Sephirah, Malkuth, the Kingdom—the abode of the material universe, the microcosm, and the isle of spiritual exile of the human soul. Even though Malkuth (and consequently humanity) finds itself at the bottom of the Qabalistic barrel, it is still a unique and wonderful position—for here at the most remote outpost of the divine empire lies a buried treasure. Because the *inferior agrees with the superior*, the genetic code of Kether and the entire involving/evolving universe sleeps like a dormant seed inside each of us.¹² It takes a gardener to awaken and germinate this seed, and that gardener is the Vau ם of the ineffable name, our Holy Guardian Angel.

γ & δ

*The father of that One Only Thing is the Sun;
its mother is the Moon; the wind carries it in
its wings; but its nurse is Spirituous Earth.*

¹² “[T]he heaven is in the earth, but after an earthly manner; . . . and the earth is in the heaven, but after a heavenly manner.” *Proclus*.

*That One Only Thing (after God) is the father
of all things in the universe.*

—Tabula Smaragdina, vs. III & IV

Like all true holy books, The Emerald Tablet is constructed with such perfection that it simultaneously addresses all levels of existence and consciousness.¹³ The mysteries of its thirteen short verses can be applied to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, the alchemical transmutation of lead into gold, or even the mastery of the perfect golf swing.

The above verses seem to contain a confusing paradox. If the “One Only Thing” is really the one only thing, who made its father the Sun, its mother the Moon, the wind its chauffeur, and its nurse the spirituous Earth? Perhaps we will never really know the answer until we become the “One Only Thing” ourselves, but we can at least establish a basis for further discussion by answering with Zen-like ambiguity: “It did!” As *above, so below*—the “One Only Thing” infuses all levels of existence. From the highest heaven to the lowest hell, its father is the Sun (of some kind), its mother the Moon (of some kind), it is transmitted by air (of some kind), and it finds shelter and nourishment in spirituous Earth (of some kind).

Qabalists will recognize that the above verse reveals the pattern of the elemental formula as established by ה ו ה י ; the Sun is Yod-Fire, the Moon is Hé-Water, the wind is Vau-Air, and the nurse is Hé

¹³ For this reason, works of this nature make excellent oracles. The same *I Ching* hexagram may counsel one man to take a job at the slaughterhouse, and another how he may relinquish the last hidden desire of his heart that keeps his soul bound to the wheel of birth and rebirth.

(final)-Earth. The Earth in Verse Three is further designated “spirituous” as if to underscore the living presence of the Universal Agent, even in the depth of the lowest elemental world.

£

*Its power is perfect, after it has been united to
a spirituous earth.*

—*Tabula Smaragdina*, v. V

With this sentence, the entire plot of the great Hermetic play is established. The dramatis personae are as follows:

***King Yod, the Unknowable*¹⁴**

Supreme Godhead, seat of infinite power, but who has no kingdom of expression through which to exercise that power until he weds . . .

***Queen Hé, the unquenchable*¹⁵**

whose lands and possessions are everywhere and everything.

***Prince Vau . . . heir to the throne of the King*¹⁶**

the handsome first born of King Yod and Queen Hé, who, because he is one generation removed

¹⁴ Ain Soph centering to Kether, extending to Chokmah.

¹⁵ See chapter II. Queen Hé is the third Sephirah, Binah. (1-Kether-2-Chokmah-3-Binah together are referred to as the “Supernal Triad,” positioned above the abyss which separates the ideal from the actual.)

¹⁶ See chapter II. 4-Chesed, 5-Geburah, 6-Tiphareth, 7-Netzach, 8-Hod, and 9-Yesod (but centered in Tiphareth)—the Macrocosm.

from the infinite power of his Father, is prevented from living in the royal palace and instead sets up a principality in the macrocosmic countryside.

Princess Hé-final¹⁷ . . . heir to the throne of the Queen

The beautiful, but naive sister of Prince Vau, who, because she is two generations removed from the King and Queen, has been stricken with a severe case of amnesia, and is completely ignorant of her royal birthright and her relationship with Prince Vau. She is hopelessly insecure and thoroughly identifies with her sorrowful microcosmic status. She is only vaguely aware of the greater macrocosmic principality. Sometimes in reveries she dreams of meeting a handsome prince who will lift her from her life of drudgery, but most of her time is spent working as an actress in an endless loop of soap-opera re-runs.

Obviously we are poor Princess Hé-final. But residing within the gross layers of each of us is a perfect portion of supreme deity (as a matter of fact this little piece of God stuff is our true identity). Human beings are unique test tubes containing an incongruous mixture of the highest high and the lowest low. We are the “spirituous earth” spoken of in The Emerald Tablet.

The Holy Guardian Angel is, of course, Prince Vau, and Verse Five reveals to us that he needs the Princess as much as the she needs him! *[T]he power is perfect*

¹⁷ See chapter II. Princess-Hé final is Malkuth, the tenth and last Sephirah. Positioned at the bottom of the middle pillar of the Tree of Life, it is the reflection of a reflection (9-Yesod) of a reflection (6-Tiphareth) of supreme godhead (1-Kether).

after it has been united with spirituous earth. The only way Princess Hé-final can escape the endless curtain calls of incarnations is to marry Prince Vau, and the only way Prince Vau can regain his birthright as a King is to make Princess Hé-final his bride. When this is accomplished *the power is perfect.* Prince makes Princess pregnant—making her the mother-Queen—making him the Father-King. Just as it took “two to tango” (Yod & Hé) to initiate creation/involution, so, too, it takes “two to tango” (Vau & Hé-final) to begin the assent/evolution back to godhead.

§

*Separate that spirituous earth from the dense
or crude earth by means of a gentle heat, with
much attention.*

—*Tabula Smaragdina*, v. VI

At this point the aspirant might well ask, “If my Holy Guardian Angel needs me so much, why doesn’t it just swoop down, pick me up and drag me off to some heavenly fertility rite?” The reason is simple. Your H.G.A. is stuck in place because *you* are hoarding the stash of spirituous Earth! You, and you alone, can extract a usable portion of this precious commodity from yourself and get it to your Angel. To do this, you must process yourself as though you were the primary ingredient in a chemistry experiment, and separate the subtle spirituous earth from your dense, crude earth. When the subtle fire of the spirituous earth is released, it ascends and burns through the membrane, separating the micro-

cosm and the macrocosm, and igniting your Angel to action.

I won't argue that this sounds like the plot of a cheap science fiction novel, and for good reason, for it is indeed the underlying truth of the mythological scaffolding of Western civilization from the "fall of man" to the Star Wars Trilogy.

One cannot achieve the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel by blindly following the procedures outlined in a book. As detailed as Abramelin's instructions are, they provide us only with an elaborate formula of invocation. In more modern times, Aleister Crowley distilled and fine-tuned the Abramelin formula in his masterwork, *Liber Samekh*. While I certainly do not wish to downplay the importance of these classic texts, I must voice my belief that most successful invocations of the H.G.A. are executed by individuals who have not performed either of the above rituals. Indeed, I would even go so far as to wager that most K of C'ers have never heard the word Hermeticism, nor would they consider themselves aspirants, initiates, or magicians. Why is the success rate so high among these "non-professional" mystics? Is the macrocosm prejudiced against those of us who study the spiritual road map before starting the trip? In a way, yes, but not because we are too rational or analytical, but because all too often we simply aren't *romantic* enough.

The Sixth Verse of The Emerald Tablet tells us the spirituous earth is separated from the dense or crude earth—*by means of a gentle heat, with much attention*. This gentle heat is Love, and, as anyone who has ever been in love will tell you, in matters of the heart, the mind often just gets in the way. It does not take a scholar to fall desperately in love. To generate the heat necessary to separate the spirituous earth from the

dense earth, the primary skill you need to possess is the ability to be agonizingly lovesick for the Angel. With the pure intensity of an adolescent who obsessively fantasizes a romantic encounter with a movie star or rock idol, you must physically, emotionally, and spiritually yearn for your Angel's touch. Every act of life must become an act of devotion to your beloved. You groom yourself so as to be attractive to your Angel; you sleep so you may dream of your Angel; you surround yourself with tokens and symbols reminiscent of your Angel.

The Hindus call this aspect of the holy science, Bahkti yoga, union with god by means of devotion, and consider it to be the fastest, most direct route to enlightenment. The flame of devotion can be enkindled toward any object of worship. It does not matter if the beloved is called Krishna, or Shiva, or Christ, or Fred. If devotion is offered with perfect, one-pointed ardor (*with great attention*) union can be achieved.¹⁸ No religion, philosophy, cult, fraternity, or school of thought has yet cornered the market on falling hopelessly in love.

The human life cycle presents us with a frustrating challenge. In our youth (before the advent of responsibilities, regrets, painful memories, and spiritual cynicism) we find it quite easy to achieve this one-pointed devotion. But the roaring hormonal flame of youthful devotion is far from the "gentle heat" required for this delicate operation. Also, the juvenile attention span is so short that we don't give *great attention* to anything for any significant length of time. Hopefully, as mature

¹⁸ This experience of Krishna or Christ consciousness is said to open and activate the Anahata (heart) chakra of the human psychic body. This center corresponds to the sixth Sephirah (Tiphareth on the Tree of Life), the focal point of the macrocosm and abode of the Holy Guardian Angel.

adults, we have become disciplined enough to have conquered the great attention part of the equation, but for many of us, the winds of the cold, cruel world have extinguished all but the pilot light of our devotional hearth.

Keeping this in mind, some of the more curious aspects of Abra-Melin's instructions make more sense. The magician should be over 25 years of age, but less than 50. He¹⁹ must be sufficiently set in life to afford to retire from the mundane world for six consecutive months, in which time he is to have only the minimum contact with the outside world. If he be married, he can continue with the moderate exercise of his husbandly duties, but whether married or single, everything must be done to withdraw from the world of matter. Strict rules of diet, and a regimen of daily devotional observances are recommended, not as magical oblations but simply to focus the mind toward the object of the operation. After two months, the daily routine of prayers, confessions, and devotions is intensified to help further magnify the magician's longing for the Angel. For the last two months, the activities are yet again intensified. The magician becomes totally obsessed with desire for the Angel and is perpetually enflamed with prayer. At the end of six months, at the climax of an elaborately prepared ceremony, the magician is at last received by the Angel. Abraham the Jew's

¹⁹ Abraham the Jew made no attempt to be sensitive to feelings of a gender-neutral 20th century. And even though it is likely that he never dreamed that a woman would be interested in the *Sacred Magic* or related subjects, he gives no indication that the operation cannot be performed by members of either sex. It is also very clear that the projected gender of the H.G.A. is a matter of personal attraction and transcends all boundaries of human sexuality.

reverent description of this moment is reminiscent of the ecstatic writings of Saint Teresa or Solomon's Song of Songs, and leaves the reader with no doubt as to the authenticity of the experience.

ζ

In great measure it ascends from the earth up to heaven, and descends again, new born, on the earth, and the superior and the inferior are increased in power.

—*Tabula Smaragdina*, v. VII

The Seventh Verse describes the process we have just discussed; the subtle fire of the spirituous earth is released by the aspirant's fervor; it ascends from the microcosmic plane of Malkuth and vivifies the Holy Guardian Angel in Tiphareth, who then descends to unite with, and transform, the magician. Magician and Angel are each metamorphosed—in actuality they become a single new entity.

Abra-Melin instructs the newly *H.G.A.ized* magician to intimately commune with the Angel for a period of three days, after which, under the Angel's guidance, the four great Princes of evil, Lucifer, Leviatan, Satan, and Belial are to be summoned and an oath of unquestioning obedience is demanded of them. On the following day, the magician is to summon the eight Sub-Princes; Astarot, Magot, Asmodee, Belzebud, Oriens, Paimon, Arifton, and Amaimon, and extract from them the same pledge of service. The next day the evil spirits under the command of the eight Sub-Princes are conjured and subdued, and so on, and so on, until all of the

minions of hell have appeared before the angel-glorified magician and surrendered any inclination of sovereignty they may have imagined they had over his person.

Isn't it curious that after six months of rigorous labor to make oneself holy enough to spiritually unite with the Holy Guardian Angel, the first thing your celestial mentor requires you to do is deal with the denizens of the infernal regions? Why is the very first act after successfully taking the first major step toward godhood the conjuration of evil spirits? A clue may be found in the second half of Verse Seven of The Emerald Tablet.

The magician does not operate in a vacuum. Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is literally an event of cosmic proportion. All levels of consciousness and existence are enriched by the balance the magician has reestablished in his or her quadrant of the universe. However, it is not only the heavenly angels who rejoice at the return of the prodigal child. *[T]he superior and the inferior are increased in power.* The spirits of the infernal abodes also feel an injection of new power on this haloed occasion. And if the magician doesn't act fast to harness this new energy it will overtake and destroy him or her the instant the afterglow of the Angel's presence begins to wane.

It is not my intention in this place to embark upon a lengthy oration upon the character or even the relative existence of infernal spirits.²⁰ Let us simply advance what momentum remains in this little essay, and view them as the inhabitants of the lowest sub-levels of the microcosm—disorganized and fragmented pieces of energy which, when properly directed, are responsible

²⁰ See chapter VII, *Demons Are Our Friends*.

for doing all the heavy work in the universe. However, like circus tigers, they have the nasty habit of tearing apart and eating anyone whose skill, courage, and concentration is not up to the task of caring for them properly.

Let's look at this aspect of the Abra-Melin operation in corporate terms. You are a talented shop foreman (magician) who has succeeded in recruiting and training a band of wild and undisciplined workers from the worst part of town (infernal spirits). Under your strict guidance, this roughneck crew succeeds in boosting the factory's production to such high levels that your good work is brought to the attention of the company president (God) who introduces you to his beautiful daughter (H.G.A.) with whom you fall head over heels in love. Soon your tenacity, charm, and the unique ability to lick your own eyebrows wins the heart of the boss's daughter, and she marries you and has you promoted to an upper-middle management position. Meanwhile, back in the shop, your old crew of workers are leaderless and restless. The lunch truck has stopped coming by and they sit around all day and night with nothing to do but abuse the heavy machinery and think about how you let them down. Abra-Melin in his wisdom saw this scenario coming. His instructions are explicit. Instead of ignoring the infernal spirits, your new bride and you go back to the shop the minute the honeymoon is over. You introduce her and explain she is the boss's daughter, and that they are now working directly for both of you in a new and more responsible capacity, adding that if they remain loyal you will continue to promote them even as you are promoted.

Admittedly the analogy is a silly one, but I think you get the idea.

η

Thou shalt by this means possess the glory of the whole world, and therefore all obscurity shall flee away from thee.

—*Tabula Smaragdina, v. VIII*

Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian brings with it clarity of vision and the realization of the central purpose of one's life. It does not guarantee an end to your troubles. On the contrary, once you have become focused on the real reason you have incarnated, all thoughts and actions that do not advance that primary purpose become potentially quite dangerous. At this point in your spiritual career there is no vacation from the Great Work. Any deviation from the path recoils with the same mad energy as a gyroscope knocked from its base. This is not to say that one has to lose one's sense of humor or stop having fun. No artificial moral imperative should motivate the aspirant's purity of purpose other than the driving desire not to waste precious time and resources.

θ

This is the potent force of all force, for it will overcome everything subtile, and penetrate everything solid.

—*Tabula Smaragdina, v. IX*

Until now I have talked about the experience of the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian

Angel as if it were a linear event, taking place in time and space (*before Knowledge and Conversation you're a complete jerk; after you get your Angel, mosquitoes won't bite you, etc.*), but the simple truth is it is no such thing at all. For the Universal Agent there is no "was" or "will be"—there is only *is!*

The microcosm already *is* in perfect alignment
with the macrocosm.

Your H.G.A. already *is* one with you.

Hé-final already *is* one with Vau.

Hé already *is* united with Yod.

The apparent descent of spirit into matter is just an illusion of digressive defects in perception, a cascade of consciousness, each level forgetful of the level just above it. Initiatory landmarks, such as the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel aren't steps upon a ladder, rather they are shifts of consciousness—awakenings. You could say the rest of the universe has already pulled its act together and is just waiting for you to wake up to the fact.

The potent force of all force spoken of in Verse Nine is already flowing quite happily throughout the cosmos. The fact that the ancients were aware that it could overcome everything subtle, and penetrate everything solid is an astounding prehistoric venture into the realm of quantum mechanics. The nature of matter is still unknown. At the subatomic level, its basic units simultaneously behave like particles *and* waves, but are neither. Physicists won't even commit themselves to confirming that matter definitely exists, but only that as a mathematical probability it possesses a *tendency* to exist. The divine alchemy of The Emerald Tablet of Hermes reaches this deeply into the heart of existence.

