

Lion & Serpent

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The view from the summit of the earth.

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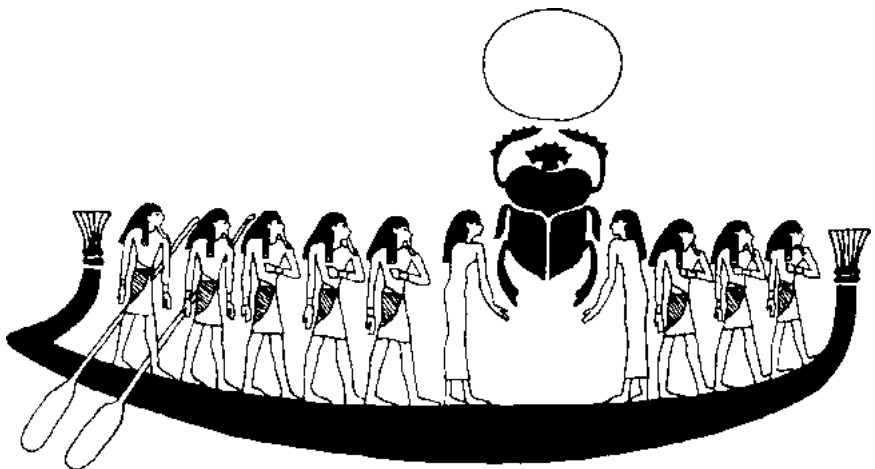
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The First Page

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

The summer months a year ago saw us all working on NOTOCON. Well, it looks like this summer's acronym might be LOTOCON (Local OTO Construction project)... 'Cause no sooner had we passed the first year mark for the Portland Thelemic Community Center than we discovered it was time to move to a new facility. Undaunted, the search began, and in July a large, nearly 2000 sq. ft. space was leased. Great space, but rough on the edges. Consequently, it became obvious What We All Did the Summer of 2000. Even as I write, Brothers and Sisters are over at the new Center, cutting insulation, putting up drywall, climbing scaffolding, and just generally throwing mind and muscle into transforming it into a fully functional temple/classroom/office mega-space. It'll take a few weeks yet, of course, before that final coat of paint gets applied, all the temple gear gets moved out of storage, and we get back to a full schedule of local events; but, in the meantime, folks have been opening up their basements, backyards, and living rooms for occasional events (not to mention making sure to reserve a regular Tuesday night table at R & R).

Meanwhile:

From the Lone Star State: Brother Ash dropped in from Austin for his sister's wedding and got a chance to socialize with the local membership at BOG and a backyard barbecue (plus he got the mandatory tour of Powell's).

A Spot o' Tea: Bro. Diapason and Sr. Isabella made a pit stop in the UK for a few days, hung with Brother S. and some of the London membership, and rendezvoused with Sister C. (who was over there for a five week school-exchange program, and other surprising developments...). They returned home just in time to welcome a fresh batch of five Minervals.

Spreading her Wings Southward: Sister J. has, as anticipated, relocated to Southern Oregon. We wish here all the best, but we're sure gonna miss her.

Jazz-Funk or Funk-Jazz?? : The Darsan Trio played an outdoor festival gig at Mt. Hood College (thanks to Brother H. for putting this one together).

Cuter than Ever: The youngest member of the Brother D. and Sister N. brood underwent his anticipated corrective eye surgery with flying colors.

Write On: Brother K. has inaugurated a weekly writing group (which is what Thelemites notoriously seem to do during those infrequent intervals when they aren't talking or reading...).

In Memoriam: With deep sorrow and even deeper joy we wish Brother Alex B. a swift and ecstatic ride to his Greater Feast. He will be missed.

Love is the law, love under will.

Fraternally,
Frater Diapason

Prayer to Sekhmet

by Soror Viktoria

O SEKHMET, DESTROYER OF THE INESSENTIAL,

Cleanse from me all which hinders the broadening of my experience,

my tolerance, and my generosity of heart.

REVEAL THE SEED OF BRIGHTNESS,

Uncover my Heart's Desire,

And bring that silence of peace

In which its voice I may hear.

O SUN, LIGHT THIS DARKENED HOUSE

Devour with your rays the pride of my ignorance

Clear away all obstacles in my path,

And with Beauty inspire me on my Way.

O, TERRIBLE! O, IRRESISTABLE!

PRAISE UNTO SEKHMET THE MIGHTY!

And woe unto him who would make War upon Her,

For even the greatest is subdued by Her Love

And the World overwhelmed with the children of Her Victories!

Analysis of the Gnostic Mass (Part I)

by Frater V.I.T.R.I.O.L. with assistance and additional commentary by Soror A.R.G.M.

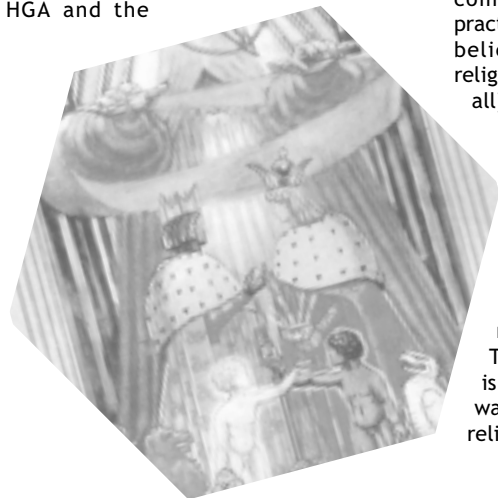
Liber XV, the Gnostic Mass, is the central public and private ritual of the OTO and EGC, being itself a IX° operation. All of the secrets of the Order are contained within it, in symbol and ceremony. Yet it strikes me that a little bit of pre-production analysis would be of great benefit to everyone who has seen it. Aleister Crowley was a gifted ritualist, but the full extent of those gifts can really only be appreciated if we study and analyze the rituals that he wrote. In order to gain a fuller understanding of them we must not only observe or read about them, but we must also, of necessary, perform them. Let the phrase "Theory and Practice" be kept always uppermost in mind!

"While Liber XV is hardly a Class A publication, explaining and interpreting any of Crowley's writings is always risky business." - from *The Gnostic Mass: Annotations and Commentary* by Helena and Tau Apyron, <http://www.hermetic.com/sabazius/gmnotes.htm>, i.e. the Invisible Basilica of Sabazius (hereafter referred to as IBS.). What is the Gnostic Mass about? Here are a few opinions:

"Harry Furlong XXIII of the Cabal of Cabbage Enthusiasts has to say of Al Crowley's Gnostic mass.. 'well... when I wear my hermetic goggles I see a symbolic representation of the attainment of K&C of HGA and the

crossing of the ABYSS. when I wear my catholic goggles I see a diabolical abomination of the mass. when I wear my liberal catholic goggles I see a devotional rite for the BVM (as long as the priestess keeps her robe on..) when I wear my THELEMA goggles I see NUIT and HADIT getting it on and AIWASS telling us all the juicy details. when I wear my magician goggles I see a rite to be used to manifest a desire. when I wear my materialist goggles I see a symbolic enactment of the sex act. when I wear my astrophysicist goggles I see the formation of a solar system. when I wear my sci-fi goggles I see our frog brothers from the star system SIRIUS calling us home. I don't know what magick IS. I don't have a fucking clue what religion IS. and I REALLY don't know what the gnostic mass IS. it seems (along with everything else in all the universes I've visited... um... remember visiting) to have the qualities of a fractal creature with a highly reflective surface. monkeys suffering from the ARISTOTLE SYNDROME tend to look at these reflective fractal creatures and mistake their monkey reflections for qualities in the creature itself.' but Harry tends to BE full of shit so I wouldn't take him seriously." - Fr. O.G.

