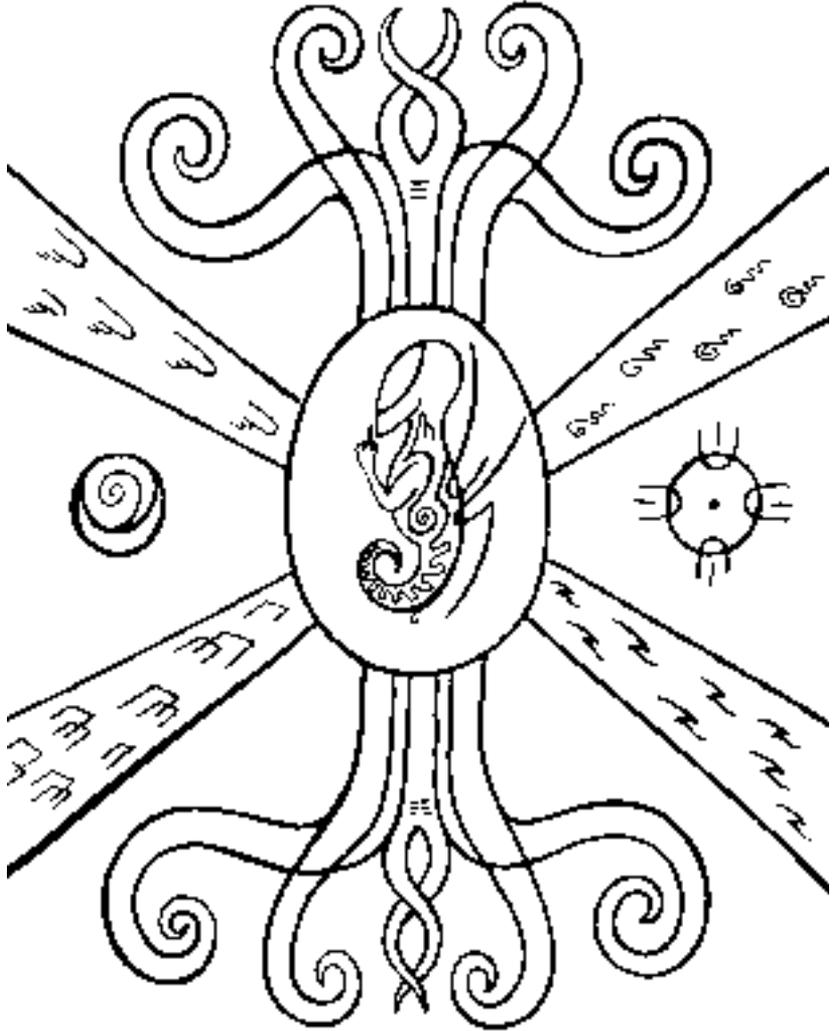


# Lion & Serpent

© in II, Anno IVix ~ Volume 6, Number 2



Elyxir Child born within the Cauldron  
that hides within the Tree

Frater ZyGoat, Anno IVix ~ Pen & Ink

# Lion & Serpent

*the Official Journal*

*of Sekhet-Maat Lodge, O.T.O.*

⊙ in II, Anno IVix

Volume 6, Number 2

Publisher - Sekhet-Maat Lodge, O.T.O.

Editor & Layout - Frater HydraLX

Proofreading - Frater Diapason

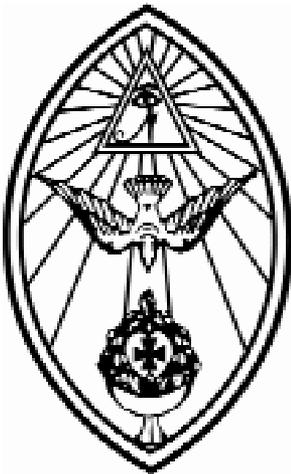
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# The First Page

by Frater Diapason



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

Now that Spring is steadily under way, it looks like many of our members have begun to do the annual "residential shuffle": a more rigorous version of Spring Cleaning where, instead of just clearing out last year's junk and tidying up a bit, you actually put everything you own in boxes and move to a new apartment or house. Must be some kind of seasonal migratory thing... (or maybe it's simply that no one wants to move when it's raining). In any case, these moves always promise to bring with them a steady flow of housewarming get-togethers. It's also kinda noteworthy that in addition to financial and space considerations, many folks actually seem to be including "walking or easy driving distance to the PTCC" as one of their criteria for new residence selection (...what hath OTO wrought?). Speaking of... we're rapidly approaching the first year anniversary of the Center Construction Project, and, personally, I intend to stay as far away from power tools as possible this Summer... which reminds me, if you haven't registered yet for NOTOCON2001, make haste -- it's gonna be a good one. Okay, time for me to return to updating (yet again) the entries in my address book... and happy moving days to all concerned.

## News Briefs:

**Cairomancy:** Three very impressive days of Liber AL readings in April. Well done, and thanks to everyone involved.

**Take Init to the Limit:** Congrats to the new Firsts and Thirds.

**Windy Wedding:** Fra. H and Sor. E took a little midwest jaunt to officiate at the nuptials of Sor. S and Fra. C.

**Eight Days a Week:** Sor. B has once again resurfaced and rejoined the world of Summer leisure, after successfully getting through yet another of her overwhelming work seasons.

**Mass Appeal:** Fra. K and Sor. C headed up to Seattle for the weekend as a visiting Mass team. Meanwhile, Fra. D and Sor. N are helping to hoist the local ecclesiastical banner.

**Get Back:** Fra. T and Sor. A paid a brief weekend visit, as part of their plan to return to PDX full time this Summer. It'll be great to have ya back in town.

*Love is the law, love under will.*

# Lion & Serpent:

Past, Present, and Future

by Frater HydraLVX

I have always loved *L&S*, since the first issue I received in Anno IVvii, which featured Sr. Viktoria's wonderful *Evocation Method I: Babalon*, among a variety of other interesting essays, poems, and artwork. This of course was not the first issue. *Lion & Serpent* was in at least its fourth year of publication at that time, not counting the previous incarnation of a similar zine called *Babel*. Those many years, the existence of both journals was thanks primarily to the hard work and tender care of Fr. V.I.T.R.I.O.L., who tirelessly brought each issue to members from start to finish: soliciting submissions, editing, typesetting, copying, stapling, folding, and distributing hard copy as well as publishing on the web with minimal outside assistance.

About the time I received my first copy, things were changing. Fr. Mick had volunteered to ease our brother's workload by taking up editing the journal, while Fr. V.I.T.R.I.O.L. continued with layout, production and distribution. Just a few short months later, Fr. V.I.T.R.I.O.L. had placed a number of new pots on his stove, and asked me to take the reigns of layout and distribution. I was delighted at the opportunity to apply my skills, and he was better able to focus on other projects. He continued to publish the web version until recently giving that responsibility to Fr. Aleksei-Ra. What I find amazing, and a testament to Fr. V.I.T.R.I.O.L.'s dedication and hard work, is the fact that our publication now takes about five people to do the work that he did alone for so many years.

After getting our bearings, Fr. Mick and I worked like a well-oiled machine to produce issues for about the last year and a half, with much appreciated help from Fr. Diapason, Fr. Balise d'Anubis, Sr. Ariche and others. Fr. Mick's leadership and vision has propelled *Lion & Serpent* along a path of continued improvement since the day he put his shoulder to the wheel. In that time, we have seen more numerous submissions, even including some from outside our

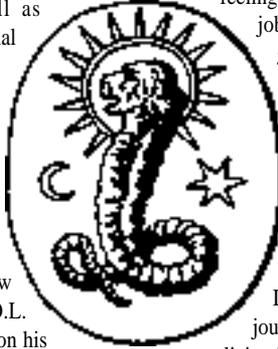
valley. Distribution has broadened to include many other U.S. O.T.O. bodies, three bodies in other countries (which change each issue), a robust list of Grand Lodge officials, and public distribution points in Portland and Seattle. Overall, our distribution has increased three-fold in the last year and a half. Fr. Mick's focus on widening distribution, requiring that all submissions be original work, and giving priority to publishing the work of local members has brought *Lion & Serpent* to where it is today.