1

*In this manner the world was created, but the
arrangements to follow this road are hidden.*

—*Tabula Smaragdina*, v. X

As we near the end of this chapter, The Emerald Tablet leaves us with mysteries. The enigmatic choice of words of the Tenth Verse teases us, not with a hidden road, but with the hidden details of a journey. The road is revealed in the First Verse, and the alchemical process by which we equip ourselves for travel are admirably set forth in the verses that follow. Why then are *the arrangements to follow this road* hidden? Perhaps because the journey is different for each of us.

Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is a most intensely personal experience. It is almost impossible to share the details of your angelic relationship with another person, because, in all likelihood, he or she will not recognize your personal pantheon of images, or the nuances of your unique spiritual vocabulary that make the experience real to you. My angel might scare the pants off of you. It would be the height of presumption (and ignorance) for anyone to judge the validity of another's experience, or impose their vision on you. I have been assailed by friends (and others who should know better) and informed that *their* angel had an urgent message for me!

The above comments should also be applied to all fields of spiritual exploration. One of the major shortcomings of guided meditations and pathworking is the insistence by misguided group leaders that everyone "sees" standardized images in each path or Sephirah.

Discarding your own visions and allowing your psyche to be programmed by those of another individual or group is the fastest way I can think of to become spiritually crippled. *The arrangements to follow this road are hidden*, so be extremely cautious of those who would insist that they can show you the way.

K

*For this reason I am called Chiram Telat
Machasot, one in Essence, but three in aspect.
—Tabula Smaragdina, v. XI*

I will not even attempt to project a pretense of knowledge of the Chaldean language. Any attempt on my part to appear occult, erudite, and recondite on this subject would be instantly exposed as transparently fraudulent by all serious and knowledgeable readers of this essay. The best I can do is to ask you to join me as I muse to myself about the last three verses of The Emerald Tablet of Hermes, and hope that my words will not unduly hinder your meditations on the subject.

The opening words of The Emerald Tablet names the Secret Work "Chiram Telat Mechasot"; Chiram is the Universal Agent, and the remaining words translate roughly "one in Essence, but three in aspect." In his *Lost Keys of Freemasonry*,²¹ Manly Palmer Hall states that it is believed that the Chiram of The Emerald Tablet is the earliest representation of "Hiram," the

²¹ See footnote 8, page 53.

Master Builder, grand architect of King Solomon's Temple, and the central hero of Masonic mythology.²² He goes on to quote an ancient and unnamed source who provides us with more clues concerning the birth of the precious spirituous earth.

Chiram can be interpreted by Qabalistic Notariqon, combining the Hebrew words Chamah (Fire), Ruach (Air), and Majim (Water). These three principles are not the elements themselves but the primitive roots of the elements.²³ The threefold Chiram is the father of the four elemental building blocks of nature, fire, water, air, and earth, and broods in its unmoved state as the primal electrical fire, but when it moves it manifests as visible light. When focused and agitated, this light produces heat and literally becomes corporeal fire. Combined with the humidity produced by its three aspects (primitive fire, water, and air) the Chiram solidifies like clotted blood, to bring forth the material universe and Earth. And, just like blood, the spirituous earth entombs the living and perfect image of the Creator in every cell.

λ

In this Trinity is hidden the wisdom of the whole world.

—Tabula Smaragdina, v. XII

²² Depending upon Hebrew dialect and pronunciation marks H and Ch (ח and ח) can both be pronounced the same.

²³ See *The Sepher Yetzira*, verses 10, 11, 12. Carlo Suarès (Boston: Shambhala, 1976), pp. 73–74.

The alchemical formula of creation is a process of divine incest. How could it be otherwise? An inscrutable God, whose very existence and potential to create is owed to Its threefold nature exercises the three aspects of Its being, thereby producing three *conditions* (children). The children combine with each other in various permutations and the Chiram, aroused by some unknown motivation, mates with It's compounded offspring and injects them with enough concentrated God sperm to initiate the creative process and fertilize all levels of being and consciousness, right down to the material universe and you and me.

By distilling the divine essence from our spirituous earth and achieving Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, we take the first step in reversing the alchemical process of creation and the inevitable return to our original estate.



*It is ended now, what I have said concerning
the effects of the Sun.*

—*Tabula Smaragdina, v. XIII*

With this curious epilogue, the Emerald Tablet of Hermes comes to an end. We discover that the great alchemical processes described in the previous verses are “the effects of the Sun.”

As I will discuss in Chapter IV, the Sun is the god of our solar system, and solar energy literally created life as we know it. This energy, this vivifying light and heat, is merely the by-product of the marriage of the nuclei of two atoms hydrogen, the lightest and most com-

mon element in the universe. "Marriage" is not an accurate description of the event. The two nuclei are actually fused by the titanic forces of gravity and heat, to become the nucleus of a new and heavier element, helium (so named because it was first discovered on the Sun).

Likewise, Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel is not a marriage but a fusion. 1 is not added to another to become a 2; 1 is fused to 1 to become a new, independent and self-radiating 1. In the truest sense of the word, the magician and the Angel become a Star.

*Is not Mercury the Sun-God, when hidden
during the Night, among the souls of the
dead? Hail unto Thee, Trismegistus, Hail unto
Thee!*²⁴

The Secret Work Chiram Telat Mechasot
(Chiram, the Universal Agent,
one in Essence,
but three in
aspect.)

²⁴ Rite of Mercury, the Rites of Eleusis, *The Equinox Vol. I. No. 6* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), p. 104.

Chapter
IV

THE PRECESSION OF THE
EQUINOXES AND THE
METAMORPHOSIS
OF THE GODS

*Now I shall tell of things that change,
New being out of old:
Since you, O Gods, created mutable
arts and Gifts, give me the voice
To tell the shifting story of the world
From its beginning to the present hour.*

—Ovid
*The Metamorphoses*¹

¹ Translated by Horace Gregory (New York: Viking, 1958),
p. 31.

IV

I CONFESS THAT I AM OLD ENOUGH TO REMEMBER with poignant nostalgia the golden age of hippiedom (1966–1969). My wife and I *tuned in* to the Beatles, vegetarianism, yoga, astrology and Eastern mysticism, *turned on* to the softer varieties of chemical mind expansion, and *dropped out* of college, the military-industrial complex, and any involvement with the social and spiritual formulae of the previous generation. We found ourselves thrust into the vortex of a profound and universal polarization of perception. Artists and young people were the first to be affected. Either you saw that the world had just changed radically, or you didn't. If you saw it, you were seized with the realization of limitless possibilities—a world at peace, the eradication of disease and hunger, space travel, spiritual enlightenment—all seemed possible and within our reach. Those that didn't see it, including family members, politicians, and movie stars, were seen as dangerous troglodytes, collaborating with the slave-masters and worshipping false old gods of greed, violence, and self-induced ignorance. Many and colorful were the variations within this symphony of change, but Bob Dylan's raspy little voice articulated its major theme: *For the times they are a-changin'.*

There was no shortage of theories proposing to explain this cultural phenomenon. The government blamed

communist agitation. The military blamed the liberal government; school administrators blamed television and the compassionate child-raising advice of Dr. Benjamin Spock; right-wing extremists blamed an international Jewish conspiracy, fluoridated water, and Elvis Presley; Elvis Presley blamed the Beatles; and Christian zealots from nearly every band of the ecumenical spectrum proclaimed that the eagerly awaited universal holocaust prophesied in the Bible was at last at hand. Finally, with a cultural irony that perhaps could only have occurred in 20th-century America, a hit Broadway show about hippies revealed the cosmic cause of this manifestation of euphoric optimism and wild unrest—the dawning of the Age of Aquarius.

World events of the decades following the turbulent 60s have proven that we were a bit premature in our expectations of a millennial utopia, but a broad overview of human history and cultural evolution reveals that we are, indeed, living in an era of radical change. Looking farther back into recorded history, it is possible to see other such transitional periods. Flashing at regular intervals along the time-line of history, these brief sparks ignite the atmosphere of the age and define its dominant spiritual, intellectual, and social formulae.

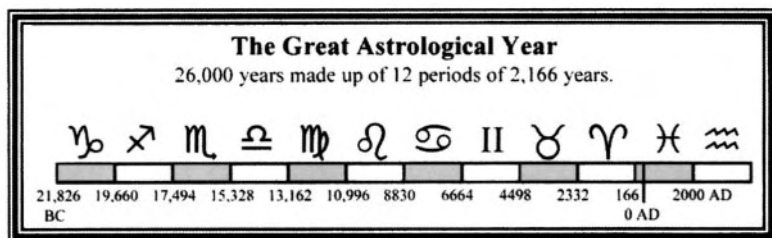


Figure 5. Astrologers differ on the exact dates of the Astrological Ages, but there is general consensus that the Age of Aquarius begins shortly before or after the year 2000 A.D.

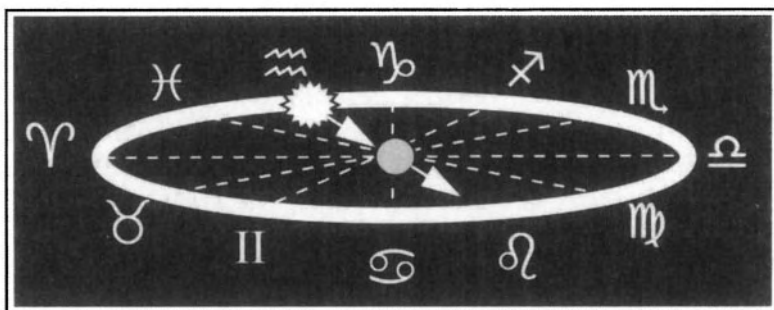


Figure 6. The diagram crudely illustrates the relative position of the Sun and Earth (geocentric) on the Vernal Equinox in the Age of Aquarius. Two thousand one hundred sixty-six years earlier, the Sun occupied the sign of Pisces; 2,166 years before that, the sign of Aries, etc. It is important to observe that when the Sun is “in” Aquarius (from the Earth’s point of view), the Earth is “in” Leo (from the Sun’s point of view). Figuratively speaking, when the Sun is in Aquarius, both the Sun and the Earth are “shish-kabobed” upon the Aquarius-Leo pole. The characteristics of each zodiacal sign are colored by the influence of its polar opposite.

Landmarks along the time-line and the names of the ages vary depending upon one’s scientific or spiritual discipline. The scale of the archaeologist is marked by the Ice Age, Stone Age, Bronze Age, Copper Age, and Iron Age. The sociologist thinks in terms of the Dark Age, Renaissance, and Age of Enlightenment. The Greeks and Hindus sang of a Golden Age (Satya Yuga) of perfect bliss and harmony when humans walked with the Gods; a Silver Age (Treta Yuga) of justice and enlightenment; a Bronze Age (Dwapara Yuga) of law and enforced morality; and an Iron Age (Kali Yuga) of violence and moral degeneracy. To the student of Western Hermeticism a most significant time-line of the ages is determined by the relative movement of the heavenly bodies.

Since at least the third millennium B.C., Vedic astrologers were aware of the spherical shape of the Earth, the law of gravity, and the heliocentricity of the solar system. Centuries of observations also led them to surmise that our Sun and solar system were revolving in an elliptical path about a dual Sun, or some other inscrutable point in the galaxy. By observing the relative position of the Sun against the backdrop of the zodiacal band at the vernal equinox, it was discovered that the Sun seems to fall a bit short² of its starting position of the previous year, resulting in the loss of approximately one full degree every seventy-two years. Consequently the Sun appears to move backward across the belt of the zodiac at the approximate rate of one zodiac sign every two thousand one hundred sixty years.³ Because the ancient observations took place at the vernal equinox, this phenomenon of retrograde movement was named the "Precession of the Equinoxes."

During its twelve-month yearly journey, the Sun moves forward through the zodiac, whose signs serve as symbols of the *seasonal* changes upon the Earth. During the 26,000 years of the Great Year, the Sun moves backward through the zodiac, whose signs are symbols of *spiritual* "seasons" that are the various stages of the evolving consciousness of humanity. It is the momentum and direction of this spiritual growth that is the

² This phenomenon is actually caused by an extremely slow wobble of the Earth's axis, which, like a spinning top, traces circles in space with its north and south poles.

³ Astrologers disagree upon the exact length of the astrological ages, giving estimates ranging from 2,000 years to 2,400 years. For the purpose of this essay, I will use a commonly accepted modern calculation of 2,166 years. This results in a Great Astrological Year of 26,000 years (12 periods of 2,166.66) in which the entire zodiacal belt is traversed.

focus of this chapter, for it is, in truth, this movement that animates the metamorphoses of the gods.

PANTHEON OF ONE?

At the risk of being labeled a solar-chauvinist, I will affirm a fact that any astrologer (who is not suffering some terminal form of parochial denial) must grudgingly admit to be true. The Sun is the god of the zodiac. Its first and most important god-like duty is to simply provide the aspect of *position* in a time-space continuum. Without this point of reference there would be no belt of the zodiac, because there would be no fixed point from which to project one; no *time* whose fragile existence requires a point of triangulation from which to observe the relative movement of the heavenly bodies; and most importantly—no us!

Solar energy (either from our own Sun or from earlier generation ancestors) literally created the Earth, Moon, and our planetary neighbors. The conversion of sunlight creates and sustains all life. Truly, in our little corner of the universe, the Sun is not only the symbol of a god, it *is* a god. This is not to say the Moon, the planets, individual stars, the fixed stars, asteroids, comets, black holes, and all other as yet undiscovered celestial dignitaries are not also gods. But, for those of us upon Earth, the influence of these other deities can only be ultimately realized through the agency of (or relationship with) the Sun.⁴

⁴ The reader may argue correctly that the Moon and the various planets, as they traverse the houses and signs, also serve to focus the zodiacal energy upon the Earth. While this is true, it must be re-

LOCAL PANTHEONS

There is abundant evidence to demonstrate that since prehistoric times the Sun was venerated as deity by cultures around the world. More common, however, was the worship of a pantheon of goddesses and gods who at first represented an assortment of natural powers and agencies relevant to the daily lives of the population of the local geographic area. Our Stone Age ancestors had thunder gods, gods of the hunt, and gods of fertility, who in later years would be called Zeus, Artemis, and Aphrodite, who (just a few hundred miles away and a handful of years later) would be called Jove, Diana and Venus. Gods such as these are not destroyed with the passing of each age, just as the Sun is not destroyed as it passes from sign to sign in the Precession of the Equinoxes. Rather, the gods undergo shifts in character and importance within the local pantheon. This metamorphosis is also illustrative of changes which accompany major societal and geopolitical upheavals, such as when the goddess of one culture becomes merely the wife or mother of her former consort or the male god of the tribe, city, or nation which has conquered her devotees in battle.

For the ceremonial magician, each god can provide a subjective and easy-to-visualize image of a specific aspect of his or her own complex psycho-spiritual nature. To enter into a working relationship with a god (invocation, evocation, exaltation, prayer, etc.) is to contact, ac-


membered that each of these satellite bodies owes its individual identity as a luminary, and its position and orbit of influence, to the Sun. In the final analysis, all lunar and planetary activity is an aspect of solar dominion.

tivate, assimilate, or direct the particular facet of one's own being personified by the god. As we have observed, the characters of the gods are mutated and change (sometimes subtly, sometimes radically) with each step in the evolving consciousness of our race. In order to operate with the maximum efficiency and safety when invoking a god of any pantheon, the magician must be unambiguously in tune with the most recent shift. Zeus, Artemis, and Aphrodite (and the gods of all ages and cultures) are alive and well in the Age of Aquarius, but the means by which they exercise their powers upon the modern psyche differ significantly from those of their Bronze Age incarnations. The modern magician who wishes to invoke the strong and aggressive presence of Mars might find himself or herself emotionally and ethically unprepared to handle a manifestation of drunken blood-lust which was the natural calling card of Homer's god Ares.

To better understand the momentum of change along the time-line of the astrological ages, let's take a brief look at just a few of the anthropological, cultural, and spiritual landmarks that characterized the historic epochs important to Western Hermeticism.



AGE OF LEO (10,996 B.C. TO 8830 B.C.)