"Thelema is a law of nature. It does not require faith, service, devotion, worship, commitment, institutions, attitudes, practices, conformity, causes, principles, or beliefs. (See dictionary definition of religion.) Christianity requires most (if not all) of these things. ... Thelema is not a religion. The confusion arises because religious praxis (i.e. practice) is often used in order to understand Thelema and to live in harmony with it. ... The Mass has all these things. Thelema does not require them. The fact that the Mass has these elements does not mean that those elements must be present in order to "typify" Thelema ... Ecclesia Gnostica Catholica is a religion which celebrates Thelema by way of the Gnostic Mass. Thelema is not a religion." - Joe Thiebes



Various Purposes the Gnostic Mass May Serve

- ⊕ An operation of the IX°
- ⊕ A rite for the invocation of the K&C of the HGA
- ⊕ A method of obtaining Samadhi
- ⊕ A simple siglizing rite
- ⊕ A form of talismanic magick
- ⊕ A religious ceremony celebrating the adventures of the qabalistic god
- ⊕ Religious worship of the Goddess
- ⊕ Religious worship of the God
- ⊕ A practical sex magick rite played in symbolic form
- ⊕ The mating ritual of the opposites
- ⊕ The creation of the Magickal Child, or Immortal Fetus
- ⊕ Creation of a homunculus
- ⊕ The invocation of Ra-Hoor-Khuit
- ⊕ The mystery play of Thelemic cosmology
- ⊕ A symbolic revelation of the system of OTO
- ⊕ etc.

We can learn everything that we need to know about the Gnostic Mass by studying the Lovers card in the Thoth deck, and then its completion in the Art card.

The Mass is a solar-phallic rite. The Sun is seen as the (active) life-giving force for the (passive) Earth, and the phallus is seen as the life-giving force for humankind. "The PHALLUS, then, in its capacity as 'the sole viceregent of the Sun upon Earth,' represents the creative and life-giving Fire as it manifests itself in living beings who dwell on the surface of this planet. ... In the context used in the Gnostic Mass ... the name "PHALLUS" or "PHALLE" should not be confused with the word "penis" ... The term "Phallicism" as used by Sir Richard Payne Knight and others does not refer to penis-worship, but to the worship of the Generative Power - a Power which dwells in sexually mature individuals of both sexes. ... Israel Regardie, in *The Eye in the Triangle*, quotes Crowley as having said, 'When you have proved that God is merely a name for the sex instinct, it appears to me not far to the perception that the sex instinct is God.'" - IBS



A Brief Outline of the Gnostic Mass

- ⊕ The Creed - A compact overview of the EGC belief system
- ⊕ The Priestess enters and performs the conjunction of the Sun (fire altar) and Moon (water altar) via the Serpentine motion
- ⊕ The Priestess awakens the Priest from the tomb and consecrates him with Earth and Water (salt water), Fire and Air (incense) and invests him with the robes of his Office
- ⊕ The Priest thrones and consecrates the Priestess with Earth and Water (salt water), Fire and Air (incense)
- ⊕ The procession and adoration of the Lance, the generative Power
- ⊕ The Priest's invocation to Nuit
- ⊕ The Priestess' speech as Nuit
- ⊕ The Priest's invocation of Hadit
- ⊕ The Deacon's declaration of the Calendar of Thelema
- ⊕ The Priest's invocation of Ra-Hoor-Khuit
- ⊕ The parting of the Veil
- ⊕ The Collects - A further outline of 11 important precepts in EGC
- ⊕ The Consecration of the Cakes and Wine
- ⊕ The Anthem (declaration of the process)
- ⊕ The Lance and a portion of the Host goes into the Cup - the act itself
- ⊕ The Host and Wine is consumed (sublimated)
- ⊕ The People communicate as did the Priest
- ⊕ The Priest returns to the Tomb - the End.

An Outline derived from IBS

OF THE CEREMONY OF THE INTROIT

The Proclamation of the Law
The Creed
The Entry of the Priestess and Children
The Entry of the Priest
The Confession of the Priest
The Lustration of the Priest
The Consecration of the Priest
The Vesture of the Priest
The Coronation of the Priest
The Consecration of the Lance, and the
Invocation of the Lord

OF THE CEREMONY OF THE OPENING OF THE VEIL

The Raising of the Priestess
The Circumambulation of the Temple
The Ascent to the Veil
The Priest's First Oration Before the Veil
The Priestess's Oration From Behind the Veil
The Priest's Second Oration Before the Veil
The Calendar
The Priest's Third Oration Before the Veil
The Opening of the Veil

OF THE OFFICE OF THE COLLECTS WHICH ARE ELEVEN IN NUMBER

OF THE CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS The Trisagion or Sanctus

OF THE OFFICE OF THE ANTHEM

OF THE MYSTIC MARRIAGE AND CONSUMMATION OF THE ELEMENTS

The Blessing of the Elements
The Fractio
The Consignatio and Commixto
The Epiklesis
The Consummation of the Elements
The Benediction (Benedictio)

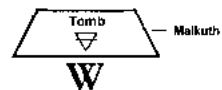
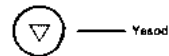
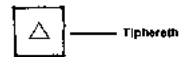
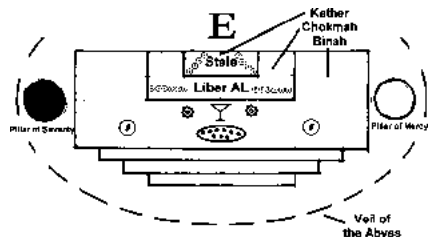
The information used in the following step-by-step analysis of the Gnostic Mass has been derived from a variety of sources, including, but not limited to: Lon and Constance DuQuette, IBS and Red Flame No. 2, the works of Aleister Crowley, and my own experience and study as a Priest of the Gnostic Mass. It is by no means a complete analysis (if such a thing is even possible!) and is meant only as a guide to further studies. Study, analyze, observe, and perform!

The symbolism of the Mass simultaneously takes place on many levels, Assiah, Yetzirah, Briah and Atziluth, and the various interpretations reflect this. An action can be seen as having meaning and effect on all these levels, depending on what set of "glasses" you have on. My analysis will

jump levels from one phrase to another, so don't let the contradictions throw you.

Interpretations of quotations from Liber AL are mainly left to the individual. Any interpretations that I do are prefaced by the anagram C.O.P. which stands for Center Of Pestilence.

Alterations I have made to the stage directions are mainly a matter of clarification, or reflect my own preferred practice. For those who would say that it can only be Liber XV if the script is followed exactly, I respectfully submit that they study the works of Shakespeare and the performance practices involved therewith.



LIBER XV

ECCLESIA GNOSTICA CATHOLICA

by To Mega Therion

My comments and quotes from other sources are in **bold**, Sr. Viktoria's comments are in *<<italics>>* and my stage directions are surrounded by [square brackets]. Crowley instructions that have been replaced or altered are ~~crossed out~~.

I

ON THE FURNISHINGS OF THE TEMPLE

The temple is setup on the Tree of Life format, with emphasis on the middle pillar. It may also be seen as a representation of the Lamén. (See illustration.)

In the East, that is, in the direction of Boleskine, which is situated on the south-eastern shore of Loch Ness in Scotland, two miles east of Foyers, is a shrine or High Altar. It's dimensions should be 7 feet in length the 7 lower sephirah, 3 feet in breadth the 3 supernals, 44 inches in height the height of the double cube altar, also the 4 elements in the 4 worlds (44). "The Altar is sized to be of the dimensions of a typical Egyptian sarcophagus." - IBS It should be covered with a crimson altar-cloth, on which may be embroidered fleur-de-lys in gold, or a sunblaze, or other suitable emblem. Solar-Phallic symbology.

On each side of it should be a pillar or Obelisk, with countercharges in black and white. The pillars of Severity and Mercy, the light and dark pillars, Boaz and Jachin, etc.

Below it should be the dais of three steps, in black and white squares. The 3 steps may represent IAO, the 3 Triads, the 3 Triangles, the 3 Stages of Life and Initiation, Salt-Sulfur-Mercury, the 3 chapters of the Book of the Law, the aeonic progression of Isis, Osiris, Horus, etc. The Black and White squares are yin/yang, +1(-1), etc.