The day that Fr. Mick asked me to take over for him as editor a couple of months ago was one of mixed feelings. Of course I was excited to take the job. I was also very sad to see Fr. Mick go, because his influence has been such a positive one on our journal, and I know that he loved it so. I am glad, however, that he will be more available to the Prison Outreach Program as well as his family and congregation, according to his will.

I am excited about the future of our journal. I plan to continue the trends and policies that Fr. Mick has set, as well as setting my own goals for improving *Lion & Serpent*. Look for the following milestones in our near future:

- ⊕ A regular production schedule, with a new issue every two months (so far, so good!).
- ⊕ Distribution to occult bookstores throughout the Pacific Northwest, especially including those in college towns of low population.
- ⊕ Improved paper quality and full-color printing.
- ⊕ Occasional or annual Special Edition issues, including full color artwork, more guest articles from other areas, and paperback binding.

*Lion & Serpent* would be nothing without the authors, poets and artists who contribute to it. With your continued good works, and the donations, advertising and subscriptions of others, the goals above will be easily realized.



# The Formula of the Cup of Babalon

by Frater V. I. L.

Of the Thoth tarot trump, The Chariot, Aleister Crowley writes: "The central and most important feature of the card is its centre--The Holy Grail."<sup>1</sup> So important is this Cup that Crowley's Charioteer is charged with only one task: "His only function is to bear the Holy Grail."<sup>2</sup> We know from Crowley's Magick in Theory and Practice and other works that the Holy Grail is synonymous with the Cup of Babalon. However, the formula of the Cup of Babalon, that which describes its function and purpose, is never clearly defined. To understand the importance of the Grail/Cup, we must investigate the formula.

Before we proceed, it is important to understand the nature of Babalon. Babalon is the Lady of the City of Pyramids, the destination of the adept crossing the Abyss. She is the Thelemic personification of Binah, the Great Mother. The Cup of Babalon symbolizes her womb, the Universal Womb spoken of in the Gnostic Mass "wherein all men are begotten, and in which they shall rest."<sup>3</sup>

The formula of the Cup of Babalon is revealed in the first six verses of "Liber Cheth vel Vallum Abiegni Sub Figura CLVI", one of the Holy Books of Thelema:

*1. This is the secret of the Holy Graal, that is the sacred vessel of our Lady the Scarlet Woman, Babalon the Mother of Abominations, the bride of Chaos, that rideth upon our Lord the Beast.*

*2. Thou shalt drain out thy blood that is*

*thy life into the golden cup of her fornication.*

*3. Thou shalt mingle thy life with the universal life. Thou shalt keep not back one drop.*

*4. Then shall thy brain be dumb, and thy heart beat no more, and all thy life shall go from thee; and thou shalt be cast out upon the midden, and the birds of the air shall feed upon thy flesh, and thou bones shall whiten in the sun.*

*5. Then shall the winds gather themselves together, and bear thee up as it were a little heap of dust in a sheet that hath four corners, and they shall give it unto the guardians of the abyss.*

*6. And because there is no life therein, the guardians of the abyss shall bid the angels of the winds pass by. And the angels shall lay thy dust in the City of Pyramids, and the name thereof shall be no more.<sup>4</sup>*



The blood the adept drains into the Cup symbolizes the personality or ego that must be annihilated in order to traverse the Abyss. As stated in Liber ABA, "...the Ego-idea must be ruthlessly rooted out before Understanding can be attained."<sup>5</sup>

This blood is sometimes referred to as the blood of the saints, a saint being one who sacrifices everything, even his life, in devotion to a deity or the principle of enlightenment. "Blessed are the saints,

that their blood is mingled in the cup, and can never be separate any more.”<sup>6</sup>

To aid him in accomplishing this task, Liber Cheth advises the adept to “divest thyself of all goods,” specifically identified in the text as wealth, health and love. The Cup of Babalon is the Universal Womb, and the blood therein is the Water of Universal Life.<sup>7</sup> When the adept mingles his blood with the blood in the cup, he dissolves his ego in the Universal Life. The annihilation of the Ego must be absolute or else there will be dire consequences:

*11. For if thou dost not this with thy will, then shall We do this despite thy will. So that thou attain to the Sacrament of the Graal in the Chapel of Abominations.*

*12. And behold! if by stealth thou keep unto thyself one thought of thine, then thou shalt be cast out into the abyss for ever; and thou shalt be the lonely one, the eater of dung, the afflicted in the Day of Be-with-Us.*<sup>8</sup>

When all of the ego-blood is drained from the adept, he dies and his body is left to decay in the Sun. The fourth verse of Liber Cheth describes the alchemical process of putrefaction, the spiritual or symbolic death of gross matter that must occur in order for the soul or spirit to be purified and reborn.

The little pile of dust that remains is the essential essence of the adept, his True self. It is the “life which has no consciousness of ‘I’”, now no longer fettered by the ego. The dust is gathered in a sheet with four corners, which represents the position of the Abyss between the ideal and the actual in a geometrical sense. For the sheet is a plane, that which is attributed to Binah in the Naples Arrangement,<sup>9</sup> yet it has four corners, and is thus a square, a symbol of Chesed and manifestation.

This dust is carried by the “angels of the winds” and given to the guardians of the abyss, and because there is “no life therein,” the guardians allow it to pass to the City of the Pyramids in Binah. There the adept is “...received and reconstructed in the Third Order, as a Babe in the womb of our Lady BABALON, under the

Night of PAN, to grow up to be Himself wholly and truly as He was not previously...”<sup>10</sup>