Pole of Ω—

The end of the last Ice Age coincided with the beginning of the Age of Leo. Much earlier, however, starting about 35,000 B.C., Homo Sapiens began displacing the Neanderthals as late hunting and plant-collecting people spread throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and later into Germany and Denmark. By the beginning of

the Age of Leo, advanced hunters of continental Europe were fashioning statuettes of a fertility "goddess," but worship of animals and the magick of the hunt appears to have been the dominant form of spiritual expression. The tribal "hero-king," killed in the hunt, was venerated as a god (and perhaps eaten) along with the slain animal. This way of life continued in many localities well into the later ages. The hero whose life is sacrificed for the survival of his people is certainly among the earliest gods of the prehistoric pantheon. As "consort" to the Great Goddess, we will see his position and duties change as the ages progress.



AGE OF CANCER (8830 B.C. TO 6664 B.C.)

Pole of ☿—♊

This period has been characterized as the Neolithic Revolution, for humanity was beginning to exercise a willed control of nature. In the Near East several varieties of plants and animals were domesticated. In many areas, the nomadic life of the hunt was replaced by the establishment of villages and towns necessary for the organized cultivation of crops. Crafts of the household, such as spinning of textiles and pottery-making developed late in the Cancerian period.

The town of Jericho, where decapitation of the dead and burial within the house was common, had a population of 2,000 by 8000 B.C. Crete was first settled in this period. In both locations, carved female images and phallic effigies (remnants of fertility cults) have been unearthed.



AGE OF GEMINI (6664 B.C. TO 4498 B.C.)

Pole of ♊—♋

In Mesopotamia the first settlement in the lower Sumerian plain was established in 6000 B.C. Advances in irrigation technology and other agricultural improvements during this period contributed to a proliferation of settlements, and new cities swelled in population. Standardization of languages⁵ (a primary aspect of Mercurial Gemini) led to the development of trade and industry.

Even amidst the preoccupations of urban life, religion appears to have still been focused upon the mystery of fertility—fertility of humans, and fertility of crops, domesticated animals, and beasts of the hunt. During this era, the figure of the Great Goddess changed dramatically, taking on a threefold image of maiden, mother, and crone. Furthermore, her male consort (the sacrificial victim) was pictured riding a bull or leopard, symbolic of the animal nature harnessed, but not tamed. As the astrological Age of Taurus was dawning, the spreading horns of the bull became the universal symbol of the Goddess' sacrificial lover.



AGE OF TAURUS (4498 B.C. TO 2332 B.C.)

Pole of ♉—♊

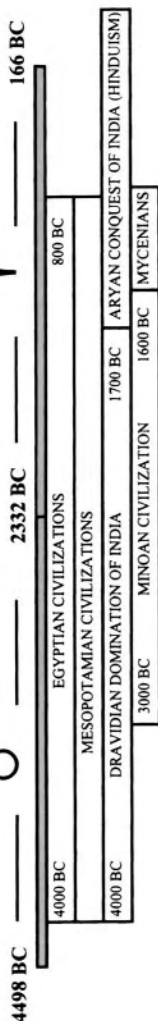
The age of Taurus can truly be called the birth of civilization, for it presided over the creation of the cultures

⁵ Modern research points to the existence (c. 5000 B.C.) of a root language (Proto Indo-European) from which the dominant languages of the West have developed.

Age of Taurus



Age of Aries



Age of Aries

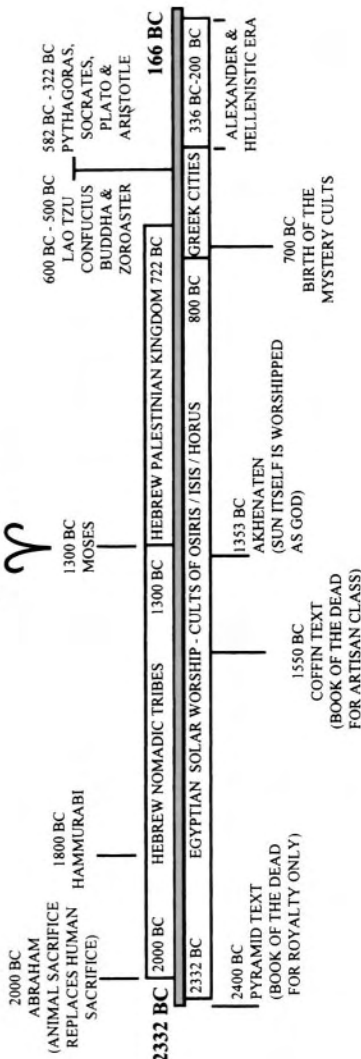


Figure 7. Taurus-Aries, Aries Timelines.

that would lay the foundations of Western thought, technology, and religion. Here the symbols and meanings of the zodiacal ages become more comprehensible to the modern student, for it was during this period that the art of astrology reached a zenith, and the twelve signs familiar to us today were given their names and attributes. This was also the time when the archetypes of what we think of today as the "pagan" pantheons began to take recognizable form.

This period saw a social/sexual revolution in the hierarchy of the religious cults. The command the Great Goddess held upon the racial imagination began to wane as it became more and more obvious that the fertility of her priestess (and consequently the Earth) depended ultimately upon the potency of her consort. Arrangements were negotiated to postpone the regular sacrifice of the male consort by substituting a surrogate victim (often a virgin boy) each year in his place. Understandably, the consort came to enjoy the idea of not being ceremonially dispatched in the fields at the end of his tenure and eventually the matriarchal establishments were overthrown altogether and replaced by formerly subjugated males (whose emblem was the bull).

Figure 7 shows that the Age of Taurus saw the birth of the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Minoan, and Indian civilizations. The pantheons of local gods of these and other cultures developed along uncannily parallel lines, but despite the popularity of the local deities, the predominant religious icon remained the bull. In Egypt, the adoration of the bull god Apis dominated the ceremonies of public worship for over a thousand years. Privately, however, the priests of the bull cults worshipped differently.

As I pointed out earlier, when the Sun is "in" one sign (from the Earth's point of view), the Earth is "in"

the opposite sign (from the Sun's point of view). The sages of Egypt were among the first to realize that while our physical bodies are creatures of the Earth, our spiritual bodies (our real identities) are solar beings. In other words, in the Age of Taurus our physical bodies and mundane lives were influenced by the energies filtering through the Sun from Taurus, but our spiritual condition was influenced directly by the unfiltered rays of Scorpio. Keeping this in mind, it is no surprise that the same priests who publicly led the jewel-bedecked bull of Apis to his sacrifice wore upon their brows the uraeus serpent—one of the most sacred and secret symbols of Scorpio.⁶



AGE OF ARIES (2332 B.C. TO 166 B.C.)

Pole of —

The Sun is exalted in Aries, and in Egypt the great astrological Age of Aries saw the development of magnificent forms of solar worship. For over two thousand years, the cults of Osiris, Isis, and Horus embedded the passion play of the daily and yearly adventures of the Sun deeply upon the consciousness of the people, and evolved a collateral pantheon of gods and goddesses of such sublime strength and perfection that they are easily reawakened in the modern psyche. Identity with the cycles of the Sun brought with it an obsession with death and resurrection that dominated the spiritual musings of royalty⁷ early in the Age. Later in the period

⁶ The other two symbols of Scorpio are the eagle and, of course, the scorpion.

⁷ *The Book of the Dead* (Pyramid Text c. 2400 B.C.). Wallis E. A. Budge, *The Book of the Dead* (New York: Dover, 1967), p. 3.

artisans and tomb workers would become eligible for eternal life.⁸ By proper magical identification with the same divine power that is responsible for the daily and yearly rebirth of the Sun (the glorified Osiris, slain and risen) one could now assure one's own continuity of existence after death. This magical theory is precisely the same as that espoused by Christianity and scores of lesser known cults. I will discuss this subject in greater depth in the last section of this chapter.

In 1353 B.C. the pendulum of Egyptian solar worship reached its most radical swing when king Akhenaten attempted to enthrone the god Aton, the solar disk itself, as state deity and attempted to withdraw governmental support of all other cults. This move proved to be politically incorrect and a major social *faux pas*. The royal cult of Aton did not survive long after Akhenaten's death. Smenkhare, his son and immediate successor, lived to rule less than a year, and Tutankhamun, the next in line, presided over Akhenaten's denunciation. His cult was vilified and his name was obliterated from all public buildings. Soon the priests of Amoun returned "stability" to the two lands.

Mars rules Aries, and it is not surprising to observe that the major technical advances of the early Arian Age were weapons of war. This was the age of the Trojan war. Carbonized iron was the military secret that ensured the political and religious dominance of whichever army that wielded it, and until the middle of the Age of Aries, that was the Hittites. They were also the first to adapt cuneiform writing to their language which would give rise to what we now call the classical

⁸ *The Book of the Dead* (Coffin Text c. 1550 B.C.). The Egyptian Coffin Texts, by Adriaan de Buck (Chicago: The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, Oriental Institute Publications, 1935).

Greek forms of Linear A and Linear B. Spread by the dynamics of international trade, the popularity of Linear A and B would initiate the first real quantum leap of literacy the world had ever experienced.

The gods of the Age of Aries are very recognizable to the modern student. One need only read of their adventures in Homer's *Iliad* to see how the Greek pantheon had crystallized in the Hellenic soul. The Sumerian pantheon also received a face-lift when it was adopted by the Semites and an assortment of other cultures, including those which would eventually shape the remarkably resilient traditions of Judaism. Biblical scholars maintain that Abraham, the grand patriarch of the Jews, Christians, and Moslems lived approximately 2000 B.C. (at the beginning of the Age of Aries) and that Moses, the great law-giver of the same three religions lived approximately 1300 B.C.⁹ (the very middle of the Age of Aries). Whether or not there is any veracity to the historical¹⁰ existence of either of these characters it is still interesting to note the obvious parallels of astrological symbolism involved in their myths.

As I mentioned earlier, the Taurean Age was characterized in many cultures by the annual or biannual sacrifice of the male consort of the goddess/priestess. This became stylized late in the period by the substitution of a male child¹¹ in place of the consort, a practice which some authorities believe undermined the role of

⁹ See figure 7 (page 90).

¹⁰ There is little debate over the historical validity of King Hammurabi of Babylon, the great 18th-century B.C. lawgiver whose laws were given to him by the Babylonian Sun God (an early version of the Semitic Jah) and inscribed upon a basalt stele (whose shape is suspiciously suggestive of the stone tablets of Moses).

¹¹ A grim ceremony of sacrifice practiced in Bronze Age Sparta, and throughout the Italian peninsula, foreshadowed several of the land-

the goddess/priestess and led to the ascent of the male gods, and the establishment of patriarchies. The first part of this scenario is illustrated quite clearly in the biblical story of Abraham, the founding father of the great patriarchal religions.

Abraham came from "Ur of the Chaldeans"¹² (Akkadian-ruled Babylon). In obedience to his god¹³ he was about to dutifully offer up his young son Isaac as a burnt offering to the Lord when he . . .

*[L]ifted up his eyes and looked, and beheld
a ram caught in a thicket by his horns; and
Abraham went and took the ram and offered
it up for a burnt offering instead of his son
(Genesis 22, v 13).*

At the very dawn of the Age of Aries (the Ram) the primary mythological personage of the age magically modified the fundamental form of religious expression of the previous age by substituting animal sacrifice for human sacrifice. The sacrificial symbol of the previous age was the bull (animal nature harnessed, but not tamed), now the sacred victim was the ram/sheep, the symbol of the animal nature suppressed, subjugated,

mark elements of the "Stations of the Cross." To assure the future harvest and in honor of Upright Artemis, the Sacred King (a virgin adolescent boy) was tied or nailed to a sacred tree. He was then lashed with willow strips until the scourging induced involuntary erection and ejaculation. Only after the field had been fertilized with the combination of his blood and semen was the Sacred King dispatched. Jesus was also lashed, hung upon a tree, and made to issue up blood and water before the final release of death.

¹² Genesis 11, v. 28.

¹³ Genesis 22, v. 1.

and exploited by humans for sustenance, comfort, and commerce.

Also, let us not forget that in the Age of Aries the Earth and Sun were impaled upon the Aries/Libra pole (see figure 6, page 83). During this period, the influence of Libra (whose scales of justice balance the energies of its celestial neighbors Scorpio and Virgo) is particularly significant when we observe the major societal changes brought about by the introduction of *laws* and the development of formal legal institutions. Babylon's great law-giver Hammurabi reigned during the early years of the age. Moses, by tradition, descended Mount Sinai with the Ten Commandments at the zenith of the Age of Aries. It is most interesting to observe that by 166 B.C., when the Aries/Libra era ended, the entire Western world was ruled by the iron laws of Rome and policed by the greatest military organization the world had ever seen.

The last five hundred years of the Age of Aries experienced such an explosion of scientific, cultural, and religious energy that 2,500 years later we are still reeling from the impact. Karl Jaspers,¹⁴ the great 20th-century existentialist, called this era the "axial period," a time of great transition in human consciousness when the mythological worldview gave way to philosophical speculation. From one very important point of view, this was the death of the gods. Deity was now thought of in terms of a unified dynamism. In Palestine, the prophets Elijah, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah charged the Semitic world with a wild combination of mysticism and terror. The Upanishads appeared in India, and

¹⁴ (1883–1969).

in Greece the golden age of the city-states brought forth the intellects and philosophies that continue to nourish the Western soul. Within two hundred short years, Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all lived and taught. Aristotle's student, Alexander the Great, would conquer and Hellenize the world. In a single century between 600 B.C. and 500 B.C., Lao Tzu, Confucius, Buddha, and Zoroaster walked the Earth.¹⁵



AGE OF PISCES (166 B.C. TO A.D. 2000)

Pole of)(—♊

A Hellenistic fable relates how Aphrodite and her child Eros were pursued by the devil god, Typhon. In order to escape destruction, they transformed themselves into two fishes, tied their tails together, and hid themselves beneath the waters of the river Euphrates. This charming little tale is a remarkable allegory of an age that would attempt to suppress natural and erotic love, but would only succeed in driving it deeper into the stream of our subconscious mind. True to style, this suppressed love would resurface in the very middle of the Pisces-Virgo Age as *amor*, courtly love, and the cult of the Virgin.

Although it is difficult for us to observe when examining the prehistoric periods, each age begins with a level of social stress which triggers intense spiritual polarization. One could almost say that, with the dawn of each new age, some people become more subtle and en-

¹⁵ Noted therapist, R. D. Potter, upon examining the time-line of the lives of these venerables observed, "My god! All these guys could have had the same shrink!"

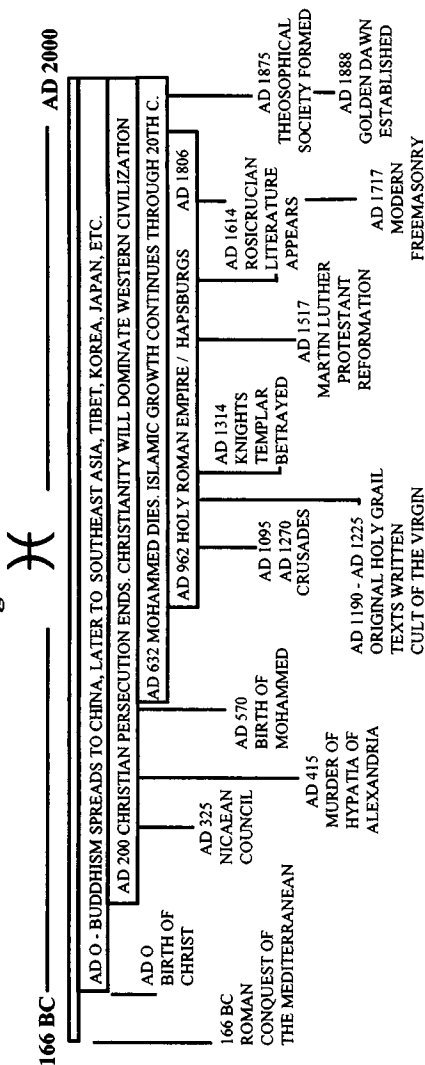


Figure 8. Pisces Time-line.

lightened, and the remaining idiots figure out better ways to make the world a more unpleasant place. With the passing of each age, we become better and worse at the same time. The gods inevitably reflect both extremes. For the Piscean Age mystic, the concept of sacrifice became more abstract and stylized, a sacrifice of one's self. In many cults bread, grain, or wine was substituted for the animal victim. However, for the socially, politically, or spiritually disenfranchised, the new age intensified the cycle of drudgery and brutality. Subtlety was pounded out of the souls of the masses and they yearned nostalgically for a Neolithic savior-king—a flesh and blood human sacrifice. The new gods of Christianity were to supply them with both.