Above it is the super-altar, at whose top is the Stele of Revealing in reproduction, with four candles on each side of it. The Stele is raised above all other furniture and Officers, where it "presides" over the Temple. The Aeon card in the Thoth deck is based on the Stele, linking the image of the Stele with the concept of the Aeon of Ra-Hoor-Khuit. Thus, its position may be seen as representing the presiding current or energy of the Aeon. This current is manifested within the matrix of space/time by the 8 candles, 4 to a side: the 4 elements in the 4 worlds. They also may be seen as the 8 paths above the Abyss. The Stele occupies the position of Kether. Below the stele is a place for The Book of the Law, with six candles on each side of it. The "Word" or "Logos" is in Chokmah, the position of V.V.V.V.V, or the Magus. See *Liber B vel Magi* for further information. It is held within the belt of the Zodiac as represented by the 12 candles, 6 to a side. Also, 6 and 6 could be seen as the exterior Sun and the interior Sun, the BoL being the "conduit" or communication between the two, the link between objective and subjective. Below this again is The Holy Graal, with roses on each side of it. The Ace of Cups. The Graal is Binah, Specific Water or Water on the highest octave, the feminine principle (yoni on the physical plane), the cup of Babalon into which the blood (thoughts, semen, etc.) of the Saints is poured. The roses can be linked to Geburah (red English 5 petal roses) or

Netzach (the flower of Venus). There is room in front of the Cup for the Paten. The Paten is the Ace of Disks, the body itself, Malkuth, also the womb. The Hosts are Yesod, the female eggs. Together, Paten and Hosts are the qabalistic Guph. The Cup and Paten taken together are the alchemical Sun and Moon. On each side beyond the roses, are two great candles. Usually one black and one white, a recapitulation of the 2 pillars.

The Cup, roses, Paten, Hosts, and Candles together form a glyph of the Chariot card. The Altar itself is Binah, the roses symbols of Geburah. The Grail of Babalon is borne by the charioteer (paten and hosts) by the two polar animals (candles) along the path of Cheth between Binah and Geburah.

From IBS - "All 5 elements are symbolically represented ... Air is represented by the roses, Water is represented by the Cup, Fire is represented by the candles, Earth is represented by the Paten and Hosts, Spirit is represented by the Stele ... The arrangement of the implements on the super-altar and High Altar recapitulates the Tree of Life. In this case, the Stèle, atop the super-altar, is at Kether, the Book of the Law (as Logos) is one step below at Tiphareth, the Cup is at Yesod, and the space for the Paten in front of the Cup is at Malkuth. The Priestess completes this Tree when she places the Paten on the Altar in front of the Cup. It may also be noted that the Stèle, Book, and Cup correspond to the three principal elements of the Lamen of the O.T.O.: the Eye in the Triangle, the descending Dove, and the Holy Graal, respectively."

There are a total of 22 candles, 2 x 11, the total number of the Paths, and the rays on the Lamen.

All this is enclosed within a great Veil. The Veil of the Abyss, or on a lower octave, the Veil of Paroketh.

Forming the apex of an equilateral triangle whose base is a line drawn between the pillars, is a small black square altar, of superimposed cubes. The fire altar, Tiphareth.

Taking this altar as the middle of the base of a similar and equal triangle, at the apex of this second triangle is a small circular font. The water altar, Yesod.

Repeating, the apex of a third triangle is an upright tomb. The Malkuth altar. "Entombed in flesh."

This gives us the 3 triangles, Supernal, Ethical, Astral, and the form of the Lamen.

II

OF THE OFFICERS OF THE MASS

The Priest. **Sulfur, Emperor, the Beast, Chokmah, Hadit, Yod. The Black King on the Lovers card.** Bears the Sacred Lance penis, the phallic force, and is clothed at first in a plain white robe a burial shroud in the Tomb, i.e. night, winter, death, etc.

The Priestess. **Salt, Empress, Babalon, Binah, Nuit, Heh. The White Queen on the Lovers Card.** Should be actually Virgo Intacta, or specially dedicated to the service of the Great Order. See *Little Essays Towards Truth* for Crowley's take on Chastity. She is clothed in white, blue, and gold. "My colour is black to the blind, but the blue & gold are seen of the seeing." - *Liber AL*. White indicates purity of purpose. She bears the Sword the weapon of intellect and discernment "Let the woman be girt with a sword before me: let blood flow to my name" - *Liber AL*. Also a reference to sex magick, i.e. sword = penis from a red girdle the blood of life, indicates fertility, and a Paten and Hosts, or Cakes of Light. **Womb and eggs.**

The Priest and Priestess together = the Hermit Triad.

The Deacon. **Mercury, Magician, Aiwaz, Tiphareth, Vav. The Angel on the Lovers Card.** He is clothed in white and yellow. Yellow = Sun, white = purity or yellow on a higher octave, i.e. Kether He bears The Book of the Law. The bearer of the Logos. The Lovers Triad.

Two Children. **Guph, Heru Ra Ha & Hoor-paar-kraat, Heh final. The Children on the Lovers card, also the spheres on the Devil Card.** They are clothed in white and black. Yin/yang One the black child bears a pitcher of water and a cellar of salt earth, and the other the white child a censer of fire and a casket of perfume air. They represent the Priest and Priestess of the future, or the Priest and Priestess on a lower octave. The Man of Earth Triad.

The Congregation also represents the MoE Triad.

III

OF THE CEREMONY OF THE INTROIT

The Deacon, opening the door of the Temple, admits the congregation, and takes his stand between the small altar and the font. In the position of Air (see Temple diagram), on the path of Samekh (There should be a doorkeeper to attend to the admission.)

The Deacon advances and bows before the open shrine where the Grail is exalted. **Note that the**

Grail is already in place before the paten & cookies appear. This is the "pre-incarnate" state, so to speak. He kisses The Book of the Law three times, once for each grade, or for Nuit, Hadit, Ra-Hoor-Khuit. In some traditions, "knocks" (here kisses) on altars and magical weapons serves to "wake them up", make them ready for use opens it so the word of the Law may "speak", and places it upon the super-alter in Chokmah, the position of the Magus, or Magician. He turns West. He stays at the top step to bring the "word" down from "on high" to the people. Think Moses and the 10 commandments.

Deacon - Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law. I proclaim the Law of Light, Life, Love, and Liberty <<four "Ls" make a swastika, also Breath of Deacon, his "weapon" (air, words, Aleph) declares the Law (Lamed), Aleph + Lamed = AL>> see Liber L-L-L-L-L for further details in the name of IAO. Again the tripartite formula. I am the Alpha and the Omega.

Congregation - Love is the law, love under will.

The Deacon goes to his place between the altar of incense and the font, faces east the direction of the rising (born) sun, and gives the step and sign of a Man and a Brother. All imitate him. Theoretically this would indicate that only I° and above should be present, however, we use obsolete Masonic signs for public Masses instead. Common practice is for the congregation to omit the step and only do the sign. Indicates being born into the Mysteries.

Deacon and Congregation - I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD Kether, more or less; and in one Star in the Company of Stars of whose fire we are created i.e. the Sun, and to which we shall return this talks about the highest samadhi, as well as the physical fact that all matter on Earth was born from the Sun and will eventually return there when the Earth falls into the Sun; and in one Father of Life, Mystery of Mystery, in His name CHAOS Chokmah, the sole vice-regent of the Sun upon the Earth phallus; and in one Air chi the nourisher of all that breathes.

And I believe in one Earth Malkuth, the Mother of us all, and in one Womb wherein all men are begotten <<Malkuth/Yesod>> i.e. matter or the physical womb, and wherein they shall rest <<Binah or Shabbathai, which means "rest">> the grave, or the timeless deathless trance, or as the Mind with capital M rests during the supreme moment of orgasm, Mystery of Mystery, in Her name BABALON Binah.

And I believe in the Serpent and the Lion i.e. spermatozoon, also Leo, also Gnostic compound deity, also penis and orgasm, Mystery of Mystery, in His name BAPHOMET compound deity of the Templars here identified with the Lion/Serpent or Lion/Fish compound deity.

And I believe in one i.e. not two, no schisms here! Gnostic i.e. direct knowledge and Catholic i.e. comprehensive, universal, broad in sympathies, tastes or interests Church of Light, Life, Love and Liberty, the Word of whose Law is THELEMA. The EGC in the outer. Or in the inner, the "invisible college", the "inner church."