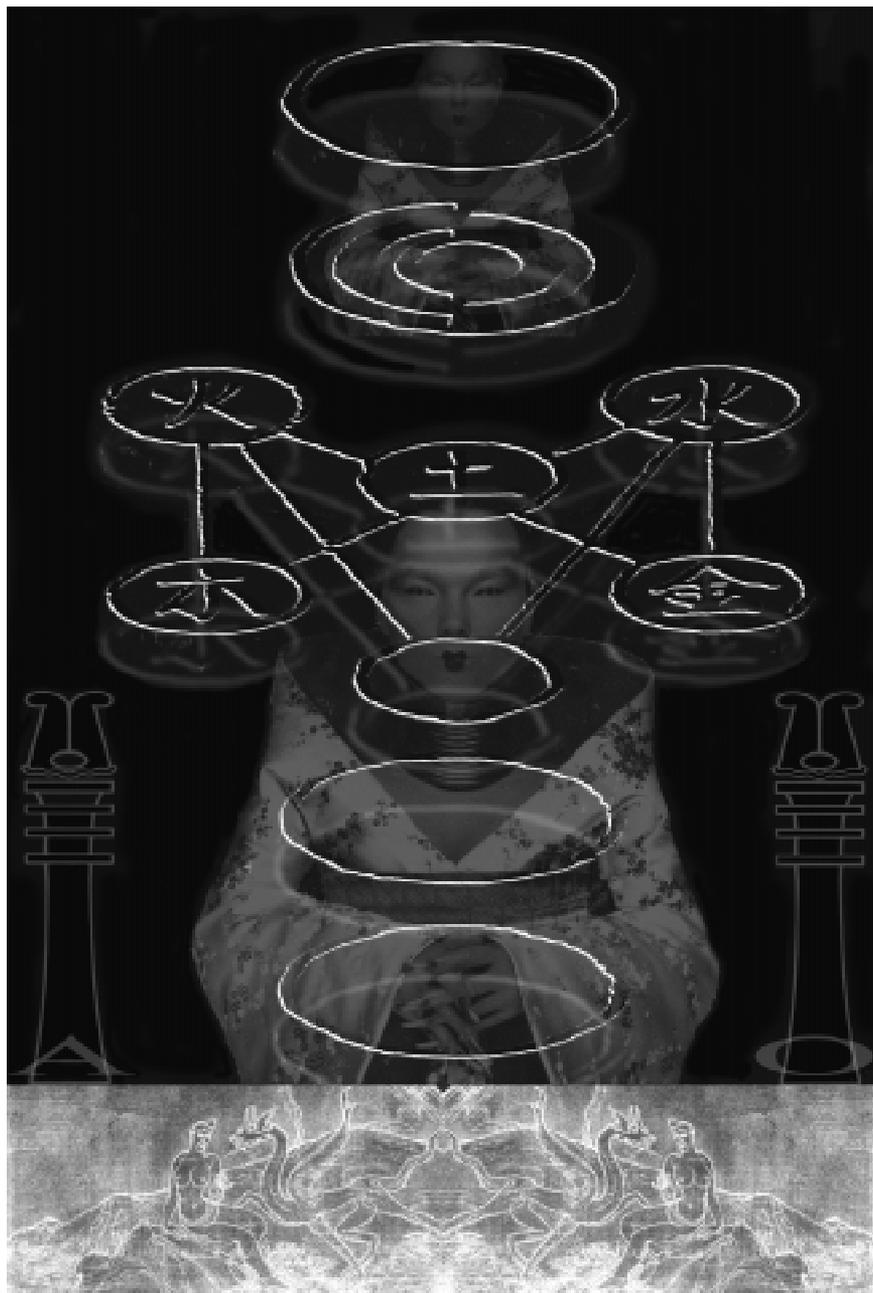
The adept is reborn in the Cup of Babalon from the Water of Universal Life. His name, a symbol of the ego or “I” consciousness, “shall be no more,” for in Binah the adept becomes NEMO, Latin for “no man.”

The formula of the Cup of Babalon can be summarized as follows: The adept drains his blood (ego) into the Cup of Babalon, mingling it with the Water of Universal Life. He dies and putrefies into a little pile of dust (the True Self). This dust is carried across the Abyss, and because there is “no life therein” (no ego), the dust is allowed to pass to Binah. There the adept is reborn as NEMO in the Cup (womb) of Babalon.

This completes our brief analysis of the formula of the Cup of Babalon. Further examination and contemplation of The Chariot and Liber Cheth is highly recommended for a more perfect understanding of the Mysteries of Babalon.



1. Crowley, Aleister. The Book of Thoth, pp. 85-86.
2. Ibid.
3. The Gnostic Mass (Liber ABA, page 573).
4. Liber Cheth is found in Liber ABA, pp. 651-652.
5. Liber ABA, p. 78.
6. 12th Aethyr of Liber 418 (Equinox IV:2, p. 151).
7. See Atu XVII, The Star.
8. Liber ABA, p. 651.
9. The Book of Thoth, pp. 12-16.
10. One Star in Sight (Liber ABA, p. 483).



# Untitled

Anonymous, Anno IVix ~ Digital Art

# Pleasure

by Soror S. D. M.

Bare-breasted night bird  
sits and sings the love-death song  
tickling clicking wicking slowly  
licking lambent flame of blue,  
tastes a feast of eagle's wings  
of lust and things  
hissing wishing softly  
kissing the soul of infinite space -  
tell a story of Victory and Glory  
transmission of death to life -  
wheeling reeling rapid feeling  
twine entwine around the heart  
force and feeling reeling wheeling  
thunder in the star-filled  
dark -

# Applications of the Godform of Hoor-Paar-Kraat

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

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of the Crowned and Conquering Child!

These energetic applications of the Sign of Silence and godform of Harpocrates have arisen from the daily experimentation with its use in conjunction with QiGong practices and alchemical meditations. They are presented for your enjoyment and edification as part of the ongoing series of Psychic Technology essays that are now drizzling from ZyGoat's Mental Lingam.

We begin with the "when, how and why" of this sign and visualization. After each outgoing movement of a ritual, there is a counter-balancing in-drawing movement. This mirrors the perpetual sacrament of breathing and the special sacrament of sex. True Ritual is both a Breathing and a Copulation between the Microcosm and the Macrocosm. We send forth the Pentagrams, Hexagrams or other Will-symbols, which bear our Intent into the fertile Womb of the Limitless Void. This is done in the Sign of Ra-Hoor-Khuit (sign of the Enterer), and the sign of the Proclaiming of the Word. When this Word is exhausted and this microcosmic (personal) energy is projected, the Magician returns to the Center in the Sign of Silence. In this Sign, the response from the Macrocosm is received and the magician becomes a Child born anew from this Union.

Here we behold the rhythm of polarity between Word and Silence, Center and Infinite Direction. The Sign of Silence occurs whenever the magician is withdrawing the Force into his or her center. Within Tai`chi, QiGong and some martial arts, there is a phase called "Taking back the Chi" which occurs at the end of each section

of a form and at the completion of each session. This phase generally consists of a relaxed gathering of the energy that has been circulated and "worked" during the exercise. The Chi is gathered into the Tan`Tien or Hara center, which resides within the lower abdomen. Some exercises even include a turning to each of the four (or eight) directions to gather back the chi from all of space. The idea of this inward movement is to prevent the energy from being dissipated or from causing random harm if left undirected. The methods used to accomplish this gathering range from simple inhalations while focusing on the navel, to visualizations,

to internal rotations of a "chi ball" in the abdomen to elaborate hand-body motions. The general principle of intent is the same, however. The Pearl of Great Price is being kept and warded within its Sanctuary.



Over-extension leads to loss of balance and thus, loss of Strength. The Yang phase of a ritual is followed by the Yin phase. Ra-Hoor-Khuit and Hoor-Paar-Kraat form a rhythm of Power. In order for the Magician to have a sufficient force to launch into the Lightning Bolt of the Sign of the Enterer, all of the personal energies that have been scattered to the Four Directions must be withdrawn and concentrated into the Hara. Our personal Force becomes involved in thoughts, worries, expectations, projections, remembrances, and many other entities. These scatter the Force into the periphery of our consciousness and thereby weaken the center. The Sign of Silence can be used even before the initial banishing to inhale, withdraw, return the Force to its center, consolidating it into the form of the Child.



by Frater ZyGoat

The Visualization used is that of a Child standing within a blue Egg of Spirit upon a lotus, or upon a crocodile...a Prince's Lock upon His head, thumb or forefinger to lips. There is variation within the exact form, yet the guiding Intent is what connects the symbols to their function. The form that I prefer has a child-like body of pure gold, crowned by the white orb of Kether, bathed in the Orgone-blue radiance of the Egg of Akasha. Each of these symbolic details contains much meaning. The Gold is the metal of sunlight condensed into enduring form. It is very malleable yet incorruptible. Most importantly, it is highly conductive of electricity. These are characteristics of the well-developed Body of Light.

I frequently use an extended assumption of the Godform as a connecting transition from the Lesser Banishing Ritual of the Pentagram to the Chi cultivation exercises that I do immediately after.

The Pentagram prepares the Field for the Cultivation. The Immortal Embryo, The Golden Child of Mystery is the Seed of Intent planted within this field. The Chi-Gong practices are the fertilization, watering, warming, and airing of this God-Sprout.