The Age of Pisces dawned with a golden promise of world order and enlightenment. As brutal as the Roman conquest appears to 20th-century sensitivities, it served to spread technology, literacy, and a higher standard of living throughout the Mediterranean world. Remarkably respectful of the gods of vanquished nations, the Romans adopted the various local deities and placed them in the Roman pantheon, side-by-side with their gods of state.

In Greece and elsewhere, the free-form revels of the orgiastic cults of the previous age were fine-tuned and institutionalized into the degree structure of the mystery schools. The Eleusinian Mysteries, which had flourished throughout the better part of the Age of Aries, still attracted thousands of candidates well into the Christian era. For over a millennium its great passion play, the rape of Persephone, mirrored in its sublime perfection the changing roles of the gods of antiquity.

The basic solar myth crystalized in the liturgies of scores of religions whose object of worship and way to

salvation was a "dying god." Most notable among these was Mithraism, the great Persian mystery religion. Wildly popular at the dawn of the Piscean Age, its appeal was truly universal, and welcomed members of every stratum of society. Slaves, nobles, farmers, merchants, and soldiers all were washed clean by the blood of the slain bull—all protected after death by their solar deity—all brethren and equal in the subterranean Mithraic temple. Spread by the armies of Rome, Mithraism was the only living religion to seriously challenge the ascendancy of Christianity. In order to conquer this popular Sun God, the new Christian faith was forced to put forth a Sun God of its own. To do so, it had to adopt practically all the recognizable traditions and tenets of Mithraism.¹⁶

Mithraism was not the only religion to suffer brazen plagiarism at the hands of the Christian founding fathers. The parallels between pagan myths, the stories of Osiris, Horus, Tammuz, Alcestos, Dionysus, Jesus, Hesus, Crite, Krishna, Buddha, Apollo, Sakia, Quirinus, etc. are so numerous as to be laughable.¹⁷ But

¹⁶ According to tradition, Mithras' birth in a cave (on December 25) was witnessed by shepherds who were informed of the event by a host of angels. He was the mediator between God and humanity. After being washed in the blood of a sacrificed bull, the devotee was considered purified and eligible for resurrection and life eternal. By eating cakes of bread (symbolic of the divine body) and drinking consecrated wine (symbolic of the divine blood), initiates of the cult commemorated their moment of salvation. Mithras will return someday to "shepherd" the souls of the dead to a celestial heaven.

¹⁷ Jesus and Krishna were born of virgins; their births were preceded by the slaughter of all male children in the vicinity; both were crucified on a tree; their bodies pierced; both rose from the dead; Horus and Jesus both had two sisters as nurses (Isis/Nephthys and Mary/Elizabeth); were supernaturally taken to a mountain top,

let us not be too quick to condemn this pattern of religious piracy. As despicable as it appears to us today, it provides us our first good look at the mortal "dirty work" behind the metamorphosis of the gods.

As romantic and unlikely as it may sound, there appears to have actually been a body of individuals who (at least at first) were profoundly in tune with the new magical formula of the dawning age. However, unlike the god-makers of the past who altered and amended the details of popular myths to more accurately reflect the changing realities of *local* politics and religion, these adepts (or those inspired by them) made a conscious effort to gather up and funnel the spiritual momentum of every significant religious movement extant, and then focus that energy upon one new and ecumenical god. It did not seem too far-fetched an enterprise. After all, the world was unified geo-politically by one government in Rome, why could there not now be one universal (catholic) religion?

Ambitiously, the new faith attempted to distill the essence of scores of popular religious passion plays (usually solar allegories) and squeezed the attributes and powers of the gods of all ages into two (later three) personages:

The Exoteric Piscean Pantheon

- *Ptah, Amoun, Osiris, El, Baal, Zeus, Jupiter, Jove* and, indeed, all the male dictators of the gods would now be called Jehovah, the Father, and identified with the jealous and wrathful lawgiver of the Hebrew mythol-

tempted and confronted by a supreme adversary (Set/Satan); Krishna, Jesus, and Horus all ascend bodily into Heaven (Jesus and Horus even do it from a "mount of olives!").

ogy. Like the sacred kings of the late Taurean period, he would assure the harvest, save his people (and perpetuate his own life) by sacrificing his first-born son.

- *Horus, Dionysus, Hermes, Apollo, Krishna, Mithras, Eros, Hercules, Orpheus, Sol Invictus*, and all male offspring of a father god (and in many cases a mortal mother) who stand as the approachable mediator between humanity and the father; or who shepherd the souls of the dead to happier realms; or who officiate as the dying god whose self-sacrifice ransoms wicked humanity; or who stands in judgment of the souls of the dead, would now be called Jesus Christ. This new Son of God would be identified historically with a potentially powerful Palestinian claimant to the throne of David and with a martyred oriental ascetic, teacher and healer.
- *Isis, Hathor, Hera, Demeter, Inanna, Astarte, Ishtar, Vesta, Aphrodite, Venus* and all vestiges of the Great Goddess, would now become the Virgin Mary. Early in church history, she would receive no prayers or worship. She would be relegated to almost complete obscurity as the submissive and obedient incubator of the Christ child. Ever mindful that the god of Abraham would not tolerate any doctrine that would give even the appearance of a return to pagan matriarchy or polytheism, the church was nevertheless eventually forced to yield to racial memory and deify Mary as Mother of God and Queen of Heaven. The chaste cults of Vesta and Diana were conveniently absorbed by the convents and nunneries of Christendom. Even the Sophia, the inscrutable Gnostic goddess of wisdom, found her place (albeit concealed in the unisex

guise of the "Holy Spirit") as a full partner in the Holy Trinity.

The Piscean Magical Formula

As in every age, the magical and spiritual formula of the Age of Pisces was dictated by the perceived facts of nature. Our Piscean Age ancestors saw nature as a cycle of birth, catastrophe, and rebirth. (Ceremonial magicians will recognize this threefold concept as the basic INRI/IAO¹⁸ formula.) Still bound to the concept of sacrifice, yet willing to carry the idea to a higher spiritual octave, they adopted the ceremony of the Eucharist to allow all devotees to symbolically partake in the catastrophic sacrifice of the dying god in order to share with him his resurrection. Just as Abraham, at the dawn of the Age of Aries, is said to have modified the fundamental form of religious expression of the previous age by introducing animal sacrifice in place of human sacrifice, the Christ, at the dawn of the Age of Pisces, is credited with modifying the fundamental form of religious expression by substituting bread and wine (symbolic of the Self, the only real sacrifice) in place of the flesh and blood of an animal.

However, the spiritual subtleties of the new formula of self-sacrifice were to take a back seat to the remarkable political successes that accompanied the spread of the new faith. Just as the early adepts had hoped, their hybrid religion took over the world. Those who would inherit the helm of the church were put in the unique position of being able to custom design a re-

¹⁸ **I** - Virgo, Isis mighty mother; **N**—Scorpio, Apophis, destroyer; **R**—Sol, Osiris, slain and risen; Isis, Apophis, Osiris—**IAO**.

ligion which the Western world was already programmed to accept unquestioningly. Unfortunately, this luxury led to the formation of a religion by committee, and resulted in the creation of a body of doctrine that espoused the lowest common denominator of spiritual ideas. All other ideas, including many of the concepts that gave birth to Christianity, were labeled heretical and ruthlessly crushed. Personal mystical and visionary experiences (which were epidemic in the infant church, and which spawned the concept of the resurrected Christ in the first place) were denounced as dangerous hallucinations, satanically inspired, and impossible to substantiate. Such personal revelations served only to muddy the doctrinal waters of the new and partially crystalized church. *Blind Faith* in the historical reality of the virgin birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus became the sole act necessary for salvation, and one's continued eligibility for paradise depended upon absolute surrender to the totalitarian hierarchy of the church.

For our purposes here, I shall not dwell upon the intrigues, excesses, crimes, and atrocities that characterized the formation of the outward doctrines of the Christian church.¹⁹ Suffice to say that it contributed generously to the eventual collapse of classical civilization and engendered a nearly two-thousand-year period of enforced spiritual slumber, when direct mystical experience, spiritual exploration, and study were practiced at the risk of one's life.

This is not to deny that on and off throughout the Piscean Age there weren't glorious flashes of light. But

¹⁹ See chapter VI, *Devil Be My God*.

to avoid the stake, even the radiant string of philosopher-magi who adorned the Renaissance took absurd pains to conceal their full brilliance. Only toward the very end of the Piscean Age would the church begin to loosen its stranglehold upon the occidental soul. But the Western world had lain so long in darkness that newly awakened seekers of light found themselves far removed from the golden sources of their spiritual birthright. In order for them to unearth the true spiritual gems formed in the Age of Pisces, they were forced to explore the wisdom of the East and dig deep into the forbidden world of the Western heresies.



AGE OF AQUARIUS (A.D. 2000 TO A.D. 4166)

Pole of ♊—♋

The gods of one age become the devils of the age to follow. The priests look forward to the coming age and see only the end of the world.

Not being endowed with the gift of prophecy, I will not presume to predict the details of Aquarian Age worship. I will, nonetheless, venture to predict that the gods of the Aquarian Age will be diametrically opposed to the gods of the Age of Pisces. Already all over the world we see the decay of the repressive patriarchal establishments that have held sway for the last two thousand years. It is almost comical to see how foolish and myopic the old establishments appear when juxtaposed with the rational goals of universal human rights, the women's movement, and global environmental awareness.

I suppose it is very natural for the participants of a revolution to despise and demonize the icons of the overthrown administration. The early Christian church perpetrated the legend that, at the moment of Christ's birth, all the oracles of antiquity fell silent and that an Egyptian sailor named Thamus heard an unearthly voice call to him from the isle of Paxi announcing, "Thamus, the great god Pan is dead!"²⁰ As historically dubious as this story is, it serves to illustrate my point. Pan, who started life as the endearingly mischievous god of Thracian shepherds, eventually became the transcendent symbol of *all* the pagan gods. His ruddy complexion, horns, and cloven hooves became, in the Age of Pisces, the very image of Satan, the prince of evil.

Does this mean that Jesus Christ will become the devil of the Age of Aquarius? Probably not. But the spiritual significance of his deity will, in all likelihood, be drastically different from that expounded by the exoteric doctrines of the last two thousand years, and it will surely appear to the last vestiges of the Piscean Age establishments that the new spiritual impulse is "anti-

²⁰The "all-great Tammuz," the Babylonian Sun God who was killed by evil forces, but eventually resurrected by his mother/wife Ishtar, was worshipped throughout the Mediterranean well into the Christian era. Just as Christendom drapes its churches in black and laments the crucifixion of Jesus on Good Friday, the holy mantra *Thamus Pan-megas Tethnēce* ("the all-great Tammuz is dead!") was ceremonially chanted on the summer solstice by the devotees of Tammuz to observe the yearly death of their redeemer God and shepherd. It is far more likely that if Thamus the sailor heard anything, it was this well-known chant, for the worship of Pan remained alive and well for two centuries after this alleged epitaph.

Jehovah, anti-Allah, anti-Christ" and the gods of the new age are devils.

After years of isolation on the *amanita muscaria*-rich isle of Patmos, Saint John the Divine wrote down his vision of the awesome and terrible events which were to characterize the end of his Age. This *revelation* was peopled with many strange and colorful spiritual personages, such as the Seven Angels; Four Horsemen; the Lamb; the Lion of Judah; an eagle; locusts; a woman clothed with the Sun, with a Moon under her feet; a great fiery dragon—the serpent called the Devil and Satan; the archangel Michael; wild beasts (one from the sea, one from the Earth); and perhaps the most colorful character of all—Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots and Abominations of the Earth. It is she who becomes drunk on the blood of the martyred saints, an act that serves as a catalyst to the climactic defeat of the enemies of the Lamb.

As is often the case when one explores Qabalistic literature, the villains of the exoteric narrative become the heros of the esoteric interpretation, and *vice versa*. Naturally, at the beginning of each cycle, the gods of the new age will appear at first somewhat sinister. The more one is committed to the magical formulae of the old age, the more strange and evil the new gods will appear. Keeping in mind the fact that John (or whoever wrote the book credited to him) was sensitive to the spiritual changes at the *dawn* of the Piscean Age, can we in all fairness expect him to be an unbiased interpreter of the prophetic images that symbolize the forces that would in two thousand years bring the age of his beloved savior to an end? Perhaps for us, the Whore of Babylon, the great Dragon, or even the Beast 666 are perfectly wholesome spiritual personifications of the mechanics of the growth-spurt of a new age.

THE EQUINOX OF THE GODS AND THE MAGICAL PANTHEON OF THE NEW AEON

Before we move on, I wish to talk briefly about one more time-line of the ages that is of singular importance to the subject of magical pantheons. To understand this timeline, we must pool what we have learned about the astrological ages and view history from a much broader perspective. This chart is not measured by years or astrological ages. Instead, its lines of demarcation are set by the most fundamental evolutionary stages of human consciousness, and relate directly to our most basic perceptions of reality.

There is no mightier god than that which presides over the universal self-image of the race. Whenever this self-image is amended, the magical formula which expresses the essence of this "god's" character is also changed. Periodically, as our consciousness expands, and our understanding of ourselves and the universe improves, we find that the old ways of doing business (including magick) are no longer efficient. The beginning of such periods of profound spiritual change is called the *Equinox of the Gods*, and according to a wide spectrum of modern ceremonial magicians, the planet has just recently experienced one.

Early this century Aleister Crowley²¹ postulated that within racial memory there have been three such

²¹ (1875–1946). No matter what one's opinion of Crowley may be, his magical writings remain an invaluable resource to students of Western Hermeticism, especially his elucidations on the nature of the magical aeons.

magical aeons to which he assigned the rulership of the three principal gods of Egypt: Isis, Osiris, and Horus.²² We have just entered²³ the Aeon of Horus; the previous aeon was that of Osiris, and before that, Isis.

The reader may ask at this point what modification in human consciousness could possibly be so universal as to justify an Equinox of the Gods? The answer, not surprisingly, involves humanity's evolving perception of our relationship with the primary god of our solar system, the Sun. In order for us to more easily understand the magical significance of the new aeon, let's take just a moment to trace the trajectory upon which our evolving solar consciousness has propelled us the last two aeons.

The Aeon of Isis

The Formula of the Great Goddess: It is impossible for us to pinpoint the dawn of the Aeon of Isis. As we learned in our discussion of the astrological ages, evidence of the worship of the Great Goddess is found as far back as the age of Leo. In this period, when humanity was struggling with the first attempts at social intercourse, the most awesome mystery to excite the imagination was the power of woman. More than any other observable phenomena, woman was most godlike. Each month, coinciding with the rhythmic cycles of the

²² Isis, Osiris, and Horus archetypically represent mother, father, and child, respectively. For an expanded account of their mythical escapades see *The Magick of Thelema* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1993), p. 8.

²³ According to Crowley, the date was March 20, 1904, 12:00 noon, Cairo, Egypt. See *The Equinox of the Gods* (Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1992).

Moon, she issued blood. Yet miraculously she did not die. When the cycle of bleeding stopped, her body changed; her breasts and belly swelled for nine Moons, until she burst with water and new life.

Because the earliest Isian-agers were as yet unaware of the cause and effect relationship between sex and birth, it appeared that woman, alone, was the source of human life. Her life-giving powers were not limited to blood and birth, for from her breasts flowed milk, a rich white blood to nourish and sustain the new life she created. Woman was the human embodiment of the Earth, itself, which appeared to spontaneously bring forth the vegetation and animals needed to sustain the race. It was the most self-evident fact of life—Earth was mother—mother was life—god was woman. To be in harmony with the formula of the Great Goddess was profoundly simple, and as long as it was universally perceived that life and nourishment came directly from the Earth and from woman, all successful endeavors, magical practices, and religious expression did her homage.

This perceived reality was deeply impressed upon our ancestor's minds, and long after they solved the mystery of where babies come from they clung tenaciously to the outward forms of Goddess worship, and based all social and religious institutions on her formula. Eventually, however, as our understanding of the universe around us grew, we were confronted with a more complicated worldview and new unsettling mysteries.

The Aeon of Osiris

The Formula of the Dying God: Even though the formula of the dying god became crystallized in the reli-

gions and institutions of the astrological Age of Pisces, the Aeon of Osiris dawned much earlier.