And I believe in the communion the act or instance of sharing, the sacrament, or bread and wine of Saints. As listed in the "Saints" section. Could be seen as implying that we are ourselves on the same level as the Saints, that we are ourselves Saints. <<In vodou, the "communion of the Saints" is any ritual of worship in which the Gods descend into the physical flesh of the devotees, essentially a direct and literal gnosis>>

And, for as much as meat and drink are transmuted in us daily into spiritual substance, I believe in the Miracle of the Mass. We are naught but spiritual substance, that is all we can truly know, i.e. the doctrine of subjectivity. Also lead to gold.

And I confess one Baptism of Wisdom fucking, whereby we accomplish the Miracle of Incarnation. Being born.

And I confess my life one, individual, and eternal that was, and is, and is to come. <<The Oak and Acorn chain - the idea of the present creature being the bearer of the genetic information through ALL his parents stretching back to the beginning, and also the idea of the individual (reproductive) creature being the Father or Mother of all that are ever to come of his/her "line"; the reality of physical immortality, the "DNA" continuity>>

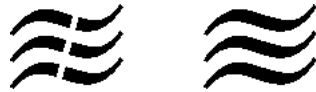
AUMGN. AUMGN. AUMGN. The Thelemic Amen x3. For a full analysis of the word "aumgn" see *Magick in Theory and Practice*.

For more on the Creed, also see Red Flame #2 Chapter 3.

Music is now played. The [black] child enters with the ewer and the salt. The Virgin enters with the Sword and the Paten. The [white] child enters with the censer and the perfume. They face the Deacon, deploying into a line, from the space between the two altars. [i.e. between the fire

altar and the Veil. They should end up with the Black Child on stage right, and the White Child on stage left, regardless of what part of the Temple they enter from.] Note that the Priestess enters from *outside* of the Temple, from outside of the Tree of Life, from outside of the normal phenomenal universe. She is the magical agent that is beyond normal perception, "thou beyond speech and beyond sight," that which alone can effect change. The Priestess may be seen as the very embodiment of Magick.

Virgin - Greeting of Earth and Heaven! Malkuth and Kether. Stresses middle pillar, also identification of the highest with the lowest "Kether is in Malkuth and Malkuth in Kether after another fashion." From IBS: "The Priestess exhibits dual feminine aspects, corresponding to Babalon (Earth) and Nuit (Heaven), the Empress (Earth) and the High Priestess (Heaven)." Also, in I Ching, the Earth Trigram and the Heaven Trigram are on opposite ends of the spectrum:



All give the Hailing sign of a Magician, the Deacon leading. Another old Masonic sign. Indicates Life and capability in the Mysteries.

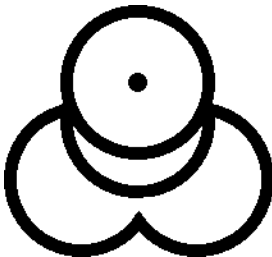
The Priestess, from IBS: "The Virgin is now referred to as the Priestess. The only event that has happened is that all have greeted her with the Hailing Sign, and she has turned away from the congregation in order to ascend the steps of the High Altar. She becomes Priestess both through the recognition of the People, and through her own self-dedication to the Highest." Also she may be seen as having always been a Priestess, with Virgin being simply an alternative title. See comment above where she first enters the Temple the negative [black] child on her left, the positive [white] on her right, ascends the steps of the High Altar, they awaiting her below. [i.e. the Children do not ascend the steps, but wait at the bottom.] She places the Paten before the Grail. Having adored it, she descends, and with the children following her, the positive [white] next her, she moves in a serpentine manner involving 3 1/2 circles of the Temple. This indicates the serpents path up the Tree, the motion of Shakti, the movement of energy up the spine (the straight line of the temple as the spine.) By this action, she makes herself a Priestess, capable of wakening the "Eld" of the Priest. In the Tetragrammaton formula, it is the Princess (Heh final) that rejuvenates the

dying God (Yod) and which thus makes the formula cyclic, instead of a static one-way trip. In the Thoth deck, all of the Princesses are Priestesses. From IBS: "The Kundalini is said to be coiled 3 1/2 times around the Svayambhu Linga located in the Muladhara Chakra at the base of the spine." (Deosil about altar, widdershins about font, deosil about altar and font, widdershins about altar and so to the Tomb in the West.) [The Black Child on her left and the White Child on her right.] She draws her Sword, and pulls down the Veil, therewith. Indicative of the action of discernment in the physical world, and it's use in pulling down the veil to the "inner life." <<"dividing for the sake of union">>

Priestess - By the power of + the sign of light, LVX, crosses indicate an "infusion" of light. <<in some traditions (vodou, the toltecs, etc.), crosses are used not only to sanctify, but to open up a "gateway-mark" for the divine energy to come through. Crosses can likewise be used to "seal-up," depending on the manner made and the intent>> Iron besides the sword, also indicates blood, incarnation, reproduction, <<menstrual blood/womb lining as waiting nourishment for the fertilized egg to come>> From IBS: "Iron is the metal of Mars, Ra Hoor Khuit, the initiatory force. Mars is attributed to the Svadhista Chakra, located in the pelvic region. I say unto thee, Arise come into life, into erection, into "inner life" in the name of our Lord the + Sun Tiphareth, and of our Lord + ... Kether that thou mayst administer the virtues a beneficial quality or power of a thing to the Brethren.

She sheathes the Sword.

The Priest, issuing from the Tomb not unlike the child from the womb, or the penis from the zipper ;-), holding the Lance erect with both hands, right over left active over passive in the attitude of Ptah, against his breast, takes the first three regular steps. This indicates his status as a Master Magician. The Master Magician has experienced the cycle of Birth - Life - Death, and therefore is in a position



to act with knowledge. All subsequent degrees are pendants to the mysteries of the first three. Old Masonic steps are used.

He then gives the Lance to the Priestess, and gives the three penal signs. Old Masonic signs are used.

He then kneels, and worships the Lance with both hands. The adoration of the (as of yet only potential) generative force.

Penitential music. Penitential = "of or relating to penitence or penance" "sorrow for sins or faults" - Webster's

Priest - I am a man among men. i.e. I am not a priest yet, just a dude.

He takes again the Lance, and lowers it. [I like to actually tap the butt of the lance on the ground at this point.] The lance is thus put in its inactive, passive position, i.e. flaccid. He rises.

Priest - How should I be worthy to administer the virtues to the Brethren? How shall I become a priest? One could just as easily say god here in place of priest.

The Priestess takes from the [black] child the water and the salt, and mixes them in the font. [If there are no Children, the water and salt are already on the water altar, and the Priestess simply goes there.]

Priestess - Let the salt of Earth passive element earth, Malkuth admonish the Water passive element water, the element of primal birth to bear the virtue of the Great Sea Binah, or the Sea of evolution. (Genuflects.) Mother, be thou adored. Binah, the Great Mother, the Goddess. In sum, the activation of the passive elements, earth and water.

She returns to the West. + on Priest with open hand Yod means open hand doth she make, over his forehead Mind - Hod, or 3rd Eye Chakra, breast Spirit - Tiphareth or Emotions - Netzach, or Heart Chakra, and body Body - Malkuth or Root/Genital Chakra/s. This is all done with the passive elements.

Priestess - Be the Priest pure a passive virtue of body and soul!

[She returns the ewer to the Black Child.] She takes the censer from the [white] child, and places it on the small altar. She puts incense therein. [If there are no Children, she simply replaces the ewer on the water altar on her way to the fire altar, where the censer and incense already are.]

Priestess - Let the Fire active element fire and the Air active element air make sweet the world!

The perfumes are attributed to Yesod. (Genuflects.) Father, be thou adored. Chokmah, the Sky Father, the Horned God. In sum, the activation of the active elements, fire and air.

She returns West and makes + with the censer before the Priest, thrice as before. As before, only with the active elements.

Priestess - Be the Priest fervent an active virtue of body and soul! [She returns the censer to the White Child.] [If there are no Children, the Priestess returns the censer to the fire altar, and then returns to the West.]

This concludes the full activation of the 4 elements on the Priest, the full Tetragrammaton formula. Done as a 2-fold operation.

(The children resume their weapons as they are done with.)