In the Pentagram Ritual itself, after each movement outward, I withdraw into the Sign of

Silence as I inhale into my Hara with full attention thereon. Thus, I link each of the Directions to my personal Center. This serves to return all of the Force that had been scattered through the imbalances of dispersion that pillage us daily. This energy once gathered may now be used in service of Will. As I invoke each of the Archangels, I inhale its Element into my Hara...the four elements I draw into the Cauldron to be fused into Spirit. This cauldron in the Center of the Circle is like an Egg born from the Union of all forces invoked. It receives all that is called into it and formulates it into a fortified life force that could be called Medicine. These are Intent-forms that I maintain as I move through the Ritual of the Pentagram. The Godform of Harpocrates is intimately linked with this Alchemical Cauldron of the Hara Center. When we breathe with the relaxed abdominal fullness of a child, we are nourishing this Center. Much emphasis is placed upon this child-like breathing by

Taoist texts. Remember that Aleph, the Divine Breath, is also the emergence of this Original Energy from the womb of Naught. In working with the Rituals, we are sending forth great Force through the vibrations of the Godnames upon the Breath. Let us not forget the Receiving of that energy also!

As a practice unto itself, the assumption of this Godform is most valuable. After the entire sequence of the pentagram Ritual,

*continued on next page...*



*continued from previous page...*

standing for moments or minutes within the visualized Aura of living energy, I affirm to myself the qualities of this Image. I am still in the stage of development where I am consciously programming my psychic technologies with Intent through repetition of corresponding ideas. This is but an awkward transitional phase in preparation for the majesty of the stages to come, when my subconscious



reflexes have been trained and the Godforms are truly vessels of silent rapture. Presently, as I hold the Image around my body, I affirm "I am the Crowned and Conquering Child of Heaven and Earth: Born from the Navel, Shining from the Heart, Crowned with Spirit." I feel the newness and all-potential of my Childlike body. I feel that fearlessness of the limitless One. I feel the Egg of Space around me, shimmering with Orgone, open to the reception of Prana from all directions, yet ever resilient against pernicious influences. In short, I program my energy field. Once this form and its essential qualities are connected within my awareness and my body-feeling, I carry it into my cultivation practices, whether they are movement-based, standing or sitting. This can

be done in a number of creative yet simple ways depending on the nature of the exercise. It can also be used as its own form of Chi-meditation. I often assume this Godform at just the same times during Chi-Gong exercise that I would in a ritual sequence...at any time that I wish to absorb, integrate, store or complete my work with the energy or consciousness being moved. Simply visualizing this Form before falling asleep has a notable effect upon Dreams. Before a meal, it can be used (along with gentle Hara breathing) to withdraw the scattered body-energies into the present moment for the Feast at hand. This may sound like a trivial or mundane use of a Divine Image, but it makes all the difference in the assimilation of the Sunlight Embodied within the food. Inwardly visualized within a conversational or social setting, it protects the aura from unconscious leakage...and has the uncanny effect of making those around you feel like you are the only sober one in the room.

Here is a brief outline of an energy-meditation sequence based upon the Godform of Hoor-Paar-Kraat:

Sitting, standing or lying, still or moving, it does not matter. Become aware of an endless Ocean of Life, Orgone Blue and All-Penetrant. Allow your breathing to become the ebb and flow of the waves within this Ocean. Allow your personal boundaries to dissolve into this Ocean until a sense of permeability is attained (for those who feel the need, you can always Pentagonagram first).

Let this permeable sense fill your body...the cells themselves are breathing...each one penetrated by Nu-life energy. Breathing with your cells in this way, you are as an embryo in the Womb of the Ocean of Life...Your Aura becomes like a Placenta, drawing all that you need to you and feeding it into your system through your navel as well as through the entire surface of your body. Become the Child of the Endless Mother and realize that you have access to all of the energy that you need. Maintain this breathing-absorbing until you feel ready

to condense the energy into a form. At this point, visualizing the golden body of the Sun-Child will help as you feel the energy gathering into it. When a degree of solidity is attained to this image, rest for a while centered within the naval-cauldron and affirm the reality of this link to the flow of energy around you. Similarly, end with the visualization of the Egg of Blue, understanding it to be protective yet permeable, filtering yet open.

The Godform is also useful in any working intended to conjoin various polarities of Power. Hoor-Paar-Kraat is seen as the Child of Isis and Osiris, of Nuit and Hadit, of Babalon and Therion depending on the scope or emphasis of the work at hand. This is a direct and personal link into the center of many mythic images or formulae. The Egg of Creation from which the universe was formed, being composed of silver and gold intermingled. In exercises to attain a more profound grasp of the consciousness of the Center, one can contemplate each pair of extremes and then integrate into one's self as ones parent-energies. Above and Below or Heaven and Earth... uniting Here at the point of contact as You, their Child, the inheritor of the horizon. The ancestral past and the emerging future uniting Now in the point of transmutation, the alchemical fulcrum that you are. Ida and Pingala, Sun and Moon merging into the Electrum of your nervous system. The sleeping self and the waking, self-begetting the One who fulfills them both. Whichever polarity you wish to work with, the Orphic Egg or alchemical child image serves as in interface or neutral synthesis between them. The more polarities one weaves in this way, the more one is able to "return to center" as the "default setting" of one's psychic reflexes.

So ends this stroll down the path of the Godform of Hoor-Paar-Kraat and the Sign of Silence. No words can express the nature of this Sign, so please regard all of the above as an attempt to seduce you into distraction from the True and Ineffable Way.

*Love is the law, love under will.*



# The Gnostic Catholic Creed: Seeds of Self Knowledge

by Frater HydraLVX

The word “creed” is defined as a brief authoritative formula of religious belief. It is also synonymous with religion and ideology. The Gnostic Catholic Creed may therefore be considered a declaration of the beliefs of the congregation, as well as a symbolic representation of the Ecclesia and of the Mass itself. An understanding of this formula may begin with studying the correspondences of the symbolism presented line-by-line and from a holistic perspective. Such symbolic correspondences can be found by examining the qabalistic significance of specific words within the creed and by relating passages to other symbol sets, including the Tree of Life, the Tarot, and western mythologies. In addition, an informal interpretation of the more readily understood passages will be fruitful. While I have attempted to collect and summarize a wide variety of interpretive information here via research, such data can only point weakly toward the true mystery, which arises with practice, meditation and visualization.

## “I believe in one secret and ineffable LORD;”

Throughout the rest of the Creed, Crowley uses all capital letters on words that are either known to be of Greek or unknown origin, or words to which he applied isopsephy (Greek gematria) in other works. The word “Lord” stands apart from the others, as it is clearly an English word. Nevertheless, the application of isopsephy to this word, transliterated to the Greek alphabet, reveals layers of meaning.

If we resolve the “O” in LORD to the Greek *digamma*, the total value of the word becomes 140. Crowley was occasionally fond of making this liberal transliteration, probably because of that letter’s origin in the Phoenician *waw*. Another Greek word, which also adds up to 140, is ἡδονη, meaning lust, delight, or joy. The implication is that in some way, this LORD is identical with ἡδονη, and also that ἡδονη is secret and ineffable. This is an apt association by my reckoning,

especially given the Collect, entitled “The Lord,” which reads as follows:

“Lord secret and most holy, source of light, source of life, source of love, source of liberty, be thou ever constant and mighty within us, force of energy, fire of motion; with diligence let us ever labour with thee, that we may remain in thine abundant joy.” (Crowley, 1997)

What is truly remarkable, however, is that the word ἡδονη (pronounced “hedoneh”) has a striking phonetic similarity to the Hebrew אָדוֹנָי (“Adonai”), which means, in English, “Lord,” and is used throughout the Bible to refer to that God, who is also secret and ineffable.