The advent of agricultural societies necessitated a greater awareness of the cycles of the seasons. Osirian Age farmers began to recognize the effects sunlight, or lack of it, had upon vegetation. They observed that at certain times of the year the days grew short and crops did not grow. It eventually became evident that, even though the Earth *brought forth* life, the supreme creative energy that vivified that life came from the Sun. Coincidental with this discovery was a universal acknowledgment of the vital role men played in the procreative process. Just as plant life needed the warm penetrating rays of sunlight to flourish, so, too, woman needed the introduction of the male sperm to avoid being forever barren. The heretofore unrecognized concept of *fatherhood* became a dominant theme. The Aeon of Osiris truly began when our forebears raised their eyes to heaven and woke up to the fact that life on Earth was a partnership of Sun and Earth, and the life of the race was a partnership of man and woman. However, the partnership was not perceived as being equal, and as we learned in our discussion of the astrological Age of Taurus, the male backlash was severe and unmerciful. Deity was now male, a father, and his power was likened to that of the Sun.

Even though this shift of consciousness was the result of a more accurate assessment of the facts of life than was realized in the Aeon of Isis, it was not quite accurate enough. A defect in the perception of cosmological facts plunged our Osirian Age ancestors into a dark and terrifying insecurity crisis that traumatized the human race so severely that we still suffer its effects. This fundamental flaw in understanding caused

us to switch our focus from the mystery of where life comes from to an obsessive preoccupation with death.

The tragic misunderstanding focused on the belief that each day the Sun was born at dawn in the east and died in the evening in the west. Speculations abounded about where the dead Sun went during the darkness of night; and if, indeed, a new one would ever appear again in the east. Perhaps it went to the land of the dead where we temporarily visit during our nightly *little death* of sleep. The terrors and ecstasies of our dreams formed the archetypes of heaven and hell, and, after we die, who better to judge our worthiness for either place than the dead Sun, itself, who created and sustained us during our stay on Earth. This is precisely the part the god Osiris would play in Egyptian mythology and Christ's role in Christianity.

To further complicate these fears, the Sun's yearly escapades caused even greater anxiety. Each year at the zenith of the Sun's power in summer, it was observed that each day it rose and set a little south²⁴ of where it did the day before. Around harvest time, the days grew noticeably shorter, and the specter of the empty harvested fields accented the leafless trees and browning grasses, and painted a melancholy and frightening portrait of nature *in articulo mortis*. It was unsettling enough to have the Sun completely disappear each day, but if it continued to head south until night was perpetual, how long could the world survive in cold darkness before a new Sun appears?

In an attempt to calm the shattered nerves caused by such musings, a few wise souls took a deep breath

²⁴ These directions represent the situation in the Northern Hemisphere. For the Southern Hemisphere the directions are, of course, reversed.

and attempted to look at the big picture. Yes, the Sun dies each evening in the west, but years of observation and the testimony of the oldest members of society indicated that no one could remember a time when another one did not come up in the east within a relatively short period. Yes, the Sun becomes weak and almost dies each year, but the same observations and testimony revealed that it eventually reverses its journey south and the days grow longer again until a new cycle of life returns to Earth. Based on the best information at their disposal, they concluded that *magical power*, an unknown and supernatural force, was responsible for the Sun's resurrection. They further surmised that the secret of this magick must be hidden in the very nature of the Sun, itself, and if they could only harmonize with that nature, then perhaps they, too, could overcome death.

Everywhere they looked in nature, they saw the Sun's cycle of birth, life, death, and resurrection reenacted. They observed that plants sprouted to the surface in spring and grew tall and strong in the long days and warm sunlight of summer. Then in autumn, at the height of their maturity, they put forth seeds and then died or were cut down at harvest time. Like the Earth, itself, the seeds lay dead and buried throughout the lifeless winter, only to spring to life when the rains and the lengthening rays of the Sun transformed the soil into a moist warm womb.

They also observed accelerated plant growth near the decaying remains of animals or people, and wherever large amounts of blood spilled upon the ground. This wonder was the male/solar counterpart of the female/lunar mystery of menstruation. The parallels between Sun and phallus, sunlight and semen, the fertilizing power semen had upon woman and that blood had

upon the Earth did not escape our Osirian ancestors' fertile imaginations. A new "fact of life" (one that conformed to the secret nature of the Sun) became the magical formula of the aeon; life comes from death.

In order to harmonize with the new formula, it would become necessary to take an active role in the great death/life drama. For the earliest members of the Aeon of Osiris, human sacrifice was the supreme pantomime of the Sun's daily and yearly sacrifice to the Earth. It also illustrated the sacrifice of the potency of the phallus after ejaculation, and the seed's sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection. The spilling of human blood in the unsown or newly planted fields resulted in a noticeable increase in the fecundity of the harvest. The most comforting benefit derived from such bloody forms of religious expression was the undeniable fact that, as long as they continued the sacrifices, the Sun always came up in the morning, and always stopped its journey south and returned to bring spring and summer. This put a tremendous amount of power in the hands of the priests or priestesses who wielded the sacrificial knife. They positioned themselves between the people and the gods, and implied personal responsibility for the rebirth of the Sun. With each dawn they became demonstrably more powerful.

At regular intervals all over the world the ceremonial slaughter of the Divine King assured a bountiful harvest and the well-being of the people. Even though the future victim was titular head of state, he was not a *ruler* in the modern sense. He was the living embodiment of the Sun, and therefore supreme monarch of the Earth. His periodic murder and the coronation of his successor were occasions of great solemnity.

In the waning years of the Aeon of Osiris, the character of the sacrifice evolved from human blood to ani-

mal blood to bread and wine. Among the more mystically inclined, sacrifice became a personal and transcendent experience. Nevertheless, such changes did nothing to disturb the basic magical formula of the Aeon of Osiris. The cycle of birth, life, death, and resurrection remained the dominant theme right up to the time of the magical revival of the late 19th century. By this time, however, the old formula was no longer based upon misinformation. It was built upon denial.

The Aeon of Horus

The Formula of the Crowned and Conquering Child: Earlier we learned that long after our Isian Age ancestors solved the reproductive mysteries, they continued to cling to a magical formula that originated at a time when it was believed that all life came spontaneously from woman and Earth. So, too, in the Aeon of Osiris, long after it was common knowledge that the Earth revolves around the Sun, the great religious and political institutions continued to be obsessed with death and resurrection as if they still believed that the Sun died every day.

In 340 B.C., Aristotle surmised that during a lunar eclipse it is the shadow of the *Earth* that darkens the Moon. As the shadow was obviously round, he proclaimed that the Earth was a sphere.²⁵ It was also clear to Aristotle that the Sun did not die, but radiated continuously. He continued to believe the Earth was the center of the universe, and the Sun and all other heavenly bodies revolved about us. Night was just an illu-

²⁵ He also observed that the North Star appeared progressively lower (toward the northern horizon) as he traveled south.

sion caused by the shifting shadow of the Earth as the Sun passed behind us each day.

Ptolomy, in the second century A.D., enlarged Aristotle's theory by postulating that the earth (still the center of the universe) was, as it were, at the center of a glass onion surrounded by eight spherical layers containing the Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, and finally the fixed stars. He did not speculate what might lie beyond the sphere of the fixed stars. This pleased the young Christian church no end because now they had a universe with room for heaven and hell.

In 1514, Nicholas Copernicus (a Polish priest) cautiously put forward the idea that the Sun was suspended in a fixed position, and the Earth and all the planets orbited it in circular paths. Nobody paid much attention to Copernicus until nearly a hundred years later, when Johannes Kepler in Germany, and Galileo Galilei in Italy, dusted off his work and found themselves in agreement. To drive the final stake into the heart of Aristotle, Ptolomy and the church, Galileo (in 1609) peered through his newly invented telescope and observed moons happily orbiting the planet Jupiter. This information displeased the church very much. Galileo was accused of advancing a scripturally incorrect model of the universe. After all, if the Earth revolved around the Sun, and other moons could orbit other planets, then the Earth could not be God's unique creation. Galileo was forced to disclaim his findings.

Even with the disapproval of the church, it did not take long for the theory of our heliocentric solar system to become an unquestioned reality for all but the most isolated or mentally disenfranchised inhabitants of our planet. For hundreds of years mothers have assured their little ones at bedtime that the Sun is not gone, but

only shining on the other side of the world. It is this simple reassuring truth that is the key to the formula of the Aeon of Horus; it is not a formula of nourishment, not a formula of life, catastrophe, and resurrection, but a formula based upon the magick of continuous growth.

In the Aeon of Isis we identified with the *Earth*. Life came miraculously from Earth and woman. All magical pantheons were aspects of the Goddess. Death was a mystery whose depths were impossible to plumb.

In the Aeon of Osiris we identified with the *dying/resurrected Sun*. All magical pantheons were aspects of God the Father. Death could be magically overcome by obedience to formulae, rites and doctrine.

In the Aeon of Horus, we identify with the self radiant, *ever-living Sun*. All magical pantheons have become aspects of ourselves. We, like the Sun, do not die.²⁶ Death, like night, is an illusion. Life is now seen as a process of continual growth and humanity is developing a consciousness of the continuity of existence that will eventually dissolve the sting of death.

What pantheon of gods could possibly preside over a world where every man and every woman is a star—self-radiant and co-equal to every other star in the universe? What powers or agencies still govern an environment populated by independent creative beings? The answer becomes obvious when we grasp the fact that we are running out of cosmic elbow room. When all is

²⁶ The reader may argue that the Sun and the entire solar system is orbiting an inscrutable “something” in the center of our galaxy, and that eventually our Sun will, indeed, die. Is not the big bang/big crunch theory simply a rehash of the Osirian formula on a higher octave? Perhaps so. But these concepts have yet to penetrate the soul of our race.

said and done, worshippers of the New Millennium are left with three fundamental deities: “the absolutely *biggest* One; the absolutely *smallest* One; and the One that is *everything between the other two*.”

- New Aeon devotees still worship the Great Goddess—the Goddess of infinite space, whose body forms the expanding universe. Her symbolic “form” is that of the circumference of a circle. She is woman, mother, and Earth on a cosmic scale. All that ever was, is, and is to come is nestled within Her body. The Isian formula of spontaneous life and nourishment has been amended to encompass the entire universe. It is now the milk of the stars which flows from Her paps.
- New Aeon devotees still worship the All Father—an *equal* counterpart to the Great Goddess, but He is the universe infinitely *contracted*. His symbolic “form” is a point at the center of the circle. There is absolute equality between these two infinities for one could not be without the other. The Osirian formula of life, death, and resurrection has been transcended to reveal a self-perpetuated and continuous resurrection.
- New Aeon devotees still worship the offspring of the Great Goddess and the All Father. The conception of this child is the result of love-making on the grandest scale imaginable. Because the Father is an infinite “in” and the Goddess is an infinite “out,” both infinities are in a constant state of contact. This great “in-and-out” creates a friction which produces a third infinity—a child—a field of operation in which the entire universe can manifest and grow.

We stand at the millennial dawn of a great spiritual liberation. Obviously we are still struggling with the responsibilities that accompany such awesome freedom. Most likely it will take a long time before a greater reality is universally accepted and a new Aeon dawns. Each new discovery in the fields of astronomy and physics titillates us with speculations about where we are heading. Perhaps Stephen Hawking and the great minds of our age stand as the Keplers and Galileos of the age to follow the Aeon of Horus—an aeon that will generate a new and inconceivably magnificent pantheon of gods.

Chapter V

PASSING THE PYLONS

Magister Templi:

Let us enter the Ark of Increased Knowledge!

Brother Aquarius:

Master, what is Increased Knowledge?

Magister Templi:

Death.

Brother Aquarius:

Master, what is the Ark thereof?

Magister Templi:

The grave.

Brothers Aquarius and Capricornus:

Master, how shall we enter it?

Magister Templi:

*Arise and follow me!*¹

¹ Aleister Crowley, "The Rite of Saturn" in *Equinox* Vol. 1, No. 6. (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), p. 98.

V

SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WHILE TRYING TO RELAX over a pint (okay, several pints) in a London pub, I became embroiled in a spirited exchange of ideas with a celebrated author of the occult. I had just returned from Manchester, where I officiated at degree initiations of nearly two dozen members of an international magical society. My colleague of letters asked me if I planned to perform any magick while in Britain. I told him I had done little else since arriving, and told him of the marathon initiations in Manchester.

"I mean *real* magick!" he interjected. "Pentagram rituals, hexagram rituals, invocations, evocations, god forms—real magick!"

I could hardly believe my ears.

"What do you mean?" I protested. "Initiation is real magick. You know as well as I that a well-crafted initiation is a fundamental expression of the high magick of the Egyptians. Pentagrams, hexagrams, invocations, evocations, and such may be employed during an initiation, but they are tools—components of a greater ceremony of personal transformation. You can't get more magical than that!"

I fear that my point was drowned in the creamy dark amber of yet another round of stout, and the evening wearily reached its nadir when I was repeatedly challenged to mount the table and execute a *Star Sap-*

phire. Nevertheless, the debate afforded me an opportunity to reexamine and organize my thoughts on the subject, and having been graciously allowed this sober forum to act as Monday morning quarterback, I now hope to share some of the things *I should-a told 'im!*

THE CANDIDATE

Twenty-five years ago I became the embarrassingly enthusiastic student of a modern mystery school that altruistically threw wide its golden doors of wisdom to promising seekers such as myself who could afford the price of a perpetual correspondence course. Although I had never exhibited any natural psychic ability, I was determined to become a first-rate visionary, so I dutifully practiced all the mystical exercises outlined for the new student.

By tapping the limitless powers of my mind, I induced a drop of olive oil floating on the surface of a bowl of water to swirl with agonizing sloth in a direction it might not have otherwise swirled on its own. I bought a pitch pipe and chanted mystic vowel sounds. I held my breath and visualized parts of my body I had forgotten I possessed, and stared at a candle flame until my eyes watered so much I saw everything they told me I would see, and much more.

Every other month or so, the adepts at mystery school headquarters (M.:S.:HQ.:) mailed me an examination which ruthlessly tested the proficiency of my envelope opening skills. Satisfied that my dues were competently paid, and my address had not changed, the hidden masters then sent me a special monograph outlining the procedure for a ritual of self-initiation. Set-

ting aside an evening when I would not be disturbed by objective reality, I set up the ceremonial accouterments upon the altar of my upright grand piano. I lit the candles and the appropriate incense (purchased from M.:S.:H.Q.:’s own supply catalogue) and proceeded with the one-man initiation.²

I took these ceremonies very seriously and delighted in executing them with as much art and precision as I was capable of mustering. As irreverent as I may sound today, writing a quarter of a century later, I must admit these initiations had a profound effect upon my life. Each simple ritual touched something very deep inside me, and never failed to leave me with the unambiguous feeling that I had taken the next step toward spiritual enlightenment.³ Eventually I became active in a nearby lodge, and for the next few years found myself serving on the ritual team for the weekly convocations and as an officer in temple initiations.

I do not believe I am violating my oaths too severely when I share with you the fact that the style of the initiation ceremonies, indeed the whole constitution of this particular order, was decidedly Egyptian. The walls of the local lodge were festooned with winged solar discs, images of Egyptian gods, and hieroglyphs. The threshold of the temple room was skillfully painted to appear like the massive stones of an initiatory pyramid. At the Grand Lodge Headquarters (G.:L.:H.Q.:) several of the administrative buildings were faithful re-

² I assure the reader that if I were a woman I would use the term “one-woman initiation.”

³ Had I known how many initiatory steps lay before me, however, I would have torn the altar cloth off the piano and continued with my self-destructive career as a studio musician.

productions of portions of the great temple complex at Karnak, and obelisks, pyramids, and sphinxes adorned the grounds. On several occasions I made pilgrimages to G.:L.:HQ.: to take temple initiations in the beautiful and spacious Grand Lodge temple.

I fell strongly under the spell of all things Egyptian. Living in Southern California with its warm dry climate, palm-lined streets, Lilies of the Nile and pampas grass, it is very easy to daydream a shirtless, shoeless life of an Egyptian artisan or scribe or priest. I mused that perhaps in a previous incarnation I lived along the Nile, or served the gods in some great temple complex. Perhaps my mummy still lies undisturbed in some undiscovered necropolis, or has been pulverized by 19th-century European colonialists and sold as a miracle laxative.

However, when it came right down to seriously studying Egyptology, I was soon to discover the limits of my dedication (not to mention my attention span). I half-heartedly tried to penetrate Budge's *Osiris*⁴ and his fragmented translation of *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*,⁵ but I only succeeded in putting myself to sleep. This was too much work. I finally concluded that the ancient priests encouraged a dying person to memorize the *Book of the Dead* in order to expedite the inevitable by boring them to death.

Embarrassed by my failure to become a legitimate Egyptian adept I secretly resigned myself to be a mystic

⁴ E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris: The Egyptian Religion of Resurrection* (New York: Dover, 1987).