The Deacon now takes the consecrated Robe from the High Altar and brings it to her. She robes the Priest in his Robe of scarlet and gold.

Priestess - Be the flame of the Sun thine ambiance, O thou Priest of the SUN! Now has the Priest been actually made a Priest, and a Priest of the Sun (Tiphareth) at that.

The Deacon brings the crown from the High Altar. (The crown may be of gold or platinum, or of electrum magicum; but

with no other metals, save the small proportions necessary to a proper alloy. i.e. the crown of the Sun King, as in Persia and the cult of Mithraism, anointed of the gods, so it needs to indicate Tiphereth and/or Kether. It may be adorned with divers jewels about it, at will. But it must have the Uraeus serpent twined about it indicative of Kundalini, and the cap of maintenance must match the scarlet of the Robe.)



<<"I charge you to come before me in a single robe, and covered in a rich headdress.">>. Its texture should be velvet. Fashion statements.

Priestess - Be the Serpent thy crown, O thou Priest of the LORD! i.e. may enlightenment sit on your brows. The Lord in this case could mean Kether, as in the Lord ... <<Serpent Kundalini awakened and ascended up the spine to the crown, the preliminary energy-movement goal>> Kundalini is up the spine, the crosses are down the front. In Taoist practices, this is the microcosmic orbit of energy up the spine and then down the front of the body to the "Sea of Chi" in the Hara, or space about an inch below the belly button.

Kneeling, she takes the Lance between her open hands and runs them up and down upon the shaft eleven times the number of magick, very gently. don't want to pull that dick out by the roots! This activates the phallic energy, turning the lance to its erect, active state. It is common practice for the Priest at this point to bring the lance to some sort of upright position. This has been done by virtue of the actions of the Priestess, not the Priest.

Priestess - Be the LORD the phallic principle present among us! At this point, the Priest has been appointed representative of Tiphereth (Sun), Kether (Lord...) and Yesod (Phallae, the generative principle). The Phalle symbol in itself also represents the entire course of the ToL.

All give the Hailing Sign.

People - So mote it be. An old Masonic formula that means "So may it be." I like to think of it as "Make it so!"

IV

OF THE CEREMONY OF THE OPENING OF THE VEIL

Priest - Thee therefore whom we adore we also invoke. This is the formula of Bhakti yoga. By the power of the lifted Lance! This is an invocation of Tiphereth by the power of the phallus, not an invocation of the phallus itself. <<By the power of my Desire! By the power of the awakened Will>>

He raises the Lance. Woo-hoo! The Priest is potent and capable of producing an heir. All repeat Hailing Sign. A phrase of triumphant music.

The Priest takes the Priestess by her right hand with his left [she is still kneeling], keeping the Lance raised. The active lance is kept in the active hand, the passive hand joins the Priestesses active hand, ensuring a proper flow of energy.

Priest - I. PRIEST and KING, take thee Virgin pure without spot; I upraise thee [he raises the Priestess to her feet]; I lead thee to the East [spoken as they are walking to the Altar]; I set thee upon the summit of the Earth [spoken when they arrive at the Altar]. "This shall regenerate the world, the little world my sister, my heart & my tongue, unto whom I send this kiss." - *Liber AL* Malkuth is the little sister to Binah, so Malkuth is upraised to Binah. "And this is that which is written: Malkuth shall be uplifted and set upon the throne of Binah." - *Liber 418, 4th Aethyr*

He thrones the Priestess upon the altar. The Deacon and the children follow, they in rank [i.e. single file, Deacon leading], behind him.

The Priestess takes The Book of the Law [turns around and sits], resumes her seat and holds it open on her breast with her two hands, making a descending triangle with thumbs and forefingers. Descending fire triangle, the sign of Ra-Hoor-Khuit over the BoL. Also the water triangle. I prefer that the print be facing outwards, so that the "word" or "logos" is being focused out towards the congregation.

The Priest gives the lance to the Deacon it should be noted that the lance never touches the ground nor should it touch the altar later on to hold and takes the ewer from the [black] child and sprinkles the Priestess, making five crosses, forehead, shoulders, and thighs. [First 3 crosses standing, last 2 kneeling.] [If there are no Children, the Deacon brings the ewer to the Priest and trades it for the lance. When the Priest has finished, they trade back, and the Deacon returns the ewer to the water altar.] Note that the pattern is that of the first 5 sephira, which leaves the "Cup of Babalon" (yoni) in the Abyss. This is the consecration with the passive elements.

The thumb of the Priest is always between his index and medius <<In some Wiccan traditions, symbolic of the male and female conjoined, or of the female genitalia>> if the fingers are thought of as the four elements, and the thumb as spirit, this makes the pentagram, also creates a substitute lance whenever he is not holding the Lance. The Priest takes the censer from the [white] child and makes five crosses, as before. [If there are no Children, the Deacon brings the censer from the fire altar when he returns the ewer to the water altar and trades the censer for the lance. When the Priest has finished, they trade back, and the Deacon returns the censer to the fire altar.] This is the consecration with the active elements.

The children replace their weapons on their respective altars [and return to the main altar, the black child on the left and the white child on the right.]

[At this point the Priest could hand the lance back to the Deacon, or he could simply perform the following actions while holding the lance.] The Priest kisses The Book of the Law three times. Once for each chapter He kneels for a space in adoration with joined hands, knuckles closed, thumbs in position aforesaid. [If holding the lance, obviously the thumbs bit is irrelevant.]

He rises and draws the veil over the whole altar. Remember the bit about "I set thee upon the summit of the Earth"? It could be thought of that the first set of actions happen in the qabalistic world of Assiah (attributed to the element of earth), which is why the Veil is open. When the Veil is closed, the following speeches cause it to "rise" to the Yetziratic or Briatic world, like an elevator. Also reminiscent of pre-qabalistic Merkabah, or "Chariot" mysticism. I'm also reminded of the metamorphosis trick.

All rise and stand to order.

The Priest takes the lance from the Deacon [or already has it] and holds it as before, as Osiris or Pthah. He circumambulates the Temple three times this rises the appropriate amount of energy, everyone in the congregation should focus energy on the Priest and the lance. It's a procession, a showing off of the phallic god, also an indication of the aeons of Isis, Osiris and Horus, followed by the Deacon and the children as before. (Those, when not using their hands, keep their arms crossed upon their breasts.) This is the sign of Osiris risen.

At the last circumambulation they leave him and go to the place between the font and the small altar where they kneel in adoration, their hands joined palm to palm and raised above their heads. [Black Child on the left, White Child on the right.]

All imitate this motion. Hands joined palm to palm indicates union of the opposites and is the Anjali mudra, which when done above the head indicates a salute to deity. <<I have heard this asana referred to as the "flame" before- raising the arms above the head in this fashion concentrates energy in the Heart area, according to practitioners of at least one branch of Kundalini Yoga>> From IBS: "In the Roman Catholic Church, genuflection is a gesture both of adoration and of humble supplication. In the Thelemic EGC, it is a gesture only of ecstatic adoration."

The Priest returns to the East and mounts the first step of the altar. **Birth, I° or the MoE triad, the Astral triangle, 1st chapter, Isis.**

Priest - O circle of Stars **Nuit**, also see the first gesture in **Liber V** whereof our Father is but the younger brother **the Sun**, marvel beyond imagination, soul of infinite space before whom Time is ashamed, the mind bewildered and the understanding dark **there is no way to really understand infinity**, not unto Thee may we attain unless Thine image be Love. i.e. **we attain the image of infinity (the crossing of the Abyss and beyond) through the action of Love, the Uniting of the Opposites.** Therefore by seed and root and stem and bud and leaf and flower and fruit do we invoke Thee. **The path must be followed in correct order. You cannot simply bypass any of the steps, just as a fruit requires all of the previous stages of growth in order to manifest. The fruit is present in potential in the seed, but will not appear until all of the other stages come first.**

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

This speech is the Priest's invocation to Nuit. Could be seen as invoking the Goddess into the Priestess at this point, powering the "elevator."