This Lord corresponds to Hadit, to Kether on the Tree of Life, and to the Stélé of Revealing in the Mass.

AUMIGN Creed	Kether Tree of Life	Supra Erebia
LORD	Kether	Stélé
Star	Tiphareth	Heaven
Company of Stars	Negative Veils	Patent
ULAS	Clockwork	Prayer
Air	Aleph	Law
BABALON	Hinah	Uranus
BAPTISMUM	Tiphareth	Deity
THELEMA	Makuth	Uranus Terrestrial
Spirits	Sarakh	Communism
Miracle	Teth	HR
Baptism	Yesod	Patent
My Life	Tiphareth	Communism
AUMIGN	Binah	Midnight
AU AIGN	Clockwork	Midnight

*“and in one Star in the company of Stars of whose fire we are created, and to which we shall return;”*

It can be argued that Crowley is talking about something else here, something separate from the secret and ineffable Lord, due to the structure of the sentence. Also if the Lord is secret and ineffable, then this passage cannot, by definition, be a description of it. Throughout the Mass, Crowley refers to the Lord in two contexts, and probably means two different things. For example, “In the name of our Lord the Sun, and of our Lord ...” [sic] where the second “Lord” referred to cannot be named, and an ellipsis is apparently used in place of any name or description. (Helena et al., 1995)

The description above can refer to the sun, Sol, materially. The sun’s light gives us life through the energy it provides to vegetation, which is the basis of all our nutrition. In this way, we are literally created of the sun’s fire. Our physical bodies will return to this source by the same means, as we are digested by various insects that then pass us on to the plants. The plants then

convert our carbon to sugars in the process of photosynthesis, where the sun’s fire finally rends our very molecules asunder.

A more esoteric interpretation could be that each of us is a Star in the company of Stars; that we are the Gods of our own creation; that we create our bodies and minds and return to our original state after death.

This Star corresponds to Ra-Hoor-Khuit, to Aiwass, to the Holy Guardian Angel, to Tiphareth on the Tree of Life, and to the Host in the Mass.

The company of Stars of which this Star is a member corresponds to Nuit, to the negative veils surrounding the Tree of Life, and the Priestess and Paten in the Mass.

*“and in one Father of Life, Mystery of Mystery, in His name CHAOS, the sole viceregent of the Sun upon Earth;”*

Here Crowley identifies a Thelemic deity by name. Chaos, in Greek, is spelled Χαος, which evaluates to 871. Other words that share this value include: *αχος*, pain or sorrow; *σκοταισ*, secret or dark; *φορος*, a web or cloak; *αγνιζω*, to purify; and *ακων*, “against one’s will.” These associations may seem confusing at first or contradictory to the nature of deity, but they match well the visions described in the 14<sup>th</sup> Aethyr of *The Vision and the Voice* where Chaos speaks to Crowley:

“His voice comes in a whisper: O thou that art master of the fifty gates of Understanding, is not my mother a black woman? O thou that art master of the Pentagram, is not the egg of spirit a black egg? Here abideth terror, and the blind ache of the Soul, and lo! even I, who am the sole light, a spark shut up, stand in the sign of Apophis and Typhon.

“I am the snake that devourerth the spirit of man with the lust of light. I am the sightless storm in the night that wrappeth the world about with desolation. Chaos is my name, and thick darkness. Know thou that the darkness of the earth is ruddy, and the darkness of the air is grey, but the darkness of the soul is utter blackness.”

the Mass	Urs. ORBITA Gloria				7
elè	Gloria Patri				7
est					
Priestess					
est	Et Matri Et Filio				7
nce					
up	Et Filio				7
acer					
egation	Et Spiritu. Sancto Externo				7
mple					
numen	Et Spiritu. Sancto Interno				7
III					
nt	Et Terræ. Et. Terræ. In Sæcula Sæculorum				7
riset					
lar	Ses In Uno Per Notheri Septum In				7
Altar					

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And again in the 4<sup>th</sup> Aethyr:

“Blackness, blackness intolerable, before the beginning of the light. This is the first verse of Genesis. Holy art thou, Chaos, Chaos, Eternity, all contradictions in terms!”

To intellectually resolve the seeming contradiction of finding this dark desolation as the Father of Life, we can turn to the natural sciences. As the Father of Life, it makes sense that His nature would seem to suggest death and an absence of life – for life is born of these things in nature. In the physical universe, conservation of energy demands that no energy be lost or gained – there is always the same amount of energy in the universe. This being the case, utter desolation would indicate the absolute maximum in potential energy, without form. This is the beginning of creation.

We can qabalistically verify that He is the Father of Life. This can be done through pythmenes (Greek *aiq beker* – adding the numerals of a word’s value to reach a kind of “root value”) and notarichon (corresponding initial letters to core concepts). The value of  $\chi\alpha\omicron\sigma$  is 871, which reduces through pythmenes to 7, the value of the letter *zeta* which, traditionally in Greek notarichon, stands for Zoe (Life).

There is one passage in *The Vision and the Voice*, which possibly suggests an alternate spelling. While this spelling is certainly unconventional, it does indicate new depths of correspondence. From the 7<sup>th</sup> Aethyr:

“Now there is a word of four letters that containeth in itself all the mystery of the Tetragrammaton, and there is a word of seven letters which it concealeth, and that again concealeth the holy word that is the key of the Abyss.”

There is a good deal of commentary on this passage, which seem to be summarized in footnote 5:

“These words are probably BABALON, CHAOS, TARO”

One way that Babalon could conceal Chaos is if the latter were spelled, in the Hebrew, “**בְּעוֹם**,” totaling 156, the same value as Babalon. These

correspondences, along with some further suggestions in the commentary on the above passage, deserve further research and meditation.

According to Crowley, only a Master of the Temple may comprehend the mystery of Chaos. (Crowley, 1997)

Chaos corresponds to Chokhmah on the Tree of Life, and to the Priest in the Mass. Chaos, as viceregent (Priest), performs the function of the sun (Holy Guardian Angel) through the medium of the Air (the Lance – see below).

**“and in one Air the nourisher of all that breathes.”**

Air is one of the four Alchemical elements. The original Greek word is  $\alpha\eta\rho$ , and it carries the additional translations of mist and cloud. Without air, no life on earth (that we know of) could transmute base matter into energy. Indeed, the lowest forms of life, such as algae, all require sunlight and air at a minimum to survive (those that live in water extract oxygen and nitrogen gasses thence). In this physical sense, nourishment is indeed provided by air to all that breathes.

The value of the word is 109, which corresponds to  $\text{H}\rho\alpha$  (Hera), the second wife (and sister) of Zeus. Hera is known as “The Perfected One” and She is known for ultimate and equal rulership, with Zeus, of the world of the Greek Gods and the Earth. Philolaos, a Pythagorean, relates the element of air to Dionysos. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, attributed air to Athena. Plato corresponded air to the octahedron, one of the five perfect solids. (Barry, 1999)

Using pythmenes, the value of the word is reduced to 1. The Greek initial  $\alpha$  is traditionally attributed to air by notarichon, as is the Hebrew **א**. These both have a value of 1. The Greek  $\alpha$  is also the first letter of  $\alpha\nu\alpha\tau\omicron\lambda\eta$  (east, sunrise).

The one Air corresponds to the path of **א** on the Tree of Life, to The Fool (Atu 0) in the Tarot, and to the Lance in the Mass.

This fragment concludes the first sentence in the Creed. The four parts of this sentence are all related in the sense that they all have predominantly masculine attributes.