⁵ E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead* (New Hyde Park, NY: University Books, 1981).

poseur and simply loiter at the threshold of the initiatory Pyramid. Here where the Great Light of Egypt shattered as passed through my dilettante's prism, I imagined myself safe from its direct scintillating ray. Here I hoped I would be allowed to gambol pretentiously upon the colorful but shallow steps of the outer Temple.

It seems I underestimated the spiritual momentum of the magick of Egypt. It is unimaginably strong. Its foundations are hewn deep and wide in the collective consciousness of humanity, silently and secretly supporting a countless host of institutions and philosophies not traditionally associated with land of the Nile. Egyptian magick, I would discover, is extremely subtle, and very, very patient.

THE MAGICK

*Three tanna leaves give him life. Nine give him movement. More than nine make him an uncontrollable engine of destruction such as the world has never known!*⁶

I confess that I have never been to Egypt; never spent the night in the King's Chamber of the Great Pyramid at Giza; never gazed upon the Sphinx or rode a camel to the Valley of the Kings. However, I have always suffered from a severe case of Khemophilia, and being a movie

⁶ My dear friend, S. Jason Black, co-author of *Pacts with the Devil* (Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon Publications, 1994), frequently terrifies salad bar patrons by sticking his face in the grotesque light of the sneeze guard and quoting the above lines from the classic film *The Mummy* while fondling his spinach.

buff is probably the major contributing factor. As a child, one of the first movies I remember seeing down at the old Lakewood Theater was a colorful spectacle called *Land of the Pharaohs*, that dealt with a pharaoh's obsession with the construction of a great pyramid that would shelter his body for eternity. After an assortment of side plots (including the titillating infidelities of his treacherous queen), the pharaoh is murdered, and the queen and her cohorts hypocritically preside over the final entombment ceremony deep in the interior of the pyramid. There, the high priest announces that all the mourners assembled will be honored to join the late pharaoh for eternity by being sealed with him inside the burial chamber. The film climaxes with the terrifying sight of huge stone blocks sliding into place by means of an ingenious process of hydraulics (only using sand) while the wicked queen tries desperately to convince the high priest that there has been some mistake. (Had she known she was going to be entombed, she would have worn her entombment dress.) But nothing could stop the great stones from falling into place and sealing their fates for eternity. I was very impressed.

Why are we so fascinated with the Egyptians? After all, there is no shortage of ancient civilizations for us to ponder. What's wrong with the Hittites, the Babylonians, the Minoans? Did they not also build great cities and monuments? Didn't their armies conquer their neighbors? Didn't their religions also spread with commerce and the sword? Why have so many of us, who may otherwise exhibit no inclination to study ancient civilizations, become enamored with the mysteries of Egypt? The answer, in my opinion, is one word—MAGICK.

Egypt certainly did not corner the market on magick. Magick permeated nearly every aspect of life in all

the cultures of the ancient world. We know a great deal about the magical practices of the Babylonians. We know what gods they invoked for victory in love and battle, and what demons they evoked to torment their neighbors. These are practical skills for practical people, and from what we know about the ancient Egyptians, they, too, were practical people. But apart from a rich pantheon of deities (local and state), and obligatory domestic superstitions, Egyptian magick *appears* to have been dominated by their funeral industry.

Perhaps this is a distorted perception of the truth because so much of what we know about the Egyptians we have had to learn by examining the contents of their tombs. We will probably never know the details of many daily activities of Egyptian life simply because remnants of that life have not been so heroically preserved. We owe a great debt to the mummy mills. After all, what other magico-art form sets out to preserve its handiwork for eternity? Mystery Schools disappear; books and manuscripts turn to dust; sacred languages die; religions and whole civilizations perish without a trace; but a first class Egyptian funeral is *forever*.

It is often said that forever is a long time, but nothing could be farther from the truth. Time is nothing to forever. The Egyptian magicians who established and perpetuated the elaborate procedures for the dead did not do so to impress, or enlighten the curious minds of the future. They didn't put mummies "on ice" to await some cosmic awakening in the "future." For them, the *afterlife* is a continuous "now" (just like *life-life*), and the age-old search for eternal life is really the quest to attain *consciousness* of the continuity of existence.

Immortality is the prize for those who would achieve this state of consciousness. From this enlightened vantage point, one no longer counts the string of

spiraling incarnations as separate, or even sequential, episodes of experience. Rather, they are perceived as projected concurrently—one wall-to-wall reenactment of a single master adventure with specific and recognizable characters, ordeals, and crisis points. These crises are initiations, and the cast of recurring characters who populate this personal epic are our initiating officers.⁷

INITIATION

*In the beginning was Initiation. The flesh profiteth nothing; the mind profiteth nothing; that which is unknown to you and above these, while firmly based upon their equilibrium, giveth life.*⁸

Initiate: as noun it means *beginner*; as a verb it means *to begin, to bring into practice or use, also, to instruct*; as an adjective it means *started*. Initiation is a commencement; not a reward for achievement, not a seal of attainment, not a trophy of adeptship. Initiation is a beginning, and when we evoke a beginning we also by necessity conjure an ending. Death is the inevitable penalty we pay for allowing ourselves to be born, and

⁷ The plot of the film *Groundhog Day* is not too far removed from this concept. The main character repeatedly awakens on the same day and is required to master a succession of personal ordeals which can only be overcome by perfecting aspects of his own character.

⁸ Aleister Crowley, Liber LXI vel Causæ in *The Equinox Vol. 3*, No. 9 (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1983), p. xxxvii.

the honor of life's journey between these two great pylons is the only compensation offered for this fate.

The uninitiated invoke neither birth, nor life, nor death. Like sleep-walkers, their numbed steps bear them comatose from cradle to grave, their pale shadow lives pantomime, but never experience, the adventures of the initiate's journey. Like other mammals they are born, and live, and die. But unless they make a conscious effort to wake up, unless they harness and focus the power of their wills to take the first steps of spiritual renewal, they will not, as Homer sang, ". . . receive their share of the rite. They will not have the same lot as the initiate . . . once they are dead and dwell in the mold where the sun goes down."⁹

Prostitution may be the oldest profession in the world, but the oldest spiritual institution is most certainly the initiatory society. To those who would argue that religion holds this august position, I must respectfully disagree.

Religion merely haunts the outer courts of the great initiatory temple and holds mystery at arm's length. From the occasional thread of truth, carried by the wind from the initiatory chamber, religion psychotically weaves and reweaves doctrines and dogma—tapestries of hope, hate, and perpetual distraction. Religion exalts mystery as an unknowable secret that must be sealed in glass, like the corpse of an enchanted princess, and fearfully worshipped from afar. Initiation, on the other hand, requires direct participation, and demands each of us to smash the casket and press mad lips to mystery, wooing her as a lover who will offer up her

⁹ *Hymn to Demeter*. Helen R. Foley, trans. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), p. 26.

treasures in a succession of sweet surrenders. This she will do, but only in exact ratio to our evolving ability and worthiness to receive them.

The formula of initiation is universal. It matters little what specific mystery is revealed in the graduated steps of any particular initiatory society. Properly experienced, a *degree* of illumination is achieved in even the most innocuous rite. Scholars, stone masons, soldiers, sailors, physicians, printers, blacksmiths, even thieves and hangmen have historically enjoyed the benefits and privileges of fraternal orders. Remnants of the rites of our prehistoric brethren can still be seen in tribal ceremonies of indigenous peoples all over the planet. Initiations, circumcisions, ordeals of the hunt, sexual mysteries, secret words and signs, elaborate temple openings and closings, reenactments of heroic themes, oaths and covenants, ritual deaths and resurrections—enough naked claptrap to make the most conservative Freemason blush with embarrassment as he readily identifies key elements of his own craft.

What is of primary importance is that the master key to the *initiatory method*, itself, becomes a permanently installed fixture in the individual. Once we have learned the process of becoming something greater than we are, we can, and eventually will, apply that same alchemy to ourselves to achieve the supreme attainment.

But what about Egyptian initiation ceremonies? Do we know with any degree of accuracy what they were like? How many initiatory sects applied their art throughout the four thousand year span of Egyptian history? Did they compete with each other? When did the craft reach its spiritual zenith? At what point did it start to degenerate into empty form? Are any of the initia-

tory societies of today truly the inheritors of the Egyptian magical current?

I think the only honest answer is "Nobody really knows." There are plenty of writers who claim to have combed the astral records to eavesdrop upon the moment when Plato, Pythagoras, Homer, or Jesus were raised to spiritual perfection within the Great Pyramid. Great modern occultists including Eliphas Levi, Aleister Crowley, and Manly Hall have thrilled us with imaginative and colorful tales of the ancient initiate's journey. But no archeologist has yet unearthed a first edition of *Duncan's Complete and Unabridged Egyptian Initiator's Manual and Monitor* (Explained and Interpreted by Copious Notes and Numerous Engravings).¹⁰ Or have they?

Stuck between the legs of every well-dressed Egyptian mummy is a magical text written (so tradition would have us believe) by the god Thoth himself. It is a painfully detailed map of every aspect of the projected imagination of God. Memorized to perfection in life, it enabled the recently deceased to negotiate step by step the ordeals and confusion of postmortem existence, and become absorbed, as it were, fully identified with the immortal deity. The text is known to us as *The Book of the Dead*¹¹ and while unquestionably the scriptural centerpiece of an elaborately complex religious institution it is, in my opinion, the fundamental handbook of initiation.

¹⁰ Thebes: Nut & Geb Publishing, 2400 B.C.E.

¹¹ The most recent and complete edition, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead: The Book of Going Forth by Day, Being the Papyrus of Ani (Royal Scribe of the Divine Offerings)*, Written and Illustrated circa 1250 B.C.E., by Scribes and Artists Unknown. Trans. Dr. Raymond O. Faulkner & Dr. Ogden Goelet, Jr. Conceived by James Wasserman (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1994).

There are those who will argue that I am either overstating or understating the case; that if I were a serious scholar of the subject, I would be aware of the complex evolution of the document, its arbitrary redundancies, omissions, and superfluous attachments. To such criticism I humbly offer no resistance. In the twenty-five years since laziness induced me to put aside *The Book of the Dead* I have not gone back to college to receive a degree in Egyptology. Nor have I taken it upon myself to learn hieroglyphics or become an amateur archeologist. However, in that same quarter century the gods have seen fit to allow me the privilege of ritually officiating at the degree initiations of a great many individuals (I stopped counting at seven hundred). The dialogue and blocking of the ceremonies long ago transcended memorization and has freed me to stand apart from myself and witness the proceedings from a magical vantage point. Within the sealed membrane of the tiled temple, time is suspended, I see in the darkness and, without any effort of my own, I am repeatedly allowed to become both initiator and candidate. It is in this capacity that I offer my credentials to comment on the subject.

WANNA BE A MEMBER, WANNA BE A MEMBER?¹²

Almost every facet of modern degree initiation has its complement in *The Book of the Dead*. Just as the deceased is progressively raised to complete identity with

¹² *Bimbo's Initiation* (Max Fleischer Talkartoons, Copyright © 1931, U.M.& M. TV Corp.).

the glorified Osiris, so, too, the modern candidate is eventually raised to mastership of the rite. But even before the series of initiations begins the candidate must undergo tests of his or her fitness to enter the rite. Are there any skeletons in the closet that, if uncovered, would bring embarrassment or shame upon the craft? Are the reasons for joining honorable? Such soul searching must occur before the candidate petitions the lodge in writing, formally requesting to be considered for membership:

*O my heart which I had from my mother! O my heart which I had from my mother! O my heart of my different ages! Do not stand up as a witness against me, do not be opposed to me in the tribunal, do not be hostile to me in the presence of the Keeper of the Balance. . . .*¹³

The candidate must have a sponsor from within the lodge who vouches for the candidate, and who will serve as his or her advocate before the membership:

*Thus says Thoth, judge of truth, to the Great Ennead which is in the presence of Osiris: Hear this word of very truth. I have Judged the heart of the deceased, and his soul stands as a witness for him. His deeds are righteous in the great balance, and no sin has been found in him.*¹⁴

Who hopefully accepts the recommendation of the sponsor and accepts the petition.

¹³ See Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Plate 3.

¹⁴ Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Plate 3.

Thus says the Great Ennead to Thoth who is in Hermopolis: This utterance of yours is true. The vindicated Osiris Ani is straightforward, he has no sin, there is no accusation against him before us, Ammit shall not be permitted to have power over him. Let there be given to him the offerings which are issued in the presence of Osiris, and may a grant of land be established in the Field of Offerings as for the Followers of Horus.¹⁵

YOU CAN'T GET THERE FROM HERE

The rite itself represents the universe in its totality, and the master or hierophant symbolizes the Supreme Being. Each degree is a subdivision of the absolute, and it is impossible to comprehend the greater reality of each ascending world unless one is an illuminated master of the preceding degree. In temple workings, this reality is strictly acknowledged. In Blue Lodge masonry all routine business is conducted in a Third Degree temple. In order to open the lodge in the third degree, it is necessary to first formally open in the first, then second degree. If lower degree business, such as the passing of a second-degree candidate is scheduled, the lodge then must be formally *lowered* to the appropriate degree.

In magical orders, the grades correspond directly to levels of human consciousness and are based upon a recognizable schematic scaffolding, such as the Tree of Life, or the thirty Enochian Aethyrs. It is not a prerequi-

¹⁵ Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Plate 3.

site, in most orders, for the candidate to actually achieve these progressively exalted states of consciousness. (An order possessed of the omniscience to accurately judge such matters is most likely not found in the phone book.) In most instances, including very serious magical orders, the degrees serve merely as a road map for the candidate's inevitable personal odyssey.

It is not uncommon for the "truths" communicated to the candidate in lower grades to be amended or even contradicted in the higher degrees. "Be nice to your mother" may be a worthy sentiment for a Neophyte, but a Master of the Temple is well advised to "Tear thy mother from thy heart."

HALT! WHO GOES THERE?

Perhaps the most outstanding feature of *The Book of the Dead* is that the deceased is required, on multiple occasions, to pass through a series of gates or pylons. At each point the traveler is barred from entry by a guardian who demands the secret keys unique to that particular station. Chapter 17 (in *The Book of the Dead*) outlines a journey through seven gates. At each gate the deceased is required to correctly state the name of the Gatekeeper, the name of the Guardian of the Gate, and the name of the Announcer who will proclaim the success or failure to pass. If successful, the deceased then has to declare the powers and nature of the station and the cosmic role he or she will be required to perform there.

*The fourth gate: the name of its gatekeeper is
"One whose Face Repels, One of Multitudi-*

nous Voices”; the name of its guardian is “Alert One”; the name of the announcer in it is “One who Repels the Crocodile.”

Words spoken by the Osiris Ani; the vindicated, when arriving at the gate: “I am the Bull, the son of the Kite of Osiris. Behold, you witnesses for his father, the possessor of his grace. I have cut off harm from him. I have brought life for him at his nose for eternity. I am the son of Osiris, make a path for me, so that I might pass by in the God’s Domain.”¹⁶

Evolution is the result of a threefold process of resistance, struggle, and mutation.¹⁷ The fundamental secret of initiation is revealed by the fact that the candidate is repeatedly barred, tested, and passed. The triad of primary initiating officers also reflects this process. In many rites the candidate is halted at various stations of the temple and interrogated or confronted with an ordeal. Then with the aid of a ritual guide or advocate, the candidate overcomes the ordeal and is given permission by the supreme authority to continue. Initiates of the Golden Dawn tradition will recognize in the above the offices of Hegemon, Hiereus, and Hierophant.

The threefold action is also invoked at the threshold of the modern temple where, in many instances, members are stopped (usually by an armed guard) and required to deliver the secret signs, grips, and words that will prove they are *bona fide* members of the de-

¹⁶ Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Plate 11.

¹⁷ The magical formula IAO [Isis (nature) is ruined by Apophis (the forces of decay and destruction)]. The result of this seemingly disastrous struggle is the resurrection of the glorified Osiris.]

gree currently being worked. If a member arrives late, he or she must prove up to the guardian at the outside of the temple door, who must inform a guardian on the *inside* of the temple, who in turn vouches for the late-comer, and asks permission from the master or hierophant that they be admitted.

There is no question that the cosmic significance of lodge behavior is lost on the objective mind of most candidates and members. Yet, I would wager that even the most lukewarm Oddfellow has had at least one fitful night's sleep in which his credentials, his apron, or his memory of signs and grips has been challenged in a temple nightmare. Once imprinted upon the subconscious mind, the formula of initiation is difficult if not impossible to remove. If allowed to imprint the deepest stratum of the psyche it may even provide to the diligent aspirant the key to overcoming death.