During this speech the Priestess must have divested herself completely of her robe. (See CCXX, I:62)

Priestess - But to love me is better than all things; if under the night-stars in the desert thou presently burnest mine incense before me, invoking me with a pure heart, and the serpent flame therein, thou shalt come a little to lie in my bosom. For one kiss wilt thou then be willing to give all; but whoso gives one particle of dust shall lose all in that hour. Ye shall gather goods and store of women and spices; ye shall wear rich jewels; ye shall exceed the nations of earth in splendor and pride; but always in the love of me, and so shall ye come to my joy. I charge you earnestly to come before me in a single robe and covered with a rich headdress. I love you! I yearn to you! Pale or purple, veiled or voluptuous, I who am all pleasure and purple, and drunkenness of the innermost sense, desire you. Put on the wings, and arouse the coiled splendor within you:

come unto me! To me! To me! Sing the rapturous love-song unto me! Burn to me perfumes! Drink to me, for I love you! I love you. I am the blue-lidded daughter of sunset; I am the naked brilliance of the voluptuous night-sky. To me! To me! **Liber AL I:61 - 64**

This speech is the Priestess' declaration as Nuit. Could be seen as invoking Hadit into the Priest at this point.

The Priest mounts the second step. **Life, II° or the Lovers triad, the Ethical triangle, 2nd chapter, Osiris.**

Priest - O secret of secrets that art hidden in the being of all that lives, not Thee do we adore, for that which adoreth is also Thou. Thou art That, and That am I. **A description of Hadit, and the Priest's identification with and as Hadit.**

I am the flame that burns in every heart of man and in the core of every star. **C.O.P. - In Setian terminology, this could be likened to the "Black Flame."** I am Life and the giver of Life; yet therefore is the knowledge of me the knowledge of death. **Liber AL II:6 C.O.P. - To live is to die.** I am alone; there is no God where I am. **Liber AL II:23 C.O.P. - The infinite point has no space for anything whatsoever to exist.**

The Deacon and all rise to their feet with the Hailing sign.

Deacon - But ye, O my people, rise up and awake. **C.O.P. - Kundalini and samadhi**

Let the rituals be rightly performed with joy and beauty. **C.O.P. - i.e. well done**

There are rituals of the elements and feasts of the times.

A feast for the first night of the Prophet and his Bride. **Aug. 12**

A feast for the three days of the writing of The Book of the Law. **Apr. 8 - 10**

A feast for Tahuti and the children of the Prophet - secret, O Prophet! **Secret.**

A feast for the Supreme Ritual and a feast for the Equinox of the Gods. **Mar. 20**

A feast for fire and a feast for water; **Puberty of boys (fire) and girls (water)**

A feast for life and a greater feast for death. **Birth and death.**

A feast every day in your hearts in the joy of my **Hadit** rapture.

A feast every night unto Nu and the pleasure of uttermost delight.

Liber AL II:34 - 43 The Thelemic ritual schedule. See "The Law is for All" for additional commentary.

[All sit or all remain standing.]

The Priest mounts the third step. **Death, III^o** or the Hermit Triad, the Supernal triangle, 3rd chapter, Horus.

Priest - Thou that art One if Nuit = (-1) and Hadit = (+1) then RHK = 1, or the actual in the union of the infinite opposites, our Lord in the Universe the Sun the representation of RHK in the phenomenal universe, our Lord in ourselves whose name is Mystery of Mystery the generative force, also Tiphereth and the HGA, the Sun of the subjective universe, uttermost being whose radiance enlightening the worlds the four qabalistic worlds is also the breath that maketh every God even and Death to tremble before Thee - By the Sign of Light + appear Thou glorious upon the throne of the Sun.

Invocation of Ra-Hoor-Khuit.

Make open the path of creation and of intelligence between us and our minds. **The path of Kundalini**

Enlighten our understanding. Encourage our hearts. Let thy light crystallize itself in our blood, fulfilling us of Resurrection. **Mind - Spirit - Body**

A ka dua
Tuf ur biu
bi a'a chefu
Dudu nur af an nuteru.

From the Stele. Crowley's paraphrase:

"Unity uttermost showed!
I adore the might of Thy breath,
Supreme and terrible God,
Who makest the gods and death
To tremble before thee: -
I, I adore thee!"

Priestess - There is no law beyond Do what thou wilt.

The Priest parts the veil with his lance. i.e. with the phallic force. This is the first glimpse beyond the cycle of Birth - Life - Death. Birth into the "inner life." Also can be seen as opening the Veil of the Abyss. During the previous speeches the Priestess has, if necessary, as in savage countries, resumed her robe. [Priest kneels. Most of the additional kneeling I have listed is for line-of-sight reasons. This way the congregations isn't just staring at the Priest's back all of the time.]

Priest - IO IO IO IAO SABAO yo, yo, yo Gnostic deity

KURIE ABRAXAX KURIE MEITHRAS KURIE PHALLE.
Lord Gnostic deity, Lord Mithras, Lord Phallus

IO PAN IO PAN PAN yo Pan, yo Pan Pan

IO ISCHURON IO ATHANATON IO ABROTON IO IAO.
yo mighty one, yo deathless one, yo invincible one, yo IAO

CHAIRE PHALLE CHAIRE PAMPHAGE CHAIRE PANGENETOR. Hail phallus, hail all-devourer, hail all-begetter

HAGIOS HAGIOS HAGIOS IAO. holy holy holy IAO

The Priest is here pumping himself up even more by calling on all of these phallic forces.

The Priestess is seated with the Paten in her right hand and the cup in her left. **This is the view of the Supernals from Below the Abyss. Later the Cup gets switched to the right hand, which could indicate the successful crossing into Binah.**

The Priest presents the Lance, which she kisses eleven times. [the Priestess should set the paten and cup down, paten to the left, cup to the right, and guide the lance with both hands so she doesn't accidentally get poked in the eye by the Priest.] **She magically inflames the phallic force for herself.** She then holds it to her breast while the Priest, ~~falling at her knees~~, kisses [her knees] them, his arms stretched along her thighs. **Eye level with the yoni, the Cup of Babalon, the object of adoration.** He remains in this adoration while the Deacon intones the collects. **At this point, the Priest is "traveling" across the Abyss towards Binah.**

All stand to order, with the Dieu Garde, that is, feet square, hands, with linked thumbs, held loosely. This is the universal position when standing unless other direction is given. [Or, if already standing, all sit. Performance practice varies.]

[Editor's note: The second part of Frater V.I.T.R.I.O.L.'s article will appear in the next issue of Lion and Serpent.]

Throughout this article, I have refrained from giving explanatory footnotes of the various abbreviations. Should any reader require explanation of any one of them, shoot Lion and Serpent an email at rlyeh@aracnet.com]



ATransmission

by Soror Ain Soph Guna Nuktos

La iz thEe l-Ov-E Ov gnO.thing

but what is nExt whEn thEe tEndEnciEs arE willEd away, sO that On/Li thEe

stillnEss ov naught rEmains?..

krashing glanceS, sidEway en-trancEs..thEe bEHOldEr ov kEysss is a tricky
foOL...stEping upOn fallinnggg stars, viEwinnggg thEe wOrld as a shadOw
pOOL..at thEe 7 gatEs, rE.AL.EyEzinnggg that ALL is nOnE...& thEe sekrets to

thEe TruE path Ov initiatIOn is tO libEratE thysELF ,

bEE.KOUMinnggg thysELF..that EriE buzzing in yEwr hEad, as yEw LAugh & LAugh

& LAugh tyme away- that , is thEe EssEncE ov EtErnal shadOw play...

Fringe Files II

The Joe Simonton Pancake Affair

by Frater Mick

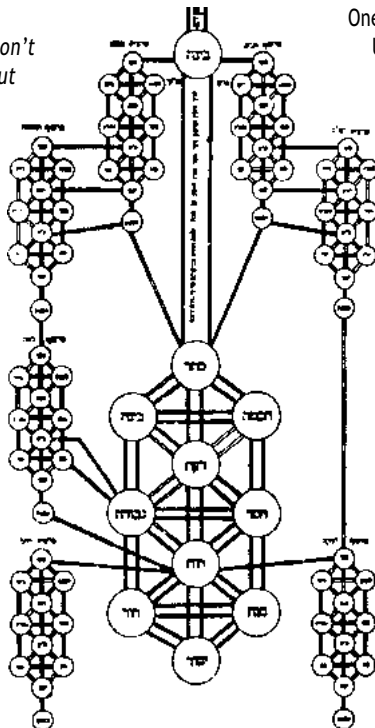
If it happened again, I don't think I'd tell anybody about it. (Joe Simonton)

Lila (Sanskrit): Play. Sport. Game. "The dance of the veil of life upon the face of the spirit."