***“And I believe in one Earth, the Mother of us all, and in one Womb wherein all men are begotten, and wherein they shall rest, Mystery of Mystery, in Her name BABALON.”***

The sentence structure in this passage is slightly different than that above. In this case, there are three parts to the sentence, and mere commas rather than semicolons separate each part. Therefore, it can be argued that they all refer directly to Babalon. Still, Crowley capitalized the initial letters of Earth, Mother, and Womb, which may offer additional hints to the nature of Babalon.

Earth, in Greek, is γαῖα, which evaluates by isopsephy to 15. Other words sharing this value are: θεᾶ, goddess; δια, asunder or through; and εἶ, “thou art.” Pythmenes reveals that the root value of 15 is 6, which corresponds to ἄββα, or father. This fact (in addition to the mysteries of Chaos explored above) may shed some light on the passage in the Anthem of the Mass, which reads, “Male-female, quintessential, one, / Man-being veiled in Woman-form.” The initial letter E of Earth probably transliterates to the Greek η, which in and of itself is a word in Greek meaning “I was.” The meaning of η by notarichon is, curiously, Hera. The initial letter γ of γαῖα has a value of 3, clearly corresponding to Binah on the Tree of Life.

Mother, in Greek, is μητηρ, which evaluates to 456. Curiously, this is exactly 300 more than the value of Babalon. Using pythmenes, we again arrive at the values of 15 and 6 (see Earth above). Other words with the value of 456 include: μεταβολη, change; διακααιοκρισια, righteous judgment; διοβολος, hurled by Zeus; and ζευγμα, bond.

Womb, in Greek, is δελθουσ, which evaluates to 1139. Another word with this value is γελωτα, laughter. This value does not reduce to 15 or 6, like those above, through pythmenes. Rather, the digits add up to 14, which breaks down further to 5, the same as the value of αδ, Had or Hadit. Again, this is an ultimately feminine symbol with a fiery and masculine association. The number 5 is also related to the sphere of Geburah on the Tree of Life, arguably the most masculine (but fundamentally feminine) member of the feminine Pillar of Severity. This seems appropriate. Of the

three concepts, Earth, Mother, and Womb, the latter is the most easily related to generation, a typically (metaphysically) masculine trait. The initial letter W of Womb probably transliterates to the Greek digamma, which carries the value of 6, thereby maintaining the connection with Mother and Earth above. It may also transliterate to omega, which by itself means the end, or the last, and is symbolic of the seventh heaven of the Christian Gnostics.

Babalon is spelled Βαβαλον in Greek, and Her value is 156. This number does not appear very remarkable at first glance, as there are few and relatively meaningless other words with the same numerology. Pythmenes gives us 12, suggesting the zodiac and the complete macrocosm. Applying pythmenes again, we get 3, the number of Binah on the Tree of Life and the value of the letter γ. The meaning of γ by notarichon is γαῖα (see above) and γεννωω, to beget or to be born. The associations to Earth, Mother, and Womb are clearly evident.

Crowley has a great deal to say about Babalon in *The Vision and the Voice* and elsewhere. She bears the cup, and collects the blood of the saints therein. Her consort is Chaos. A beautiful depiction of Babalon can be found in Crowley and Harris' Thoth Tarot (Atu XI).

Babalon corresponds to Binah on the Tree of Life, and the cup in the Mass.

***“And I believe in the Serpent and the Lion, Mystery of Mystery, in His name BAPHOMET.”***

The case of Baphomet is a curious one. The word's origin is unknown. In Crowley's *Confessions* he relates the tale of his frustration at not finding the correct spelling of this name (as no spelling he could devise yielded sufficiently significant values by his reckoning), and asking a spirit for guidance. In it, the spirit tells the spelling of Baphomet as it might transliterate to the Hebrew: **באֹפֶמֶיִתֵר**. Using the Hebrew gematria, this adds to 729, which is 9<sup>3</sup> and corresponds to Κηθασ, the name (which literally means “stone,” and in this context, the cubical cornerstone of the Church) that Jesus gave to Peter. (Crowley, 1989) The word σκαθη, ship or vessel, also shares this value.

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What is odd about this spelling is that it ends in *resh*, which transliterates to the English letter “r.” Crowley felt that this spelling resolved the etymology of the word, because it has a phonetic similarity to a title meaning “Father Mithras.” (Unfortunately he does not reveal what title this might be.) Another etymological theory that Crowley liked, but which was not supported by the new spelling, was that Baphomet was a corruption of βαθη μητρος, baptism of wisdom. (Crowley, 1989)

The name Baphomet dates back at least as far as the Knights Templar. Other similar deities date back at least as far as the Manicheans and other Christian Gnostics. The ideas that Baphomet represents have always been thought of as evil by dualists who believe that flesh and matter are manifestations of evil forces. Baphomet represents generation, and any symbol depicting generation or incarnation is in harmony with Him. (Helena et al., 1995)

The association of the lion and serpent to Baphomet gives further clues to His nature. There is a Christian Gnostic depiction of Yldaboath as a lion-headed man with a serpent wrapped around Him. Yldaboath, in the Christian Gnostic mythology, is the deity responsible for the creation of the Earth and its inhabitants. He was a blind idiot God, who could not see the other deities around Him (actually above Him) and therefore mistakenly thought He was the *only* God. Many sects of Christian Gnosticism regarded Him as evil because of His essential flaws, and because of the flaws of His creation. However, most Thelemites do not equate flesh and matter as intrinsically evil, so therefore Baphomet, our equivalent of Yldaboath, is not regarded as evil either. He is the result of the union of Chaos and Babalon and He symbolizes the union of opposites.

Baphomet corresponds to Tiphareth on the Tree of Life, and the Deacon in the Mass.

***“And I believe in one Gnostic and Catholic Church of Light, Life, Love and Liberty, the Word of whose Law is THELEMA.”***

It is doubtful that the potential readers of this document will require much elaboration on the meaning or numerology of the word θηλημα. It means “will” and its value is 93. This value is shared by αγαπη, love.

That our Church is Gnostic and Catholic simply means that we believe in direct, unmediated knowledge of deity, and that our Church is universal and comprehensive. (See Dictionary definitions of the terms.)

The repetition of the initial letter “L” in “Light, Life, Love and Liberty” draws attention to itself. The value of the letter λ is 30, and its meaning by notarichon is “lion.” The repetition of four λs gives us a total value of 120, the number of ov (the Greek word for “being” and the Egyptian word for the sun). There is also a symbolic correspondence between these words and the 7171 formula: Light = 1, Life = 7, Love = 1, Liberty = 7.

The Church and the word θηλημα correspond to Malkuth on the Tree of Life, and the physical congregation and temple in the Mass.

***“And I believe in the communion of Saints.”***

Up to this point in the Creed, there seems to be a kind of chronological cosmology depicted. The Creed begins with the most ineffable and here we are at the level of the most physical. Likewise, the majority of the Mass seems to be a pageant depicting the same. At this point in the Creed (and in the Mass), the trend begins to reverse itself in the act of communion.

Communion in the Mass consists of eating the physical manifestation of Chaos (the body of God), and drinking that of Babalon (the blood of God). But the wine is also the blood of the Saints – our ancestors. These were individual human beings and characters from myth that embodied, in some way, the phallic principle in our culture. Whether Gods, or bards, or mystics, martyrs mythological or literal, or what have you, the Saints listed in the Mass have universally been a positive, generative force in the Western Esoteric Tradition. That list is far from comprehensive (or even representative), and it may be argued that *all* those who actively participate in our mystical current will become Saints at death, for we all

must rest in the Womb of our creation. We must also return to the Star in the company of Stars. Thereby, in addition to being the body of God, the host in communion may be seen as the Saints' bodies just as the wine is the blood.