**BEING DEAD IS JUST LIKE BEING ALIVE . . .
EXCEPT WHEN YOU CLOSE YOUR EYES . . .
IT'S LIGHT¹⁸**

Chapter for repelling a crocodile which comes to take away a spirit's magic from him in the God's Domain

The Great One has fallen on his side, but the Ennead have pulled him together. I come, my soul speaks with my father, and I have this Great One from those eight crocodiles. I know them by their

18 I. Z. Gilford, *Letters from Papa*, chapter 13. Unpublished manuscript, used by permission.

names and their lives, and I save my father from them.

*Get back, you crocodile of the West, who lives
on the Unwearying Stars! Detestation of you is in
my belly, for I have absorbed the power of Osiris,
and I am Seth.*

Get back, you crocodile of the West! The Nausnake is in my belly, and I have not given myself to you; your flame will not be on me.

Get back, you crocodile of the East, who lives on those who are mutilated! Detestation of you is in my belly, and I have gone away, for I am Osiris.

Get back, you crocodile of the East! The Nausnake is in my belly, and I have not given myself to you; your flame will not be on me.

Get back, you crocodile of the South, living on feces, smoke and want! Detestation of you is in my belly, and my blood is not in your hand, for I am Sord.

Get back, you crocodile of the South! I will erase you, for I become a Bebet-herb, and I have not given myself to you.

Get back, you crocodile of the North, living on . . . which is in the midst of the stars! Detestation of you is in my belly, your poison is in my head: I am Atum.

Get back, you crocodile of the North! A scorpion is in my belly, but I will not give it birth.

I am one whose eyes are green, what exists is in my grasp, what does not exist is in my belly, I am clad and equipped with your magic, O Re, even this which is above me and below me. I am . . . , I am exalted, my throat is wide open in the house of my father the Great One; he has given to me yon beautiful West which destroys the living;

*strong is its lord, who daily is weary in it. My vision is cleared, my heart is in its proper place, my uraeus is with me every day. I am Re, who himself protects himself, and nothing can harm me.*¹⁹

In *The Book of the Dead*, the deceased cannot skip pylons and ordeals and cut straight to the boat ride. At each step of the way, the candidate must prove to the executors of the powers and energies of that unique quadrant that he or she knows the score. More importantly, at each step of the way the *candidate* must convince the *candidate* that he or she knows the score.

Besides the fact that it bears a striking resemblance to a modern banishing ritual, the above chapter reveals that the deceased maintains a perpetual monologue of self-affirmations. It is as though he or she must keep talking in order to maintain the focus necessary to avoid drifting astray in the afterlife. Could all this concentrated chatter be the central secret to overcoming death? After all, our consciousness of existence is all that is holding our individuality together. Perhaps if we could master a technique that would enable us to perpetuate our consciousness along each step of the postmortem trail, we could maintain the equipment necessary to actually *experience* the bliss of our full spiritual destiny. Without such a technique, the individual consciousness unit will disintegrate and dissolve into the universal energy matrix—a “soul” eaten by Ammit.²⁰

¹⁹ See footnote 11, Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, “The Theban Recension,” p. 103.

²⁰ Hybrid monster who, at the ceremony of the Weighing of the Heart, eats the soul of those found unworthy.

Just look at the lengths *The Book of the Dead* goes to to bolster the deceased's confidence and keep his or her mind minutely focused on the matter at hand:

"Come and enter by this door of the Hall of Justice, for you know us."

"We will not let you enter by us," say the doorposts of this door, "unless you tell our name."

"Plummet of Truth' is your name."

"I will not let you enter by me," says the right-hand leaf of this door, "unless you tell me my name."

"Scale-pan which weighs Truth' is your name."

"I will not let you enter by me," says the left-hand leaf of this door, "unless you tell me my name."

"Scale-pan of wine' is your name."

"I will not let you pass by me," says the floor of this door, "unless you tell me my name."²¹

This exchange goes on with the doorbolt, the hasp, the cross-timbers, and the door itself. Once in the hall, the deceased then goes through the same drill with the floor of the hall and a score of other pieces of furniture and body parts.

One can almost hear the priest of Osiris giving a pep-talk to the newly deceased:

²¹ See footnote 11, Wasserman, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, "The Theban Recension," p. 116.

"Atta boy Ani, don't stop thinking. Keep pretending . . . pretend they ask . . . pretend you answer . . . pretend they ask . . . pretend you answer . . . stay concentrated . . . keep up the flow of pretending . . . don't give 'em time to throw you off guard . . . don't give 'em time to ask you anything you can't answer . . . keep it moving . . . there's another one . . . tell him his name . . . tell him what color his socks are . . . tell him the name of his socks . . . announce you have the right to pass . . . never mind what he looks like . . . you're cool . . . keep moving . . . don't be distracted . . . keep focused . . . focus yourself through the planes until you hit the mark!"

Ever since childhood I have experienced dreams of flying. I now consider these experiences to be a variety of astral projection, and have developed my nocturnal flying skills to such a degree that under the right circumstances I can pop out quite easily. In my early years, however, each flight ended in exactly the same way. I would be sailing along quite blissfully, fully intending to go somewhere, then I would realize I was flying and ask myself, "How in hell am I doing this?" Once the element of doubt entered the equation, I tumbled like Icharus. Over the years I have talked to so many people who have had exactly the same experience that I have concluded it is a universal psychic occurrence.

If a little bit of concentration and practice enables us to remain airborne in dreams, could not the same skills be honed to propel us toward a supreme goal in the precious magick moments of early death consciousness? Is this why those who do not possess this skill *"will not have the same lot as the initiate . . . once they are dead and dwell in the mold where the sun goes down."*²²

²² See footnote 9.

*Hathor, Lady of the West; She of the West; Lady of the Sacred Land; Eye of Re which is on his forehead; kindly of countenance in the Bark of Millions of Years; a resting-place for him who has done right within the boat of the blessed; who built the Great Bark of Osiris in order to cross the water of truth.*²³

²³ See footnote 11, *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*, Plate 37, the final chapter.

Chapter VI

DEVIL BE MY GOD

*"I advise you to curb that waging
tongue of yours."*

—Bishop of the Black Connons

*"It's a habit I've never formed Your
Grace."*

—Robin Hood¹

¹ From *The Adventures of Robin Hood*, a screenplay by Norman Reilly Raine and Seton L. Miller, Warner Brothers Pictures, Inc., 1938.

VI

IN A.D. 415, CYRIL, THE BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA, Egypt, found himself in a most awkward position. Not only was he burdened with the task of concocting viable doctrines² from the muddled and conflicting traditions of the young Christian cult, he was required to do so in the most sophisticated and enlightened pagan city on Earth.

Long before the alleged virgin birth of the crucified savior, Alexandria, with her celebrated schools and library, nurtured the greatest minds of the Mediterranean world and Asia. Here religion and philosophy were lovers, and their union gave rise to a dynamic environment of dialogue and debate. On more than one occasion Cyril tried to glean converts from the student body of the Neo-Platonic Academy only to be struck dumb by the discomfiting realization that the fledgling philosophers were far more knowledgeable than he about the subtleties and shortcomings of his own faith. Uncomfortable as such moments were His Grace bore them dutifully. They afforded him the opportunity to suffer for his faith. His patience came to an end, however, when his faith and reputation were challenged by a brilliant and charismatic luminary of the Alexandrian

²Cyril is credited with formulating the concept of the Holy Trinity, an invention for which he was eventually canonized.

School of Neo-Platonism, Hypatia—the greatest woman initiate of the ancient world.

Hypatia of Alexandria was without question the most respected and influential thinker of her day. The daughter of the great mathematician, Theon, she took over her father's honored position at the Academy and lectured there for many years. She more than any other individual since Plotinus, the father of Neo-Platonism, grasped the profound potential of that school of thought. Her lectures were wildly popular and attracted a stream of scholars who saw in Neo-Platonism the possibility of a truly universal spiritual order—a supreme philosophy—an enlightened religion to unite all religions. Such was the golden promise of Neo-Platonism, and Hypatia of Alexandria was its virgin prophetess.

Troubled by the continued degeneration of the Christian movement, its intolerance of other faiths and its dangerous preoccupation with miracles and wonders, Hypatia began a series of public lectures dealing with the cult. She revealed the pagan roots of the faith and systematically unmasked the absurdities and superstitions that had infected the movement. Then, with power and eloquence surpassing that of any Christian apologist, she elucidated upon what she understood to be the true spiritual treasures found in the purported teachings of the “Christ.”

Her arguments were so persuasive that many new converts to the cult renounced their conversions and became disciples of Hypatia. Her lectures stimulated enormous interest in Christianity, but not Christianity as it was presented by Cyril, the Bishop of Alexandria.

Not blessed with the strength of character necessary to suffer a personal confrontation with Hypatia, Cyril embarked upon a campaign of personal vilification by preaching to his unwashed and fanatical flock

that Hypatia was a menace to the faith, a sorceress in league with the Devil. These diatribes seemed to have little effect upon the sophisticated population of urban Alexandria who were beginning to realize that Bishop Cyril's Christianity was a cult that didn't play well with other children. Deep in the Nitrian desert, however, Cyril's hateful words eventually reached the crude monastery of Peter the Reader.

Years of preaching to the wind and converting scorpions had uniquely qualified Peter to be the cleansing sword of the Prince of Peace, and the thought of a devil-possessed woman attacking his savior was more than this man of God could stomach. Mustering a rag-tag collection of fellow hermits, he marched to Alexandria where they met with officials of the Cæsarean church who informed him that each afternoon the shameless Hypatia drove her own chariot from the Academy to her home. Armed only with clubs, oyster shells, and the Grace of God, Peter and his mob ambushed Hypatia in the street near the Academy. Pulling her from her chariot, they dragged her to the Cæsarean church where they stripped her, beat her with clubs, and finally (because of an on-going debate over the soul's eternal status if the corpse remained whole) scraped the flesh from her bones with the oyster shells. The scoops of flesh and the rest of her remains were then carried away and burned.

The reaction of the Alexandrian community was one of confusion and shock, and the Neo-Platonist school was dealt a blow from which it never recovered. Although he went to great lengths to distance himself from the incident, Cyril took full advantage of the situation, and used the terror of the moment to further intimidate the city and establish that the will of the Christian God was to be resisted at one's own risk.

The martyrdom of Hypatia was certainly not the first example of truth resisting evil and losing, but it did mark the beginning of a prolonged spiritual delirium tremor from which Western Civilization has never fully recovered. Even the bright souls who did not succumb to the universal madness were forced to blossom against the twisted projections of the collective nightmare.

Spiritual growth is not impossible in such an environment. But where wisdom is perceived by the world to be ignorance, love is considered sin, and all that is best in the human spirit is condemned and repressed, the road by which a seeker of enlightenment must travel takes many curious turns. On such a journey one's companions are outlaws and rebels; sacredness breeds in blasphemy, truth falls from the lips of false prophets, heaven is sought in hell, and God is the Devil himself.

Chapter VII

DEMONS ARE OUR FRIENDS

*O Lord, deliver me from hell's great
fear and gloom! Loose thou my spirit
from the larvae of the tomb! I seek
them in their dread abodes without
affright: On them will I impose my
will, the law of light.*¹

¹ *The Magician*, translated from Eliphaz Levi's version of the famous Hymn, in *The Equinox Vol. I (1)* (London, Spring, 1909; Reprint York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), p. 109.

VII

OCCASIONALLY I MEET A FELLOW MAGICIAN who is appalled to discover that now and again I ceremonially conjure up a demon from the Goetia² to help me with a specific problem. They find it hard to reconcile such nasty business with my professed dedication to the Great Work, and ask why on earth would I want to dabble with “evil spirits.” My answer is very simple, yet it seldom satisfies the inquisitor. It is because all my life “evil spirits” have been dabbling with me!

Now, before you call the men in the white coats, I think an explanation is in order. It may even change your opinion of “evil spirits.” Who knows? Before you are through reading this you just might want to whip up one of those little devils yourself.

² See chapter 2, *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King, Translated into the English Tongue by a Dead Hand and Adorned with Divers Other Matter Germane Delightful to the Wise, the Whole Edited, Verified, Introduced and Commented by Aleister Crowley* (Society for the Propagation of Religious Truth, Boleskine, Foyers, Inverness, Scotland, 1904). Known as the *Lesser Key of Solomon*, it is the First Book of the Lemegeton (c. 1687). Translated by S. L. MacGregor Mathers (the “Dead Hand” referred to in the full title above) from the British Library Sloane Manuscripts nos. 2731 and 3648. Most recent edition with engraved illustrations of the spirits by M. L. Breton and foreword by Hymenaeus Beta (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1996).

**"I'D LIKE TO THANK
ALL THE LITTLE PEOPLE
WHO MADE THIS MOMENT POSSIBLE."**

I have watched the Academy Awards presentations for over thirty years and I have yet to hear anyone actually mention "little people." Nevertheless, each year at the podium almost every award winner recites a litany of behind-the-scenes studio or production personnel whose talents and labor contributed to the success of the film. Artists, writers, technicians, trainers, contractors, sub-contractors—individuals whose names are unfamiliar and whose faces we never see—are recognized for their talents, and are allowed for a fleeting moment to bask in the radiance of reflected celebrity. Sometimes, if the awardee is oblivious to the time restraints (or particularly loquacious owing to the inspiration of sincerity-inducing chemicals), he or she will ramble on to thank the agents who represented them, the spouses who supported them, the teachers who spanked them, and the parents who bred them.

Gushing in the warmth of the footlights, it is likely the Oscar winner momentarily forgets that all this ecstasy is the result of a tortuous journey through hell; and that the roster of "little people" so graciously honored would have, if left to their own devices, done *nothing* to make this moment of glory possible; the parasitic agent, the lecherous casting director, the indifferent foreign studio heads, the jealous co-star, the drunken make-up artist, the writers who went out on strike, the felonious producer, and (if we care to get Freudian) the bloodsucking ex-spouse, the sadistic teacher, and the abusive parent! All these "little people" and their minions, just by being themselves, could

have with equal effort contributed to the star's ultimate ruin.

Instead, *something* intervened to focus this scattered legion of raw energy toward one constructive end—some great will, a director or producer, in a position of authority and armed with specific knowledge of who to inspire, who to pay off, who to threaten, who to appease, who to seduce, who to extort, and perhaps even who to *destroy* to assure that all the “little people” and the little people working under them were all laboring together for the success of the project.

The student of practical occultism will, of course, recognize in the above scenario the characteristics of Solomonic magick or Goetia. The movie-making impresario is the conjuring magician operating under the divine authority of the entity holding the purse strings. The “little people” are demons conjured at his or her command, and the offices, studios, laboratories, and workshops wherein they toil for their daily bread are the infernal abodes.³

It seems deliciously appropriate that Hollywood subculture would so ideally reflect the *dramatis personae* of a system of practical occultism considered by many to be black magick. But we need not look farther than the circumstances of our own lives to see that we are all enmeshed in a complex web of magical evocations by which we attempt to exercise our will upon the world, or the world attempts to exercise its will upon us. In fact, every day each of us plays multiple roles in this conjuration. We are great and powerful magicians to the little-league team we coach, our employees, stu-

³ The reader who has ever visited the San Fernando Valley near Hollywood in the summer knows precisely what hell is.

dents, and dogs. Alternately, we are bootlicking demon slaves to judges, employers, police officers, and cats. We plot with Machiavellian cunning to mold the circumstances of our career and love life, but with glassy-eyed obedience pay for a shyster mechanic's trip to Hawaii.

Obviously, the analogies of everyday magick are infinite. After all, by the broadest definition of the term, magick is the "science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with Will."⁴ In the magick of movie-making, it is relatively easy for us to trace the hierarchy of labor and the chain-reaction of events set into motion by the director/magician. However, it is more impressive (and a great deal spookier) when things we want done get done through the agency of a chain-reaction we cannot see. This is magick of a more specific nature. To wield this power the magician must be willing to go to hell.

*I bid the night conceive the glittering hemisphere.
Arise, O sun, arise! O moon, shine white & clear!
I seek them in their dread abodes without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.*⁵

What is hell?⁶ Chrislemews (Christians, Moslems and Jews) believe it is an environment created by God as a place of separation and torment. Allegedly, the first tenants were the rebellious angels led by Lucifer who were

⁴ Aleister Crowley, *Magick in Theory and Practice* (Paris: Lecram Press, 1929; Reprint, New York: Magickal Childe Publications, 1990).

⁵ See footnote 1.