Jacques Vallee has noticed that many UFO encounters have the look of "staged" events – events staged with some sophisticated but not necessarily other-worldly technology. Well, it's known that the CIA has access to some rather sophisticated technology. It's also been mentioned that they had a program to create staged quasi-religious, supernatural events in third world countries ostensibly for mind control experimentation. Think about it. (Robert Larson)

As I understand it, the Oath of the Abyss consists of treating every phenomenon as if it were a dealing of God with you, personally. (Maharishi Mick Taylor)

A pancake is, yes, bread of a kind. But it is the appearance of the name, "Pan," the god of the Earth, the god of paganism, the dweller of Findhorn and other magical spots upon this planet-arguably the child or consort of Gaia-that provides us with the key to this scenario. In UFO reports, visits, abductions, contacts, and what-have-you, Pan is giving us a gift, his own version of the bread of life, a communion wafer. This particular report gives us our own key to understanding the phenomenon. (Peter Stenshoel)



One of the stranger incidents in UFO lore happened on April 18th of 1961, near the town of Eagle River, Wisconsin.

Joe Simonton, a 60-year old chicken farmer, was in his rural farmhouse when he heard a sound that he described as "knobby tires on wet pavement". When going outside, far from seeing some car with studded tires, he saw a silver disk hovering five feet above the ground near the farmhouse. Said disk was around twelve feet in the air and thirty feet in diameter - your classic UFO of the Sixties.

What happened next, however, was far from typical and assures Joe his place in UFO hall of

fame. A hatch opened in the craft, allowing Joe to see its occupants. There were three of them: around five foot tall, Italian-looking guys, wearing dark turtlenecks and knit helmets (though I'm not sure what a knit helmet would look like). One was wearing a more formal black suit.

(Now, UFO buffs will recognize this as a description of the Men In Black¹, rather than your classic Gray or Blonde alien. Since the MIB are usually linked to disinformation about aliens, perhaps the bizarre case makes a little more sense.)

One of these men approached Joe, holding out a silver jug. He seemed to indicate that he wanted

¹ And MIB are often described as being "Middle Eastern" looking, easy to confuse with Italian, especially for a rural Wisconsin farmer.



it filled, and Joe, not one to let an alien visitor go thirsty, displayed the down home hospitality that is one of the traits of America's heartland and went back into the house to fill it with water. Upon his return, he was able to get a closer look inside the craft. It was metallic black on the inside, and there was a sort of humming of machinery. Curiously, its three inhabitants were engaged in cooking over a grill. (Rather than pouring over maps of the earth, or anally probing Whitley Streiber, as good aliens should.)

It turns out that what they were cooking were little pancakes, around four inches in diameter and with small holes in them. Joe was given four of them, the hatch closed, and the craft took off with a strong blast of air. Perhaps out of curiosity, Joe ate one of the pancakes, but it tasted like cardboard.²

At about this time, an insurance salesman named Savino Borgo, driving down the highway about a mile from Joe's farm, described seeing a craft rise into the air then fly parallel to the highway for a little while. However, local sheriff's authorities found no physical evidence (other than the pancakes) on Joe's farm. The Air Force apparently analyzed said pancakes, and found them to be of terrestrial origin.

So what are we to make of the whole affair? A deliberate hoax by Joe Simonton, to get some cheap publicity? Even the notoriously skeptical Project Blue Book researchers admitted that Joe genuinely believed his strange story. And one would think that publicity seekers would be spinning yarns of advanced technology, or at least strange and delicious foods and women, not pancakes that taste like cardboard.

An old farmer guzzling too much moonshine then? Or a prank by neighborhood Italian-looking kids? Swamp gas? Or? No, this story doesn't fit into of the neat boxes of the skeptic. Then perhaps as some sort of cosmic joke, brought to you by Zenmaster aliens? A dealing of God with your soul?

Ah, you decide.

"There are more things in heaven and earth,
Amazing Randi, than are dreamt of in your
philosophy."

² Like the cakes that I had last Saturday at Vita Café. And probably aliens would have given us quicker service, and not forgotten our coffee.

Book Review

by Frater Diapason

Corbin, Henry. *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam* (Leonard Fox, Trans.), Swedenborg Foundation, 1999.

Henry Corbin's career led him from his earliest studies with Etienne Gilson at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes in the 1920's to the chair in Islamic Studies at the Sorbonne (for the two decades prior to his death in 1978) and the esteemed directorship of the Department of Iranian studies at the Institut franco-iranien in Teheran. His translations of Persian religious texts, his studies of Sufi doctrine and philosophy and their relationship to Neoplatonism, Gnosticism, German Theosophy and other Western esoteric traditions situate him, alongside his many colleagues and fellow contributors to the Eranos meetings in Ascona, including Mircea Eliade, Martin Buber, Carl Jung, D.T. Suzuki, Heinrich Zimmer, and Paul Tillich, as one of the preeminent scholars of comparative religious history and philosophy of the 20th century. His reputation as a commentator on Persio-Islamic religious philosophy is unsurpassed and his contribution to the studies of mysticism and visionary knowledge recommend him to any student of esoteric religious traditions.

His major works available in English translation, such as *Creative Imagination in the Sufism of Ibn 'Arabi*, *Avicenna and the Visionary Recital*, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, as well as his shorter essays and papers, for example those collected in *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis*, are initially daunting, however, to the student unfamiliar with Arabic terms, Islamic history, and mystics and philosophers such as Suhrawardi, Ibn 'Arabi, and Sadra Shirazi. As an inroad to Corbin's immense scholarly output, the two articles in *Swedenborg and Esoteric Islam* (originally published in 1964; published in English translation in 1995 as No. 4 in the *Swedenborg Studies Monograph Series*; reprinted 1999) is a superb introduction to his central ideas and their conceptual underpinning, and can help to bring Corbin's other works within accessible range to the student more familiar with other lines of Western esoteric thought.

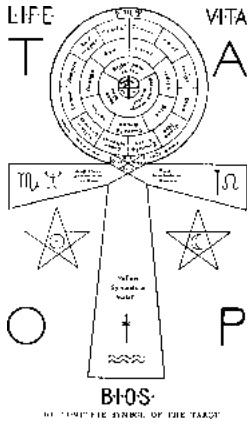
This small volume, in two concise articles, summarizes for the reader what are perhaps the

two central themes that run through and vitalize much of Corbin's published output. The first theme is captured by the title of the introductory article of the volume, "Mundus Imaginalis, or the Imaginary and the Imagenal." Corbin coined the Latin term "mundus imaginalis" (Eng. "the imaginal world") to denote "a precise order of reality corresponding to a precise mode of perception," that is both the subject of and the context for many of the experiences reported by, not only Shi'ite and Isma'ili mystics, but a range of mystics and philosophers throughout the West and the East, including Boehme, Meister Eckert, Paracelsus, and Swedenborg. More broadly, in fact, Corbin suggests throughout his published work that the existence of and understanding of the mundus imaginalis is the key that unlocks the entire Neoplatonic tradition to the contemporary Western mind.

The premise: there exists "a world as ontologically real as the world of the senses and the world of the intellect, a world that requires a faculty of perception belonging to it, a faculty that is a cognitive function, a noetic value, as fully real as the faculties of sensory perception or intellectual intuition." This world, situated between the sensory world of the body and the mental world of the intellect, has its own attributes and rules of locale, time, and space, as well as its own inhabitants. Most importantly, it is the necessary site that must be accessed by humans in order to make contact with any of the higher realms of spiritual reality.