This act of communion represents the realization of a spiritual union between the congregants and the tradition. It also is an act of sharing between congregants, and stimulates feelings of intimate fellowship and rapport – toward each other and toward our predecessors the Saints. We are members of their community, and we were before we were born. Communion is communication also, and therefore suggestive of Knowledge and Conversation with the Holy Guardian Angel.

The communion of Saints corresponds to the path of ☩, and to the communion in the Mass.

***“And, forasmuch as meat and drink are transmuted in us daily into spiritual substance, I believe in the Miracle of the Mass.”***

The Miracle of the Mass occurs in the consumption and digestion of the Eucharist. This is the process whereby we unite opposites within ourselves, taking in Chaos and Babalon to become the child, Baphomet.

We eat every day, and we unite opposites constantly in this way through the very function of our bodies. Daily we perform transmutation; daily we turn the lead into gold; and daily our activities nourish the spirit. It is perhaps the consciousness of these processes, and the awareness of their relationship to the rest of our world, which makes it a miraculous occurrence.

This Miracle takes place – not at Mass, or even in the twelve hours it takes to digest the materials after Mass – but over the course of years or even decades, as nutrients are stored, deposits left in arteries, practices observed, and awareness expanded in the body, mind, and spirit. There is no completion to this Miracle. Even after death, the process continues. It is the process, and not the result, which is miraculous. It is actually physically miraculous because it represents an isolated anomaly at extreme variance with the rest of the known universe. The Second Law of Thermodynamics states that entropy always increases. Perhaps a caveat should be added for our experience: that as Chaos increases, so shall He multiply.

The Miracle of the Mass corresponds to the path of ☩, and to the moment in the Mass when the Priest and Priestess cry, “HRILIU!”

***“And I confess one Baptism of Wisdom whereby we accomplish the Miracle of Incarnation.”***

This confession is foreshadowed immediately prior to the commencement of the Creed, when the congregation performs the step and sign of Man and Brother, Woman and Sister – the old Masonic step and sign of the first degree, symbolizing birth.

Physically, there is only one way to accomplish the Miracle of Incarnation without the intervention of advanced medical technologies. The Baptism of Wisdom is it. The act of sex is not the terminal meaning of this symbolism, however, for sex is itself symbolic. Our own Baptism of Wisdom came at conception, but everywhere is conception taking place. Our thoughts, our actions, our love, every physical law of nature and every magickal practice facilitate the process of intercourse – of union.

Nevertheless, this passage is far more materially based than that of Baphomet, which is also concerned with the union of opposites (note also the possible etymological relationship between Baphomet and the Baptism of Wisdom mentioned above). It is the first of the two confessions in the Creed. The word “confession” implies that this is not a metaphysical metaphor, but a physical fact, for to confess is to make something known. We are making known that sexual intercourse alone brings incarnation.

The symbolic and reverent language of this confession of the sex act supports the popular Thelemic doctrine that sex and sexual symbolism are divine, and that sexual taboo is unnecessary.

The Baptism of Wisdom corresponds to Yesod on the Tree of Life, and to the font in the Mass.

***“And I confess my life one, individual, and eternal that was, and is, and is to come.”***

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After conception and birth, we experience life. Each of us is singular, existing as a distinct entity forever. Furthermore, we will forever have a past, present, and future that we relate to. The confession made here describes the Holy Guardian Angel, our “higher self” that is independent of our worldly identity. The Creed has methodically progressed from the passage above regarding the Gnostic and Catholic Church – the material basis of the congregation – to the divine and separate self in each of us.

My life corresponds to Tiphareth on the Tree of Life, and to the censer in the Mass.

**“AUMGN, AUMGN, AUMGN.”**

Crowley transliterates *aumgn* to  $\alpha\zeta\mu\gamma\nu$ , demonstrating again that numerology is of far greater importance than phonetic spelling when it comes to words of this nature. (Crowley, 1997) Rightfully so, for it is in the correspondences where we find meaning in the word. Its value is 100, corresponding to the Greek  $\lambda\alpha\gamma\upsilon\epsilon\iota\alpha$  (lust) – again the underlying principle of the union of opposites. By pythmenes, the value is the same as that of Air.

This word is a Thelemic *mantra*. As such, it literally represents the aspiration of the congregants, as they conspire to unite in breath and vibration, raising the spiritual consciousness of each. It is also suggestive of our immanent oneness with God and the divinity of our selves.

Our *mantra* corresponds to the three Supernal spheres on the Tree of Life (Binah, Chokhmah, and Kether), and the altar in the Mass. This concludes the line-by-line analysis.

Looking at our Creed as a whole, there appears to be a correspondence to the *Gloria* section of Crowley’s Star Sapphire ritual (see *The Book of Lies*). It may be appropriate to examine and compare the Gnostic Mass to the Star Sapphire, as well as other eucharistic rites (such as the Mass of the Phoenix). Also, I have found a kind of recursive expression of the  $\eta\eta\eta$  formula within the Creed. These findings, and the major attributions identified previously in this essay, are shown in the attached table.

The Creed depicts the act of creation, and the aspiration of the created. It foreshadows future repetition of this cycle, demonstrating by example that there is no part of us that is not of the gods.

It is in the best interest of any that study and attend the Mass to perform such an exegesis as this, or to meditate upon the meaning of the Creed in another manner. In either case, it is my hope that your path to gnosis be made quicker by this brief exploration of the symbols therein.

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# \*stars

by Soror R. Golden

I sing death's song  
it echoes in the dark  
an uncreated mystery  
that questions where  
looking for the stars  
waiting to blink out

Soon I will go out  
called by the cabal's song  
to stand in a circle of stars  
taking my place in the dark  
to ask myself where  
and search out will's mystery

they hold the mystery  
not a single word let out  
so I barely know where  
not even the tune of the song  
I am completely in the dark  
staring at the night sky's stars

thinking how we're all stars  
with individual mystery  
shining through the dark  
watching the moon come out  
to the sound of a primal song  
ringing through time, ever where

until I am here and no where  
a star among stars  
singing my own will's song  
in a self-created mystery  
result of my reaching out  
a longing in the dark

I stare into the dark  
I am wondering where  
and when they will come out  
leading me, oh stars  
crying mystery of mystery  
god or goddess, chaos song

led in the dark some where  
by a song of mystery  
star of stars, led out

# Prism

by Frater פארשי-אל 671-31

Swiftly stream the sands,  
hourglass soon empty.  
Westward soars the home-star,  
sundial steeped in shadow.

Whose eyes scrutinize  
the hand, who calculates  
the hour? A new  
millennium dawns,  
dazzling.

Never has the sun risen  
in the west, yet the pole-star's  
not exempt from zodiacal procession:  
Water-Bearer feeds the stream,  
the Fishes swim therein.  
Ram leaps high on mountaintop,  
Bull bellows across meadow.  
Isis/Nephtys, Osiris/Set  
royal Twins, white and black.  
Crab yields to the King of Beasts.  
Vestal Virgin, barren helpmate  
kindles Balance's adjustment.  
Scorpion stings, yet Archer's arrow  
flies true. Horns rend, hooves  
slash: satyr-like, Goat cavorts supreme.

Subtle tides ebb and flow,  
alter shorelines over eons:  
from one hour's death  
the next resurrects;  
from pyre, PHOENIX.

White light shatters,  
newborn in shimmering  
rainbow hues - then fades.

If not for the darkness,  
what virtue the light?  
Life teeters,  
breathless, on the threshold.

# Adam's Apple

by Frater פארטי-אל 671-31

First cuckold, the poor guy never  
even saw it coming. Neglect demands  
attention; every itch gets scratched, eventually.