⁶ "Helle" (Middle English), "Hel" (Anglo-Saxon), simply means hidden or concealed.

tossed out of heaven for obeying God's prime directive not to worship anyone but him. The story goes God was so pleased with his new creation, the human race, that he told the heavenly host to forget his first order and fall down and worship Adam. Lucifer, not particularly impressed with Adam, figured it was a bad idea and refused (probably thinking God would eventually become bored with his boy-toy and come to his senses). Well, it should be obvious to everybody that the God of the Chrislemews never did come to his senses, and his first paranoid act was to kick the brightest and most loyal employees out of the firm. Before he gave them the boot, however, he created a place to send them—a place as far below the Earth as Earth is below Heaven—Hell.

Then (so there would never be any doubt who was the father of the biggest dysfunctional family in the universe), God put Lucifer's crew in charge of the day-to-day maintenance of life on Earth. The Lord of Hell was also given permission to torment and play mind games with humanity until some unspecified date in the future, when God would deal out a final round of punishments; among these a special place in Hell for former members of the human race who, during life, did not see the wisdom of this divine plan.

Readers who may not have as yet divined *my* feelings concerning the Chrislemew spiritual worldview can stop reading now and turn the television back on. The rest of you may be asking why, if I hold the doctrine of heaven and hell in such contempt, do I participate in a spiritual exercise apparently based upon it? My answer, to be blunt, is simply this—*because it works*.

Now, don't misunderstand me. I do *not* worship the Chrislemew God. Neither do I believe in their devil, heaven, hell, judgment, or redemption. I *do*, however, believe that these concepts portray (albeit crudely)

certain fundamental truths concerning the nature of human consciousness. For those of us with brains, spines, and nervous systems, the grotesque elements of the Chrislemew fairy tale can be very real, indeed. Recognized and manipulated with skill, they can even contribute to our physical well-being and spiritual enlightenment.

Science tells us that we use only a tiny portion of our brains, and if our full potentials were realized we could exercise god-like powers—perhaps even program our VCRs. Aleister Crowley wrote, “The spirits of the Goetia are portions of the human brain.”⁷ Each section is endowed with particular powers and dedicated to executing specific tasks. Brain surgeons know that if you stimulate different areas of the brain with an electrical current the patient will react in different ways. Poke here, the left index finger twitches; poke there, the patient smells burning rubber, or recalls a childhood memory.

Could it be that in the matrix of the untapped recesses of our brains there are little areas that, if properly isolated, stimulated, and directed, are capable of performing all manner of wonders? Even more thrilling is the prospect that the brain and nervous system represent only the visible spectrum of vast invisible mind—a universal intelligence encompassing the consciousness of every monad in the cosmos. If this is so, our brains are merely terminals in a great intelligence network; the different areas functioning as keys on a keyboard. Activated with skill, they can generate messages and trigger commands to corresponding quadrants of the universal system.

⁷ *The Book of the Goetia of Solomon the King*, p. 17.

Under this scenario the debate over the objective or subjective reality of the spirits becomes irrelevant. Each magician's *microcosmic* Goetic spirit Sitri not only corresponds with every other magician's Sitri, but also resonates sympathetically with the great *macrocosmic* Sitri. As we conjure Sitri to evoke the passions of the girl next door, we are also rubbing elbows with the same "enchantment" that draws magnetic negatives to positives, causes atoms to unite to form molecules, and lures Shakti to Shiva.

If a Goetic demon is simply the power and potential of 1/72nd of the human brain, why is it considered an evil spirit? Is it because it punches the time-clock for Lucifer and gets bonuses for making your life miserable? Is it because it hates you because it is stuck in hell while you are free to eat pizza in your Porsche and stay up late and watch Letterman?

Like it or not, we all come hardwired with a complete set (twelve six-packs)⁸ of Goetic demons. Occasionally we unwittingly catch one and put it to work whenever we are forced to discipline ourselves to learn a specific skill, or in times of stress when we are required to draw upon extraordinary wit or courage or talent. Most of the time, however, they just run amok at our expense as we allow them to randomly discharge their energy in whichever direction offers the least resistance.

⁸ See chapter II, Table 3 (between pages 20–21). The seventy-two spirits of the Goetia are allotted in pairs (one for the day, one for the night) to each of the thirty-six decans of the Zodiac. Accordingly, it has been suggested that they are the qliphothic remnants of the seventy-two spirits of the Shem ha-Mephorash. Modern magicians debate this theory because the spirits of the Shem ha-Mephorash, while also attributed in pairs to the decans, by tradition each represent *five degrees* of their native decan.

They are units of untamed natural force within ourselves that we have ignored, denied, or disowned. They surface to work their mischief when our will is ambiguous and our resistance is low. After you have committed an embarrassing act of unbelievable stupidity you are really referring to *them* when you slap your forehead and scream, "I am my own worst enemy!" As long as they are ignored and uncontrolled, they are as dangerous as hungry beasts in an abandoned zoo.

Is it any wonder they are reluctant to be summoned into the triangle? Is it any wonder they try to frighten us into abandoning the operation by assuming unpleasant and terrifying forms? We have seen fit to be the absentee landlord to this roughneck crew for our entire life, we cannot expect them to be happy to see us the first time we appear at the door demanding that they clean up the place.

Besides being stubborn and scary, Goetic spirits have earned the "evil spirit" reputation because a small (but very noisy) percentage of magicians who involve themselves heavily in Goetic operations become quite mad. The cause of this embarrassing phenomenon can often be traced to a breech in the formula of Goetic evocation, an imbalance in the fundamental equation. To examine this flaw we must return briefly to Chrislemew archetypes and review some of the attitudes and procedures of traditional evocation.

*Their faces and their shapes are terrible and strange.
These devils by my might to angels I will change.
These nameless horrors I address without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.*⁹

⁹ See footnote 1.

The ancient conjurer stood poised between heaven and hell. He¹⁰ saw himself as the pious and dutiful servant of the omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God of the Bible. He aspired through the observance of religious oblations, austerities, and prayer to become worthy to possess the same powers that God vouchsafed to Moses, Aaron, and Joshua. Only by sincerely identifying himself as a conduit for this divine power could he feel empowered to summon and control the denizens of hell. Protected by this shield of righteousness,

*[A]rmed with power from the Supreme Majesty, I do strongly command thee, by Him Who spake and it was done, and unto whom all creatures be obedient. . . . [b]y that most mighty and powerful name of God, El, strong and wonderful. . . . [A]donai, El, Elohim, Eloihi, Ehyeh Ashar Ehyeh, Zabaoth, Elion, Iah, Tetragrammaton, Shaddäi, Lord God most High, I do exorcise thee and do powerfully command thee . . .*¹¹

confident in his knowledge of the hierarchical pecking-order of hell,

[B]y Beralanensis, Barldachiensis, Paumachia, and Apologiae Sedes; by the most Powerful

¹⁰ My apologies to the gender neutral sensitivities of 20th-century magicians. Even though there is absolutely nothing preventing women from practicing Goetic evocation, the classic texts generally assumed the conjurer was a man.

¹¹ See Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Goetia of Solomon the King*, first conjuration, p. 81.

*Princes, genii, Liachidae, and Ministers of the
Tartarean Abode; and by the Chief Prince of
the Seat of Apologia in the Ninth Legion . . .*¹²

and intoxicated by babbling a string of wild and exotic
“words of power”. . . .

*Arogogorobrao: Sothou: Modorio: Phalarthae:
Ooo: Ape!*¹³

the ancient conjurer operated from a tenuous position of balance. This balance had to be maintained long after the evocation ceremony concluded. If the magician focused too intently *either* upon micro-managing the details of his demon’s service, *or* upon being the uncompromising instrument of “God’s will,” the seeds of madness sprouted quite rapidly.

The modern magician must also remain balanced. Sadly, I have witnessed more than one mental casualty on the Goetic battlefield. Once it is discovered how easy it is to call up these critters, and how effectively they can be made to do your bidding, it becomes very tempting to call them all up and try to have them do everything for you. More often than not, this is a bad idea. You may think you are summoning the cooling winds to refresh your heated brow, when it’s embarrassingly obvious to all of your former friends that you’re only blowing your mind.

While I certainly do not claim to be the world’s greatest Goetic magician, I have practiced the art for

¹² Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Goetia of Solomon the King*, p. 81.

¹³ Aleister Crowley, *The Book of Goetia*, Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia, p. 7.

nearly twenty years and feel qualified to at least voice my opinion on the subject, and perhaps even offer some words of advice. I feel that Goetic evocation can be an important part of a modern magician's arsenal of skills. First and foremost, it requires that the magician establish a vital link with a higher consciousness—call it God, the Holy Guardian Angel, the Higher Self, the Superconscious Mind, or whatever. Secondly, in order to understand its subtleties and wield its power, the magician is forced to confront important emotional issues and character defects that, left unresolved, will continue to hinder his or her spiritual evolution. Even in a clinical setting, such confrontations are seldom pleasant. Finally, equilibrium must be achieved in all aspects of the magician's life, balancing the higher spiritual aspirations against the problems and challenges of everyday living. Properly executed, this is not only powerful magick but a recipe for good mental health.

As far as the evocation technique itself is concerned, I believe it is purely a matter of artistic taste. There are those whose respect for tradition and sense of art demands that every step of the evocation be executed precisely as outlined in the Sloane manuscripts. Traditional evocations are a thrill to behold. The reader who has been lucky enough to witness an evocation conducted by C. (Poke) Runyon in Southern California has seen a master at work.

Personally, I do not use the classic versions of the conjurations and constraints, nor do I protect my circle with the various Chrislemew holy names. I believe for me to identify with mythological characters I do not admire or guard my circle with the names of gods I do not worship would not only be hypocritical, but also dangerous. I do, however, acknowledge and incor-

porate the key elements that make this form of magic work:

- I use the circle and triangle surrounded by words and holy names sacred to me.
- I utilize talismans displaying the spirit's sigil, and the standard pentagrams and hexagrams of Solomon on my vestments.
- I ceremonially bathe and dress.
- I purify, consecrate, banish, and open the temple with appropriate ceremony.
- I induce a trance of righteous authority by the recitation of the *Gnostic Creed* and *Anthem* from Crowley's Gnostic Mass.
- I recite a customized version of the *Preliminary Invocation of the Goetia*.¹⁴
- I conjure in the Enochian language with the First Call and a brief Enochian summons.
- I welcome the spirit upon its appearance.¹⁵
- I give it a brief, unambiguous order and a time limit for its execution and demand from the spirit an oath that it will be carried out.
- I give it license to depart after I tell it that I will be a kind and generous master as long as it faithfully

¹⁴ From *A Fragment of a Graeco-Egyptian Work upon Magic*, from a Papyrus in the British Museum, trans. C.W. Goodwin (Cambridge: Deighton, Macmillan, London: J.W. Parker, Oxford: 1852), pp. 6, 8.

¹⁵ It is not necessary for you to see the spirit to know that it has arrived. Be sensitive to the "feel" of another consciousness in the room, like when a dog or cat is watching you.

serves me. I also inform the spirit that if it should prove disobedient I will punish it, and if necessary destroy it.

- I banish and wait until all vestige of a “spooky” feeling disappears.
- I keep the spirit’s sigil in a prepared container and watch for signs of it working on my behalf. If it fails to execute the charge in the prescribed time, I conjure it again and torture its sigil in fire while I remind it of its original agreement. Failing again, I conjure it one more time, destroy its seal completely and never acknowledge its existence again. *Note: You will soon run out of spirits if you demand outrageous or unreasonable things. The book outlines what these fellows do. Don’t be a complete jerk.*

I have discovered it is unwise to evoke a spirit to solve a problem until I am positive I have exhausted all other avenues of resolution. If you want to hurt someone, it is much more effective (and far more painful) to just punch him or her in the nose and take the consequences. Asking a Goetic spirit to do it for you only reveals to the demon that you are a coward and unworthy of faithful service.

I cannot claim that every evocation has been a success. On the contrary, I have had quite a few blow up in my face. In fact these “failures” have been more instructive than the successes. I confess that on more than one occasion the operation succeeded superbly in bringing out the worst in me, and forced me to deal with the unpleasantness on the spot. In the final analysis, that is exactly what is supposed to happen.

*These are the phantoms pale of mine astonished view,
Yet none but I their blasted beauty can renew;
For to the abyss of hell I plunge without affright:
On them will I impose my will, the law of light.*¹⁶

I have been privileged in my life to meet a number of individuals whom I consider to be (by any definition) great magicians. Some are venerable stars in the magical firmament whose names are familiar to many in our subculture. Most, however, are ordinary women and men who have quietly achieved illumination, and with great art are proceeding to exercise their wills upon the world. A character trait they all have in common is an almost self-effacing refusal to hide their flaws and shortcomings. In fact, the magick of their lives appears to be built upon their ability to transmute these liabilities into assets. Never veiling their vices in virtuous words, these modern magi seek for truth even in their own naughtiness. They do not run from their demons or attempt to destroy them. Instead, they seize them, one at time; force them to recognize who is boss; clean them up; give them real energy to eat and real jobs to do.

King Solomon, by tradition the Grand Master of this magical tradition, is said to have built the great temple of God with the organized labor of demons. This lusty and sincere man of God, who fearlessly plumbed the infernal realms for the glory of his deity, is, indeed, an appropriate icon for the magical art that bears his name. I have a feeling that if we were to conjure Solomon to visible appearance today and ask him how he achieved such perfection, the wise wizard would answer by simply telling us all to "Go to hell!"

¹⁶ Aleister Crowley, *The Equinox*, Vol. I (1), p. 109.

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Although Lon Milo DuQuette takes the subject of ceremonial magick very seriously, he tries to remember not to take himself too seriously. This rare combination of common sense and humor have, in the last ten years, earned him a respected position in the world of modern occultism.

Since 1975 DuQuette has served as a national and international governing officer of Order Templi Orientis, one of the most influential magical societies of the 20th century. He is an acknowledged authority on the life and magick of the O.T.O.'s most celebrated member, Aleister Crowley. His 1993 *The Magick of Thelema: A*



Handbook of the Rituals of Aleister Crowley, published by Samuel Weiser, is considered a classic in its field, and has been hailed as the first useful primer for Thelemic ritual magick.

In 1991 he was asked by noted author and occultist, Christopher S. Hyatt, Ph.D., to co-author a series of books dealing with the fundamental concepts and psychological implications of ceremonial magick.¹ In 1991 he was privileged to be invited by Magickal Childe Publishing to write the introduction to its release of one of the most important magical texts of all time, Meric Casaubon's *A True and Faithful relation . . .*, the magical diaries of Dr. John Dee.²

His *Tarot of Ceremonial Magick* was published by Samuel Weiser in 1995, along with a deck (U.S. Games Systems, Inc., 1995) created with his wife, Constance, to bring to life the practical applications of Enochian Magick, Goetic Evocation, and astrology.

Angels, Demons & The Gods of the New Millennium brings many years of wisdom and practice to a new audience.

Lon and Constance DuQuette live in Newport Beach, California.

¹ *Enochian World of Aleister Crowley* (1996), *Aleister Crowley's Illustrated Goetia* (1992), *Sex Magick Tantra and Tarot* (1996), and *Taboo* (1992); Scottsdale, AZ: New Falcon Publications.

² New York: Magickal Childe Publishing, 1992.

Angels...

The apparent descent of spirit into matter is just an illusion of digressive defects in perception—a cascade of consciousness, each level forgetful of the level just above it. Initiatory landmarks such as the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel aren't steps upon a ladder; rather they are shifts of consciousness—awakenings. You could say the rest of the universe has already pulled its act together and is just waiting for you to wake up to the fact.

Demons...

Like it or not, we all come hard-wired with a complete set (twelve six-packs) of Goetic demons. They are units of untamed natural forces within ourselves that we have ignored, denied or dis-owned. They surface to work their mischief when our will is ambiguous and our resistance is low. After you have committed an embarrassing act of unbelievable stupidity you are really referring to them when you slap your forehead and scream, "I am my own worst enemy!" As long as they are ignored and uncontrolled, they are as dangerous as hungry beasts in an abandoned zoo.

& Gods of the New Millennium

What pantheon of gods could possibly preside over a world where every man and every woman is a star—self-radiant and co-equal to every other star in the universe? What powers or agencies still govern an environment populated by independent creative beings? The answer becomes obvious when we grasp the fact that we are running out of cosmic elbow room. When all is said and done, worshippers of the New Millennium are left with three fundamental deities: "the absolutely biggest One; the absolutely smallest One; and the One that is everything between the other two."

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