Corbin distinguishes the imaginal realm from the realm of the imaginary which connotes the worlds of fantasy, daydreams, etc., and suggests that a conflation of these two terms has led to numerous confusions and misunderstandings about the theosophical and spiritual traditions. And this distinction points to the existence of the faculty required to visit the imaginal world, a faculty which he terms the "active imagination" (for a broad discussion of the active imagination see "Gnosis" by Daniel Merkur, reviewed in L&S, Vol. 5, No. 2).

In this introductory article, which comprises the first half of the volume, Corbin describes the characteristics of the imaginal world and the



active imagination in detail, listing its postulates and its context within the broad scope of theosophical and spiritual tradition, and introduces the Arabic terms and concepts that outline its relevance to Islamic esotericism, including a nod to the subject of the first half of the second article: "The most exact formulation of all this, in the theosophical tradition of the West, is found perhaps in Swedenborg."

The second article, "Comparative Spiritual Hermeneutics," is the crux of the volume and details the second central theme, and perhaps the main thrust, of Corbin's life work: "the hermeneutics of the phenomenon of the Sacred Book." Through a comparison of Swedenborg's interpretive analysis of key passages and stories from Biblical texts with the analyses of corresponding passages in the Qua'ran, Corbin outlines the process of spiritual hermeneutics that he asserts is the necessary component to an understanding of "a general theology of the history of religions" and "a general theology of religions."

The Arabic term for this spiritual hermeneutics is ta'wil and is described as "spiritual exegesis," the "bringing back everything, every event to its truth, to its archetype, by uncovering the hidden and concealing the appearance." This is the exegesis that Swedenborg (for example) applies to Sacred texts, but the sense is that this is also a process that must be applied to all perceived phenomena if they are to be understood spiritually.

The essence of the process is contained in the doctrine of correspondences: "the fundamental law of analogy that permits positing a plurality

of universes among which there is a symbolic relationship." "Symbol," in this sense, denotes a relationship between the interior and exterior aspect of all phenomena, such that all sensible objects point to an interior reality that is higher, more sublime, closer to divinity. But because all phenomena "symbolize with" each other, the appreciation of and interpretation of the sensible world is the necessary place where humanity must begin if they want to apprehend another reality. All objects and events perceived in the sensible world have a locale, a history, a meaning in all other universes; they simultaneously exist on each level (and what appears revealed on one level always has a side that is hidden on another). And, a key point, in order to penetrate to the hidden aspect of a phenomenon, in order to understand the meaning of something, to practice ta'wil, it is necessary for the interpreter to enter the level of being associated with the inner, higher level of the perceived object.

One cannot perceive the inner meaning of anything, in this case a revealed text, from the level of agnostic exegesis, the level of the material world; one must be in the spiritual world to perceive the spiritual meaning of things. In a word, you can't bring something down to your level, you must move up to its level; but paradoxically, you can only move up to its level by a contemplation of the objects that exist on the level beneath it.

Corbin's essay amounts to a critique both of attempts to agnosticize spirituality through the misapplication of the Method of Science, and to spiritualize the material through the misapplication of the Aim of Religion. Neither approach, if they amount to either a paltry reductionism or a murky vaporization, can produce anything but distorted and essentially pathological outcomes. Humans are neither angels nor organisms, and to assert that they are one or the other reduces them to insubstantial caricatures. To allegorize a text or a perceived phenomenon means, in Corbin's sense, to reduce it to the merely interesting, without meaning. To spiritualize means to reduce something to the merely sublime, without meaning. To interpret, in the sense of ta'wil, to practice a spiritual hermeneutics, means to apply our very being to our relationship to objects, to assert will and love. Angels love, organisms have intellect, but neither can be part of the movement, the da'wat, that is the Call of incarnation.

Movie Review

By Frater Balise d'Anubis

Title: Gladiator

Director: Ridley Scott; Studio: Universal/Dreamworks
Principle Cast: Russell Crowe, Joaquin Phoenix, Connie Nielsen, Oliver Reed, Djimon Hounsou, Derek Jacobi

In light of films like, "Ben Hur", "Spartacus", and "The Conan the Barbarian" movies, this film looks like blasphemous trash. They have taken the sacred violence, gore and blatant homosexuality of this genre and turned it into a weepy PC bit of poo.

The movie starts off with the sexualicious Russell Crowe as General Maximus. Maximus is a popular Roman general and favorite of Caesar Marcus Aurelius (Richard Harris). After the promising opening battle Maximus is portrayed as a world weary, honorable and good man who, after the last 16 years fighting wars that he really doesn't understand for the duty of his county, just wants to go home to his family. Caesar calls him into his tent and tries to honor him for his virtue and victory with the crown.

When Maximus refuses, the continuing theme of "Rome was a dream so fragile that anything beyond a whisper could destroy it." begins. This is also the point at which we begin to wonder if we are we talking about Rome here or America? This movie says more about America than it does Rome. Continuing with this theme, there are several shots from the crowd that are angled in such a way as you wonder if you are watching some turn of the century, "Johnny comes marching home", footage. The filmmakers took the liberty to, at every opportunity, flaunt the similarities between American and Roman governmental symbolism. When Commodus, the blood heir to the throne, murders his father in one of the only moving and exciting scenes in the film, Maximus refuses to ally himself with the murderous young Caesar and he is sentenced to death. Joaquin plays the not so prodigal son very well. His final confrontation with his father's rejection of him is painful, and in true Roman style, tearful. As usual, our hero tricks his would be executors and kills them all, escaping only to be sold into slavery after finding his wife and son trampled, burned and hung on the entrance to his house in Rome. Maximus is coerced into fighting as a Gladiator.

The story goes on as you might expect, but it would bereave me if I did not mention the foxy Connie Nielsen as Lucilla. Lucilla and Maximus once had some sort of affair in their youth that ended with

them bitterly marrying other people. Lucilla is possibly the most intriguing character in the movie. She is intelligent, cunning, wise, manipulative and extremely well dressed. Maximus tells her she has a talent for survival which foreshadows some sort of "Good man redeems woman from her evil deeds" theme. Due to big Hollywood's fear of strong women, after the opening verbal S/M dick tease, Lucilla's powerful will is immediately superceded and dulled by her love and need for Maximus. Instead of becoming a formidable character with desires and a will of her own, she transforms into the piece of tail over which the villain bickers and the hero is inspired to fight for. Often while watching the film, I had wished that the story were told from her eyes rather than Maximus'.

Besides the costumes and the bits of very PC homoeroticism, the movie has very few redeeming qualities. The actors' performances are wonderful, but they are often softened by poor scripting and cheesy camera angles. There is so much potential for high drama that isn't exploited. The scene when Maximus finds his dead family or the scene when Lucilla arranges to meet with him while he is chained up. Either scene could have been eking with pathos or oozing with sexuality and pain, but somehow, ended up and affected G rated love affair. This movie is called Gladiator! What the fuck! WHERE IS THE GORE! Gladiation was all about GORE! Do you think we invented professional wrestling? Hell no! The Romans did! There was one decapitation and about 50 thousand slayings and not one of them was satisfyingly gory! This is a god-damned shame! Early episodes of Star Trek had more gore than this movie! Not only was the gore PG but the choreography after the opening was unexciting. Let's just say that while I was watching all the swordplay I was either thinking, "Ooh! What a pretty tiger", or, "Where are Zena and Gabrielle!"

The special effects, done by the kid friendly Dreamworks, left much to be desired. Computer images and cut and pastes from the other Dreamworks production, "What Dreams May Come", made up the Roman setting and most of the fight scenes. The fire, the blood and the grinder were all brought to their knees with the diluting effects of poorly done digital graphics. For all the hype they certainly seemed to have skimmed on the budget. Stay home and rent Spartacus or Conan. You will be better for it.

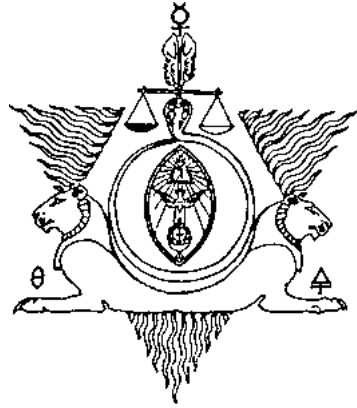
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Plate 2 (The Argument) from
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