Read between the lines: Jehovah excluded that lesson  
when he taught Adam and Eve to dwell in the garden  
. . . like vegetables.

It was swollen, ripe, beautiful to her eye -  
alluring, forbidden to magnify its charm.

The serpent slithered, caressed with forked tongue  
the tender flesh. "An apple, my sweet?" he tempted,  
"A bit of knowledge, something tasty - a treat you never  
dreamed existed before I came! Has your husband  
shown you this? Its rightful use, how best to enjoy  
it's . . . savor?"

A blaze kindled from his father's inferno,  
Cain arose. Though his hands were red,  
his thumbs, green. Instinctively he sewed  
that kinsmen arise - Tubal Cain,<sup>1</sup> Hiram,<sup>2</sup>  
De Molay,<sup>3</sup> Wieshaupt,<sup>4</sup> Crowley<sup>5</sup> -  
that bare earth bear life when he came,  
that proud stalks leap heavenward,  
challenge the craven god.<sup>6</sup>

- 
1. Tubal Cain of Biblical lore, first artificer of metals.
  2. Hiram of the same source, master builder of King Solomon's Temple.
  3. Jaques De Molay (d. 1314), last Grand Master of the Knights Templars.
  4. Adam Wieshaupt, founder of the Bavarian Illuminati (1776).
  5. Aleister Crowley (d. 1947), Outer Head of the quasi-Masonic Ordo Templi Orientis.
  6. Some consider these men and their spiritual descendants "Sons of Cain, Children of the Light" (i.e. possessors and transmitters of the creative impulse/energy).

# Book Reviews

by Frater Diapason

Versluis, Arthur. *Theosophia: Hidden Dimensions of Christianity*. Lindisfarne Press, 1994.

Faivre, Antoine. *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism* (C. Rhone, trans.). SUNY Press, 2000. (Original work published in 1996).

Within most outward religious forms of any significant longevity, there are usually embedded, sometimes deeply, sometimes not so deeply, genuine spiritual currents and streams. Arguably one of the most profound that has been bequeathed to us by 17<sup>th</sup> century German Christianity is the so-called “theosophical current” associated with Jacob Boehme (“the cobbler from Gorlitz,” “the Teutonic Philosopher”) and the various mystics and visionaries who constellated around him. Two works published within the last decade, *Theosophia: Hidden Dimensions of Christianity*, by Arthur Versluis (published in 1994), and *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition: Studies in Western Esotericism*, by Antoine Faivre (original French publication in 1996; English translation in 2000) provide important introductions to this rich, but frequently overlooked, spiritual source.

The pervasive thrust of Versluis' book is the timely reclamation of “Christian theosophy” from the hands of pedants: “far from being a forgotten province suitable only for scholars, [it] in fact represents in an era of unparalleled spiritual confusion an essential spiritual alternative within Christianity.” Conceived as pure “hiero-history” (the “history of revelation or of spiritual illumination”), he understands theosophy, in the broad sense, to be essentially synonymous with gnosticism. More specifically, however, his focus is upon the “authentic Gnostic tradition within Christianity, stretching from Dionysius the Areopagite, through Clement of Alexandria and Origen, to St. Maximus the Confessor, John Scotus Erigena, Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler, Jacob Boehme,

Gottfried Arnold, Franz von Baader, and into the present era.” His task is to demonstrate that “there is a continuity in this tradition recognized by its exponents regardless of their historical discontinuity.” Not surprisingly, he references the work of Henry Corbin in support of his notion of the “vertical rupture in historical time” that theosophy represents.

*Theosophia* is conveniently divided into three sections: the first section introduces the reader to the primary antecedents of Boehmean theosophy by means of a survey of early Christian angelophany, gnosis, and celestial hierarchy, followed by a discussion of medieval Christian mystical eros as exemplified by, on the one hand, the high mysticism of Meister Eckhart, and, on the other hand, by the low mysticism of the *minnesinger* tradition. It concludes with a consideration of key Platonic and Hermetic sources, before turning to an examination of theosophy itself, through a series of synopses beginning with Boehme, passing through John Pordage, Jane Leade, Johann George Gichtel, and Gottfried Arnold, and ending with Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Friedrich Christoph Oetinger and Franz von Baader.

The second section focuses upon the cosmology that underlies Boehmean theosophy, especially the image of the temple and the pilgrim. It also provides a nod to the significant influence of Paracelsian alchemy. The final section of the book explores the key metaphysical concepts of theosophy, particularly those surrounding the image of the divine Sophia as it relates to the celestial hierarchy. Appended to the main body of the text are two brief extracts from theosophical works, the most notable of which is from the conclusion of Jane Leade's *Enochian Walks with God*. While Versluis is sometimes a bit too insistent overall for this reader in his appeal to “Spiritual Robinson Crusoes” to find their consummate solace and sustenance in a theosophy comprised of “a spiritual confederacy that is not bound by recorded history or the crises

of our times," he nonetheless provides a readable and useful presentation throughout of the essential concepts, personages, and written works that enervate the traditional Christian theosophical corpus.

Considerably more robust and less sermonizing in tone than Versluis's book, is Antoine Faivre's *Theosophy, Imagination, Tradition*. It is presented as a companion volume to his *Access to Western Esotericism* (1994). This earlier volume, more general in scope (and originally published in French as two separate books), surveyed and discussed various classical currents within Western esotericism, including Alexandrian hermetism, Jewish Kabbalah, and Neo-Platonism, as well as more modern ones, such as Christian Kabbalah, Neo-Alexandrian hermetism, Paracelsism, theosophy, and Rosicrucianism.

This more recent work focuses, however, more-or-less exclusively upon the theosophical current, its characteristic features, history, major personages, and works (once again citing the towering figure of Jacob Boehme: "With [him] the theosophical current acquired its definitive characteristics, the Boehmean work representing something like the nucleus of that which constitutes the classical theosophical corpus").

In his Preface, the author elaborates upon the major methodological issues involved in esoteric studies, focusing especially on criteriological concerns (he includes, of course, a summary of his "six basic characteristics of esotericism," often referenced in many of the published works associated with Faivre).

The first part of the book surveys various definitions of theosophy, followed by a description of "the genesis, development, and specific features [of 'classical theosophy'] in the framework of a periodic overview." Specifically, he discusses its first Golden Age (the end of the 16th through the 17th centuries), the Transitional Period (the first half of the 18th century), a

second Golden Age in the pre-romantic and romantic era (the late 18th through the mid-19th centuries), and, finally, "its decline, and also its endurance, from the mid-nineteenth century until the present." This survey is followed by more detailed studies of particular theosophers: an analysis of Valentin Weigel and Johann Georg Gichtel with reference to the pioneering work of Bernard Gorceix; and a consideration of various theosophical points of view on the death penalty in relation to the works of Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Joseph de Maistre, and Franz von Baader.

The second section of the book looks at specific aspects of theosophical symbolism and metaphysics, particularly the magical imagination as exemplified in the image of the "divine mirror." The concluding third section is devoted to topical discussions and their relationship to theosophical themes: the proto-Rosicrucian writings; the 20th century work of Valentin Tomberg with the 22 Major Arcana of the Tarot; and, finally, the enigmatic contemporary figure of Raymond Abellio. Included in the last pages of the book is a Bibliographical Guide to Research that is an extension of the monumental one published in *Access to Western Esotericism*.

Antoine Faivre (along with Joscelyn Godwin and a few handfuls of others) is one of the leading voices and figures behind the recent emergence of "esoteric studies" within the walls of the Academy. His work is always meticulously documented, comprehensive in scope, balanced in outlook, and clear in presentation. It constitutes essential reading for any serious student of the Western esoteric tradition.





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